

Wheathampstead
Parochial Church Council

Annual Report & Accounts

for the year ended
31st December 2023

St Helen's + St Peter's · Wheathampstead
living God's love in our community



Rector's Introduction

If 2022 was a year of recuperation following the pandemic, 2023 was a year of resurrection as we rebuilt our ministries! Praise God – by the end of the year we had bounced back in many ways and Christmas attendance was close to pre-Pandemic levels. This is testimony to the goodness and faithfulness of God, and to the dedication, energy and enthusiasm of everyone who contributes to the life of our churches. Thank you!

Sadly, it was also a year in which we conducted more funerals for church family members than we would have wished. Our sisters and brothers have gone home to glory and their eternal rest, but they leave a big hole in our hearts and our communal life. We were grateful to receive two generous legacies which have been put towards our Development Fund. Legacies are likely to be increasingly important in funding capital projects, so please do plan in advance how you would like to support the church into the future. (Pick up a legacy leaflet or, visit our website for more information).

The generosity of our congregations, and the careful stewardship of our resources mean that our day to day running costs were covered by our regular income. Thank you once again to everyone who contributes by planned giving – this stable income stream is essential to our continued financial health. You can read more about our finances on pages 12 to 18. We are also grateful for the continued fundraising work of The Friends of St Helen's Church without whom we would find the upkeep of St Helen's Church building much more challenging.

Our finances are important because they enable our ministry and help us to fulfil the Vision God has given us: To Live God's Love in our Communities. You can read a summary of the vision on page 3, where you will see that we've made encouraging progress in many aspects – perhaps most notably towards being A Church for All Generations (and all backgrounds). In 2023 we had some very successful inter-generational events including a Pancake Party, brunches for Pentecost and Harvest, a boules tournament, and our end of summer BBQ. We also resumed our Youth Group and recruited new members from the Year 7 Donut Club. You can read about this, as well as our Children's work on page 10.

At the other end of the age spectrum, St Helen's Fellowship continues to flourish with a regular programme of activities (see page 10) and Coffee in the Chancel provides a Hub for many other social and networking activities.

2023 saw new initiatives for the Environment Group including schools work and the very visible Low Mow areas in the churchyard. Behind the scenes the Buildings Working Group made steady, but frustrating, progress in consulting on our plans for better facilities. Meanwhile the Fabric Committee continue to plug away at the countless small jobs to keep both buildings in good repair (see page 8). They were joined in May by an army of volunteers at The Big Help Out – a hugely successful event clearing the churchyard which we hope will become a regular fixture in our calendar.

Sunday worship is a focal point of church life, and it's made possible by many essential teams of volunteers, from welcomers and intercessors, to the 'Tech Team.' During 2023 Harry L'Estrange joined us as our new organist, and although it seems a long time ago now, we are grateful to the scratch choir who led our Christmas Carol Service. This has evolved into the St Helen's Singers who we hope will regularly supplement our worship for festivals and special occasions. Please continue to pray for our worship, that it would be Spirit filled and provide the nourishment to help us all grow in our faith.

We can only do what we do because of the time given by so many people. If you are not already part of one (or more!) of the many groups and teams, please pray about how best your gifts and skills could contribute.

We enter 2024 in a reasonably robust financial position, with an excellent team excited by all the possibilities ahead of us. Yet, at the same time we know these are challenging and uncertain times for many. Our faith or confidence is not rooted in our own abilities. We know that, "Unless the Lord builds the house, the labourers toil in vain." (Psalm 127:1) We give thanks for all God's goodness in 2023 and put our trust in him whatever the future may hold. So, let us all pray that God would guide us, inspire us and give us courage and obedience as we follow where he leads us. Amen.

With love and prayers,

God bless you -

Richard

The Parish Vision: Bringing our strategic planning to life

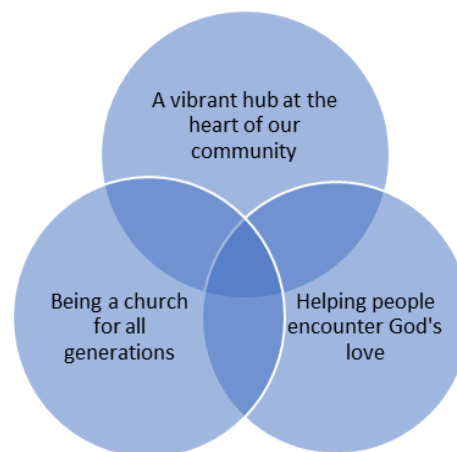
The Parish's Vision and Mission Action Plan is a framework for how we wish to see the parish developing over the next five years.

Our Mission statement and Vision are reviewed each five years and were reset in their current form at the beginning of 2022.

Our *Mission* is that we are Living God's Love in Our Community.

Our *Vision* for St Helen's and St Peter's is that we will:

1. Make St Helen's and St Peter's **a vibrant hub at the heart of the community** with buildings fit for God's mission in 21st century Wheathampstead
2. Be **a church for all generations**
3. Provide **opportunities for people to encounter God's love**



Across all of these is a wish also to lighten the parish's environmental footprint.

The PCC is responsible for driving the Vision forward and its meetings typically begin with a working session on the Vision, usually reviewing progress towards the goals for each of the Vision's three priorities and planning the next steps.

The second year of the new Vision has seen further progress in all three priority areas. Some items are covered more fully elsewhere in this Report.

The PCC has chosen its preferred option for the extension and re-ordering of the St Helen's building and an architect was appointed in the autumn of 2023 to develop that. Work continued to identify an Energy Champion for the Parish and to seek to improve its storage capacity. Two low-mow areas were established in the churchyard.

An Alpha Course ran successfully in the first half of 2023, followed by a course to prepare children to receive Communion. A range of events aimed at people across the age range took place, including on Shrove Tuesday and Heritage Open Day in September, along with several parish walks and a boules tournament.

Working together with Wheathampstead United Church, the Parish staffed and stocked a Community Larder for village residents in the WUC Hall during the summer holidays. For the second year “Christmas Lunch on Jesus” hampers with the ingredients for a complete Christmas dinner were offered to local families, distributing 29 hampers in 2023. In July, 30 children from St Helen’s School visited the churchyard for an environmental activity.

The PCC expects to build upon this progress during 2024.

The Parochial Church Council (PCC)

The combination of mission, vision and strategic priorities provides a framework within which the PCC evaluates our progress and promotes new initiatives for growth.

Role

In accordance with the PCC (Powers) Measure 1956 as amended, the Wheathampstead Parochial Church Council (“PCC”) shares with the Rector and other Ministers the work of promotion in the Parish of “the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical”. It is responsible for the churches of St Helen’s and St Peter’s, Gustard Wood. The PCC is a corporate body established by the Church of England and is registered as Wheathampstead PCC with the Charity Commission (charity number 1132924) and can be contacted at the Parish Office, St Helen’s Church, High Street, Wheathampstead, AL4 8AA. In planning the activities for the year, the PCC has considered the Commission’s guidance on public benefit and, in particular, the specific guidance on charities for the advancement of religion.

PCC Activities in 2023

Our Annual Report and Accounts look back at a calendar year: this Annual Report and Accounts 2023 looks back at the calendar year 2023.

During its year of office, the PCC has met on ten occasions – all these meetings have been in person rather than by Zoom. The PCC had been heavily involved in the Away Day in November 2021 which centred on our new Parish Vision. The PCC carries out its responsibility to take the Parish Vision forward as described in the “Vision” section of this report (above). Our meetings continue to include devotions, discussions and decision-taking. Individuals are invited to join PCC meetings where their contribution is particularly valuable. A summary of PCC meetings continues to be shared with our mailing list. Annual reports are received from many areas of church life and our policies are regularly reviewed. In addition, the Ministerial Team, sub-committees and other groups continue to meet and report to the PCC during the year reflecting the many aspects of Church life.

Membership

Members of the PCC are ex officio, co-opted or elected by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting. There are up to twelve elected lay members. The list of members who served in 2023 is below. The PCC wishes to record their gratitude to all who have tirelessly assisted in maintaining the momentum of the progress of our Vision for Wheathampstead, Gustard Wood and beyond and in particular to thank those individuals and groups who have contributed so readily to our worship and pastoral care as we have emerged into a world changed by Covid-19.

Our grateful thanks go to all who have contributed to the governance and decision-making of the church through their service on the PCC. Keith Andrews, Simon Best and Bob Carter will retire by rotation and be eligible for re-election to the PCC. Liz Carter and Margaret Pearce are retiring from the PCC. Vacancies will exist for lay members to be elected either as Churchwardens at the Meeting of Parishioners or to the PCC at the APCM.

List of PCC Members

The following members served on the PCC following the APCM in April 2023.

Name	Capacity	Serving from	Serving to
Revd Richard Banham	Rector & PCC Chair	April 2010	While in office *
Mr David Hartley	Elected Churchwarden	Elected May 2023	APCM 2024 *
Mrs Hilary Hollick	Elected Churchwarden	Elected May 2023	APCM 2024 *
Mr Keith Andrews	Elected Lay Member Deputy Warden from Oct 21	Elected May 2022	APCM 2024 *
Mr Simon Best	Elected Lay Member Lay Vice Chair	Elected April 2021	APCM 2024 *
Mrs Madeleine Bigmore	Elected Lay Member Hon. Treasurer	Elected April 2023	APCM 2026 *
Mrs Helen Caldwell	Elected Lay Member	Elected April 2023	APCM 2026 *
Mr Bob Carter	Elected Lay Member	Elected May 2022	APCM 2024 *
Mrs Liz Carter	Elected Lay Member	Elected May 2022	APCM 2025 *
Mrs Barbara Doye	Elected Lay Member	Elected May 2022	APCM 2025 *
Mr Brian Goleworthy	Deanery Synod Member	Elected April 2023	APCM 2026 *
Mr David Pangbourne	Elected Lay Member	Elected April 2023	APCM 2026 *
Mrs Margaret Pearce	Elected Lay Member	Elected May 2022	APCM 2024 *
Mrs Linda Thomas	Deanery Synod Member	Elected April 2023	APCM 2026 *
Mr Martin Thomas	Elected Lay Member	Elected May 2022	APCM 2025 *
Mr Ales Vrbas	Elected Lay Member	Elected April 2023	APCM 2026 *
Mr Stephen Wilson	Deanery Synod Member Hon. Secretary	Elected April 2023	APCM 2026 *

- **Member serving on 31st December 2023 (end of Report and Accounts year).**

At a Special Meeting of Parishioners on 28th May 2023 David Hartley and Hilary Hollick were elected to serve as Churchwardens.

Following the election of 7 lay members at the APCM 2022, lots were drawn in line with Church Representation Rules so that 3 of these members would serve for only 2-year terms while the remaining 4 serve the usual 3-year terms. Thus the number of elected PCC members retiring each year becomes more balanced.

Team of Ministers

As with so many areas of church life, we are fortunate to have such a capable and committed team of Ministers who lead our worship and do so much good work away from the spotlight of Sunday Services.

Minister	Role
Rev Richard Banham	Rector
Rt Rev John Gladwin	Retired Bishop
Rev Brian Gwinn	Retired Minister
Rev Tom Purchas	Retired Minister
Rev Geoff Barter	Retired Minister
Linda Thomas	Children & Families Minister Reader

Minister	Role
Claire Banham	Reader
Carol Hopper	Reader
Pippa Legg	Reader
John Grace	Retired Reader
Roger Payne	Retired Reader (until August 2023)
Barbara Doye	Reader in Training

Working Groups, Committees and Sub-committees

The PCC appointed the following officers: Stephen Wilson as **Honorary Secretary**, Madeleine Bigmore as **Honorary Treasurer**, Britt Dahle and Sabrina Shafer as **Parish Safeguarding Officers**, Jez Hirst as **Parish**

Safeguarding Adviser, Helen Caldwell as **Lead Recruiter, DBS Administrator and PCC Safeguarding Officer**, Judith Lambert as **Electoral Roll Officer** and Michael Hollick as **Health & Safety Officer**. David Pangbourne is serving as Interim **Data Protection Officer**.

The PCC elects a **“Standing Committee”** with power, subject to the directions of the PCC, to transact business between PCC meetings. Its members are Richard Banham, David Hartley, Hilary Hollick, Keith Andrews, Simon Best, Madeleine Bigmore and Stephen Wilson.

The overall co-ordination of our **Vision** is led by Simon Best as Chairman.

The PCC is advised by a **“Fabric Committee”** which is chaired by Stephen Scowcroft.

Bishop John, the Rector and Ruth Jeavons have served as our appointees to **Wheathampstead Churches Together** in whose activities we regularly participate together with St. Thomas More RC Church and Wheathampstead United Church. These include the Good Friday Walk of Witness, special services like the Advent Carol Service, occasions for joint prayer and our ecumenical Lent courses.

Financial Review

The Financial Statements of the PCC are attached, see pages 12 to 18.

The Statement of Financial Activities shows our income and expenditure for the year on our General (Unrestricted) Fund; on the Designated Funds we have set aside for major Fabric costs, Reserves and the Development Fund; and the Restricted Funds which we have been given for particular purposes, and our Endowment Fund. The Balance Sheet shows the state of our finances at the year end and both these statements are supported by a number of notes.

In 2023 our planned giving maintained the same level as the previous year. There was some reduction in income due to the cost of living, but we were pleased that many were able to increase their donation in line with inflation and that there were 5 new regular donors to the Parish Giving Scheme. This continuous support is much appreciated and represents over half of our unrestricted income.

The Energy Fund which was launched in December 2022 to cover the increased costs of gas and electricity has received over £11,000. This has paid for nearly all the gas used for heating the church up to the end of 2023. We are very grateful for the generosity of all donors for these extra contributions.

The Unrestricted Funds initially show a surplus for the year of £14,269. This figure takes into account our income for general purposes, from which is deducted our normal annual outgoings on the church and its activities, together with our contribution to the Diocese, and the Parish’s own giving. It is the PCC’s aim to ensure this normal expenditure is, at least, covered by our annual income, and this has been achieved this year.

In addition to these normal running costs there were expenses from our designated funds on fabric and church development. Our total funds at the end of the year stand at £302,135. This is an increase of £18,758 from the previous year.

Reserves Policy

The PCC follows the general recommendations for Church of England parishes and sets aside funds to provide cover against a sudden loss of income and unforeseen capital expenditure. These reserves are shown in note 9 to the annual accounts as Designated Funds and currently stand at £52,590 for loss of income and £78,897 for capital expenditure.

At 31st December 2023 the amount in the General Fund which was not restricted or designated amounted to £72,841.

Charity Partnerships

We are delighted that we were able to maintain our committed financial support throughout this last year – the 6th year when our focus has been on Vulnerable Children.

Overview of Charity Partnerships

Local

Azalea Luton reaches out to those suffering the injustice of sex trafficking, supporting them to build new lives because of the love of God, through Outreach, Drop-In and Befriending and also works as a key partner in Faiths Against Child Sexual Exploitation (FACES) – which is a local coalition of faith leaders working to prevent Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE).

National

The Children’s Society is committed to fighting child poverty and neglect and helping all children to have a better chance in life. From their early history in the vision and actions of a young Sunday School teacher at the end of the nineteenth century, their work has been grounded in the churches at local and national levels. Churches constitute their core partners and they work very closely with the Church of England.

International

CCT Kimbilio is overseen by a group of experienced Trustees who share a passion for the Congo and work with street children. In simple terms, Kimbilio is a project supported by the Congo Children Trust. Kimbilio supports street children in Lubumbashi, Katanga in the Democratic Republic of Congo. They have been working alongside the Anglican Church of Congo since 2007.

The decision was taken to end our link with Orphans Know More after 5 years of regular support; a new partnership with an international charity will be sought.

Giving 2023 (paid quarterly)

Charity	Annual Total
Azalea	£3000
Children’s Society	£3000
CCT & Kimbilio	£3500

Additional Support for Charities:

During 2023 we provided support and additional fund-raising activities for our Charity Partners and several other charities. The Wheathampstead Churches Together Christian Aid Week appeal raised £1,486-50. The Children’s Society received a total of £462-52 from the donation box collection. Our congregation donated £1,090-17 to the Trussell Trust in response to our Harvest Appeal with donations of food going to local food banks. The summer-holiday project “The Community Larder” attracted financial donations of £2,172 and the Christmas Lunch on Jesus project received donations in excess of £1,200. Significant donations have continued to be received into our Community Fund with which it is possible to assist local people in difficulties. The figures in this report remind us of the remarkable continuing generosity of our congregation in funding charitable work.

Safeguarding

The PCC is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and vulnerable adults who attend church or church activities. We have in place – and regularly review – a policy for Safeguarding which is the Church of England Statement “Promoting a Safer Church”. Our Safeguarding Procedures are contained in the Church of England’s “Parish Safeguarding Handbook”. The PCC receives regular reports on Safeguarding which is on the agenda for every meeting. All relevant volunteers are DBS-checked and issued with appropriate guidance for their role; safer recruitment standards are followed. We are committed to

having role descriptions and training for all our volunteers. All activities and events have risk assessments. The PCC has complied with the duty under section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 (duty to have due regard to House of Bishops' guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults).

Risk & Statutory Policies

As required by law, the PCC has considered the major risks within its responsibility and the systems designed to minimise those risks; this has included annual Health and Safety Inspections with recommendations reported to the PCC. We have undertaken risk assessments for all areas of activity. We have an appropriate fire risk assessment. We hold a register to log any accidents. We take out adequate insurance cover against fire, theft, employers' and public liability and other insurable risks. Clear procedures are in place for the authorisation of expenditure and secure receipt and recording of income.

The PCC has in place statutory policies in the following areas:

- Safeguarding of Children and Vulnerable Adults;
- Domestic Abuse;
- Data Protection;
- Equality and Inclusion;
- Health and Safety;
- GDPR/Privacy.

Where appropriate, these are in line with Diocesan guidance and all are reviewed regularly by the PCC for any changes in activities and developments in statutory requirements or recommended practice.

Goods, Fabric and Ornaments

The annual inventory of Church goods, fabric and ornaments was completed during the year and all essential items found to be present and correctly accounted for (and the absence of a few minor items duly noted). The Fabric Committee has taken further the programme of redecoration and repairs at St. Helen's and St. Peter's which has included work on the buildings, churchyard and car parks.

The PCC records thanks to the Fabric Committee for many other alterations and improvements. At St. Helen's these include new porch timer, new mixer unit in toilet, hot water dispenser in kitchen, altar rail repairs, new bookcase, collection box fitted with hasp and staple, flue and radiators repaired and cleaned, tower camera installed, organ cipher problem rectified, new fridge, flower arrangers' cupboard fitted with struts, fibre broadband service installed following network upgrade, proof of concept implementation of a "virtual guide" using QR codes. Faculty consent was received for conservation work on the Garrard Memorial and Garden of Remembrance extension. The Quinquennial Inspection roof works were completed involving tower, coping stones and capstone with a substantial donation generously provided by The Friends; gutters cleaned and a slate refixed. Two low-mow areas were marked out and overhanging trees removed. At St. Peter's smart electricity and gas meters were installed, new roller blind installed. In addition two well-attended "Big Help Out" occasions were organised and special work parties undertook various tasks at both churches both inside and outside.

Environmental Activities

At St. Helen's and St. Peter's we believe that human beings are called to be faithful stewards and to enjoy a relationship with and a responsibility for God's creation. We seek to serve the earth, not enslave it.

Caring for our environment plays an increasingly important part in the life of the Parish, as we acknowledge the stress that human activities have caused for the world around us. The Parish earned the A Rocha Eco Church Bronze Award in 2022 and is working towards the Silver Award.

The Parish's Environmental Group encouraged the establishment of two low-mow areas in the St. Helen's churchyard in 2023, complementing a similar area in St. Peter's churchyard introduced in 2022. The Group has prepared notices to display in the churchyard during 2024 encouraging passers-by to reflect on aspects of the environment.

The Group organised a visit by 30 children from St. Helen's School in July 2023 to enjoy a range of nature-based activities around the St. Helen's churchyard. It has also established a continuing connection with the Parish Council's Wilder Wheathampstead group.

During 2023 the parish collected 9 boxes of home printer ink cartridges for recycling, raising £230 for church funds. The Fabric Committee is considering how it can lighten the Parish's environmental footprint, subject to the constraints of a heritage-listed building and a limited budget. It created some wildlife-friendly woodpiles using tree trimmings from around St. Helen's.

The Parish marked the Season of Creation in the autumn of 2023 with a series of sermons on our relationship with the environment. We have been supporting the Church of England initiative (to strive for Carbon Zero by 2030) by reducing our energy footprint (controlling the thermostat carefully), removing inefficient electrical appliances such as the old fridge and being careful not to leave screens on standby.

Buildings Working Group

We continue to make steady progress with seeking practical deliverable ways we can address our needs to render the St. Helen's building a truly vibrant hub at the heart of our community with buildings fit for God's mission in 21st century Wheathampstead. Following the issue of the Feasibility Study by our architect, Acanthus Clews Architects, in early 2023, we conducted a site visit with the DAC in March 2023. We received comments from the various invited parties as follows:-

- Church Buildings Council – April 2023
- DAC - May 2023
- Historic England – May 2023
- Victorian Society – August 2023

A presentation was made to the PCC in August, where Option 2 (with amendments) was approved as the basis for moving forward. A further meeting was required with the DAC, the Victorian Society and The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings to encourage their comments on our proposals and this was held in November 2023, resulting in the receipt of comments from parties as follows:-

- DAC – December 2023
- The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings – January 2024
- Victorian Society – January 2024
- DAC – January 2024

Throughout this process, we are looking to find a balance between the sometimes conflicting views between the statutory third parties; consideration of the overall guidance of the DAC; the practicalities of maintaining an operational church during the works; phasing the project works; the availability of funding; and the best approach to fund raising.

We are currently in discussions with the DAC regarding their last guidance, to seek improved certainty around delivering "Option 2 (with amendments)", before proceeding with the next stage of design, Scheme Design. It is intended that this design stage will deliver a Faculty for the scheme and a planning consent for the necessary works at the North and West Doors. In March the PCC approved the budget for the Scheme Design and agreed the means of funding it from existing reserves.

During Scheme Design there will be further consultation with the congregation and wider village community as details of the design are prepared and presented.

A fund raising team and team leader are being arranged in parallel with the above.

Keith Andrews

Children and Families

We now have a good number of children regularly attending the 10:00 am service where a small team of volunteers read a Bible story during the sermon. The monthly all-age service continues to develop with children being involved in laying the Communion table, reading and sometimes prayers. The fortnightly Kids Worship service has a regular attendance of about 10 families who enjoy craft, a story and informal songs and worship.

Termly Messy Church services are now running in both primary schools again and over 100 people enjoyed our Messy Christingle and the most recent Messy Church in February. The team supporting this continues to grow and a number of our youth group are now involved.

Over the past year a team of three volunteers have continued to support the Children and Families Minister, and occasionally the Rector, in leading a weekly "Open the Book" worship at St. Helen's School. The children enjoy a Bible story, a short reflection and prayer and singing a worship song, often with actions. Between them the Rector and Children and Families Minister lead about four assemblies a term at Beech Hyde School. The Children and Families Minister also reads a Bible story weekly to the Reception class at St. Helen's and leads an after-school club there.

The weekly toddler group, The Ark, provides play and friendship for around 25 children and their carers.

Linda Thomas

Youth Group

Since pausing the youth group "Impact" in December 2019, the main focus of St. Helen's youth work has been the annual Donuts Club, which serves Year 7's when they go up to secondary school. This year we welcomed an average of 30 excited 11 year olds, over 6 sessions, reconnecting friends who now go to different schools; supplying space, hot chocolate and, naturally, mountains of donuts!

But there was a desire to do more ... So, following Richard's participation in Launchpad (a Diocesan initiative for Parishes wanting to start/restart youth work) in April 2023, we invited a small group of 11-13 year olds to meet at The Rectory. To our delight, not only did some familiar faces come along, but we also welcomed less well-known (but equally valued) young people from Donut Club and historical family links.

This small start has blossomed and we recently welcomed a healthy (and energetic) contingent from Year 6 to help them settle in the group before they make the significant step up into Year 7 this autumn. This has required a venue change, so we now meet in St. Helen's Church on the 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month, with the usual mix of high-octane games, quality snacks and the opportunity to talk about life through the lens of Christian faith. The aim is to give the young people a space to belong, where they feel safe to talk about the "deep stuff" but with a real emphasis on us grown-ups hearing their ideas and concerns, rather than the more traditional model of us "teaching" at every opportunity.

We also regularly connect with other youth groups at bigger events such as Fuel and it's been truly wonderful to take our young people along to the new Illuminate events in the region, such as the Cathedral Take-Over in January, where 280 young people joined together for an evening of fun and worship.

Claire Banham

St. Helen's Fellowship

St. Helen's Fellowship continues to meet each Thursday, in school term time, in the Mead Hall from 2:45 – 4:15 pm. Subs are £2 per session as from January 2024.

We now have 24 members on our register having sadly lost 4 valued and long-standing members in the past year. Also, as some others have become more frail they have either gone into residential care, become housebound or are only able to come occasionally. We make sure that we keep in touch with them.

Our termly programmes are varied but always include Holy Communion on the first Thursday of the month with valued leadership and support from our ministers.

Sessions have included excellent speakers on topics such as “Pets for Therapy” and “Greyhound Compassion” (on both occasions we had lovely dogs come along); “Made in St. Albans”, “Sons of St. Albans” and “Daughters of St. Albans” given by a St. Albans Tour Guide; “John of Wheathampstead” given by a Cathedral Guide; “A Walk around Pembrokeshire” and “What is a Reader?” by Pippa Legg.

We have had hilarious, musical, seated exercises, good singing sessions, a Beetle Drive, socials and board games, a Coronation Celebration, “Save a space for puds!”, a Summer party and an Advent celebration in church. We also had a session on getting to know each other better, sharing life experiences and interests, seeing who had what in common.

We share our ups and downs, sadnesses and joys. They are lovely sessions and we are both grateful to everyone who supports us in any way – making tea, offering transport (with special thanks to Gill Gwinn who organises the latter).

Jill Bareham and Louise Edwards

Deanery Synod Report

The Rector and three elected representatives serve on the Deanery Synod. The Deanery Ascension Day service was held at St. Nicholas Harpenden and the October Deanery Choral Evensong at St. Leonard’s Flamstead. There was also a Deanery Retreat Morning arranged in March at St. Mary’s Kinsbourne Green. In addition the Deanery Synod arranged three meetings with guest speakers to focus on a particular topic. The aim is for meetings to take place in different parishes of the Deanery and offer the chance to learn more about other churches and congregations.

The February meeting involved a presentation by the Diocesan Vocations Team – and we heard a challenge to consider all the various roles to which we may be called which make the mission of the church possible. These include but are not restricted to ordained and licensed ministry; many individuals may discover a vocation which brings them fulfilment as they serve others.

In July the Synod was addressed by Kate Ford who holds the newly created post of Diocesan Giving Adviser. She was keen to help us address the challenge of financial support for our churches – especially in the aftermath of Covid-19. In September Synod heard from Tom Abraham, the Diocesan Net Zero Carbon Officer. In his role he advises parishes on their decarbonisation journey. The maintenance, repair and heating of our buildings are important immediate practical concerns for us and should also be viewed in the bigger context of environmental responsibility.

The above report was approved by the Wheathampstead Parochial Church Council on the 13th March 2024.



Canon Richard Banham
Chairman

WHEATHAMPSTEAD PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

2023 Accounts

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES - For the year ended 31 December 2023

	Note	Unrestricted Funds £	Designated Funds £	Restricted & Endowment Funds £	TOTAL 2023 £	FUNDS 2022 £
INCOME & ENDOWMENTS						
Incoming resources from donors						
Planned Giving via Parish Giving Scheme		106,912	-	-	106,912	105,071
Other Planned giving		12,905	-	-	12,905	14,671
Tax recoverable on planned giving		27,894	-	-	27,894	27,800
Collections: St Helen's		7,283	-	-	7,283	6,420
Collections: St Peter's		1,021	-	-	1,021	649
Tax recoverable on Small Donations Scheme		2,098	-	-	2,098	2,057
Collections for Specific Purposes		-	-	1,366	1,366	4,616
Collections for the Community Fund		-	-	4,754	4,754	3,186
Legacies, donations etc	2	15,210	20,119	1,958	37,287	16,871
		173,323	20,119	8,078	201,520	181,341
Income from investment						
Interest and Dividends		2,841	7,495	775	11,111	3,212
Income from charitable trading/fees						
Coffee in the Chancel		4,713	-	-	4,713	4,021
Fees for weddings and funerals		21,000	-	-	21,000	14,911
		25,713			25,713	18,932
Other incoming resources						
Coffee after services		536	-	-	536	554
Rental income		1,412	-	-	1,412	1,587
VAT recovered on building works		1,970	-	-	1,970	1,053
Grants		500	-	-	500	2,758
Flowers		-	-	1,220	1,220	663
Bells		-	-	240	240	120
Other income		230	-	-	230	133
		4,648		1,460	6,108	6,868
TOTAL INCOME		206,525	27,614	10,313	244,452	210,353
EXPENDITURE						
Giving	3	12,090	-	4,010	16,100	27,387
Church Management & Administration	4	34,098	-	-	34,098	35,079
For the work of the Church	5	146,068	26,240	3,188	175,496	162,611
		192,256	26,240	7,198	225,694	225,077
NET INCOME/EXPENDITURE		14,269	1,374	3,115	18,758	(14,724)
Transfers between funds		(10,000)	10,000	-	-	-
NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS		4,269	11,374	3,115	18,758	(14,724)
TOTAL FUNDS BROUGHT FORWARD	9	68,572	194,023	20,782	283,377	298,101
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD	9	72,841	205,397	23,897	302,135	283,377

WHEATHAMPSTEAD PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

2023 Accounts

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS - Year ended 31 December 2023

1 ACCOUNTING POLICIES

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 view" provisions, together with FRS102 (2016) as the applicable accounting standards and the 2016 version of the Statement of Recommended Practice, Accounting and Reporting by Charities (SORP(FRS102)).

The historical cost convention is adopted except for investments, which are shown at market value at the balance sheet date.

The statements are prepared on the accruals basis.

Funds

Unrestricted funds are those available for the general purposes of the PCC. The purpose of restricted funds is noted in the statements. Interest, other income and tax recoverable related to amounts allocated to particular funds is credited to those funds.

The statements include transactions for which the PCC is responsible but not those of informal groups of members or of separately constituted bodies from which the PCC may benefit.

Income and use of resources

Collections, donations and similar income are recognised on receipt.

Income tax recoverable on donations is recognised when the income is recognised.

Income from fund raising events, coffee in the chancel etc, is shown in full and the related expenses are included within resources used.

Grants and legacies are recognised in the period when they become due.

Expenditure is accounted for when incurred.

Assets

In so far as consecrated and benefice property of any kind is excluded from the statutory definition of "charity" by Section 10(2) (a) and (c) of the Charities Act 2011, such assets are not capitalised in the financial statements.

Depreciation is provided on equipment used by the PCC over the useful life of the asset. Items of equipment costing less than £1,000 are written off when the expenditure is incurred.

Short term deposits include cash held in a Church of England Central Board of Finance account and at the bank.

2 LEGACIES, DONATIONS, NAVE BOXES, ETC.

	Unrestricted Funds £	Designated Funds £	Restricted & Endowment Funds £	TOTAL 2023 £	FUNDS 2022 £
Nave boxes etc.	5,680	-	-	5,680	4,385
Legacies	-	14,000	-	14,000	-
Friends of St Helen's	7,169	-	-	7,169	-
Flower Fund	-	-	400	400	480
Tea Time Church Fund	-	-	-	-	80
Fellowship Fund	-	-	464	464	459
Music Fund	-	-	-	-	1,202
Fabric Fund	-	650	-	650	125
Development Fund	-	2,800	-	2,800	-
Energy Fund	-	1,690	-	1,690	5,280
Concert	860	-	-	860	-
Outdoor Events	-	-	-	-	560
The Ark	434	-	-	434	437
Miscellaneous income	-	-	151	151	-
Income tax recoverable on donations	1,067	979	943	2,989	3,863
	15,210	20,119	1,958	37,287	16,871

Related Party Disclosures

Donations, including planned giving, from Trustees and their related parties amounted to £24,985 during the year 2023 (2022: £21,774)

WHEATHAMPSTEAD PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

2023 Accounts

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS - Year ended 31 December 2023

3 GIVING

	From Parish income		Special collections, Community Fund	
	2023 £	2022 £	2023 £	2022 £
Charity Partners				
Congo Children Trust	3,500	3,500	-	313
Orphans Know More	-	4,500	-	-
The Children's Society	3,000	3,000	109	161
Azalea	3,000	3,000	-	-
	<u>9,500</u>	<u>14,000</u>	<u>109</u>	<u>474</u>
Other charities				
St Helen's School	2,550	2,550	-	-
Harvest Appeal	-	-	-	2,158
The Trusell Trust (Harvest 2023)	-	-	1,090	-
Beds & Herts Historic Churches Trust	40	40	-	-
Christian Aid	-	-	100	446
Ukraine Support	-	-	-	2,241
Wheathampstead Churches Together	-	-	-	21
A Rocha UK	-	125	-	-
Payments from Community Fund	-	-	2,439	5,182
Payments from Funeral Collections	-	-	272	150
	<u>2,590</u>	<u>2,715</u>	<u>3,901</u>	<u>10,198</u>
TOTAL	<u>12,090</u>	<u>16,715</u>	<u>4,010</u>	<u>10,672</u>

Note: Giving to St Helen's School is by standing order which is continuing into 2024

4 CHURCH MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

	Unrestricted Funds £	Designated Funds £	Restricted & Endowment Funds £	TOTAL 2023 £	FUNDS 2022 £
Stationery, post, telephone, print	3,093	-	-	3,093	2,951
Staff salaries	27,759	-	-	27,759	28,729
Pension contribution	790	-	-	790	718
Payroll administration costs	494	-	-	494	516
Miscellaneous	-	-	-	-	216
Office Equipment depreciation	998	-	-	998	998
Bank charges and card fees	424	-	-	424	548
Database Fees	540	-	-	540	403
	<u>34,098</u>	-	-	<u>34,098</u>	<u>35,079</u>

Note

During the year the PCC employed an average monthly number of 3 staff (2022: 3 staff) : a parish administrator, an organist, and a Children's and Families' Minister, all on a part time basis.

The total costs of salaries and pensions are as shown above and no national insurance costs were incurred.

No employees received more than £60,000.

WHEATHAMPSTEAD PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

2023 Accounts

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS - Year ended 31 December 2023

5 RESOURCES USED FOR THE WORK OF THE CHURCH

	Unrestricted Funds £	Designated Funds £	Restricted & Endowment Funds £	TOTAL 2023 £	FUNDS 2022 £
Parish share to Diocese	100,359	-	-	100,359	99,625
Fees paid to Diocese	4,664	-	-	4,664	3,405
Wedding Disbursements	1,500	-	-	1,500	500
Funeral Disbursements	2,600	-	-	2,600	1,180
Plaques and other memorials	443	-	-	443	507
Ministry expenses	1,127	-	-	1,127	188
Electricity & Water (St Helens)	4,403	-	-	4,403	3,989
Electricity & Water (St Peters)	609	-	-	609	873
Gas (St Helen's)	1,175	8,264	-	9,439	5,928
Maintenance (St Helens)	13,729	-	-	13,729	6,157
Maintenance (St Peters)	163	-	-	163	1,497
Insurance (St Helens)	3,865	-	-	3,865	3,658
Insurance (St Peters)	669	-	-	669	642
Growing in Loving Service	167	-	150	317	264
Growing in Numbers	93	-	-	93	103
Growing in Faith	563	-	-	563	27
Children, Youth & Schools	2,802	-	498	3,300	2,070
Services	2,118	-	-	2,118	2,119
Choir and music	830	-	-	830	4,630
Casual organists for regular Church services	1,175	-	-	1,175	1,265
Hospitality	1,633	-	-	1,633	1,221
Training	264	-	-	264	15
Coffee in the Chancel expenses	575	-	-	575	703
Charitable Trading expenses	-	-	-	-	144
Stewardship costs	85	-	-	85	85
Hall Hire	369	-	369	738	756
Flowers	88	-	1,960	2,048	1,993
Bells	-	-	211	211	104
Audio Visual System depreciation	-	12,876	-	12,876	12,876
Major fabric and Projects Expenditure					
Roof Alarm	-	-	-	-	1,047
Church Development	-	5,100	-	5,100	5,040
	146,068	26,240	3,188	175,496	162,611

Notes

During the year, two members of the ministerial team who are also members of the PCC were paid £12,152 in remuneration and for working expenses (2022: £10,732)

No other payments or expenses were paid to any other PCC member, persons closely connected to them or related parties.

WHEATHAMPSTEAD PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

2023 Accounts

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS - Year ended 31 December 2023

6 FIXED ASSETS

Tangible assets

			Office printer	AV equipment	Total
			£	£	£
Cost	At 1st January 2023		4,991	64,380	69,371
	Additions at cost		-	-	-
	At 31st December 2023		4,991	64,380	69,371
Depreciation	At 1st January 2023		2,745	49,973	52,718
	Charge for the year		998	12,876	13,874
	At 31st December 2023		3,743	62,849	66,592
Net book value	At 1st January 2023		2,246	14,407	16,653
	At 31st December 2023		1,248	1,531	2,779

Investments at market value

	2023	2022
	£	£
Central Board of Finance Investment Fund	1,762	1,611

7 AMOUNTS RECEIVABLE

	2023	2022
	£	£
Income tax recoverable	2,822	3,318
VAT recoverable on building works	163	632
Other amounts receivable	419	1,842
TOTAL	3,404	5,792

8 AMOUNTS PAYABLE

	2023	2022
	£	£
Accrued expenses	4,494	7,048

WHEATHAMPSTEAD PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL						
2023 Accounts						
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS - Year ended 31 December 2023						
9 FUNDS						
	1 Jan 2023 £	Incoming Resources £	Resources Used £	Transfers of Funds £	31 Dec 2023 £	
Endowment Funds	1,611	151		-	1,762	
Restricted Funds						
Community Fund	1,756	5,608	(2,439)	-	4,925	
Flower fund	323	1,636	(1,959)	-	-	
Tea Time Church	489	9	(498)	-	-	
Bell Fund	1,443	295	(211)	-	1,527	
Music Fund	9,226	352	-	-	9,578	
Choral Scholar Fund	1,869	72	-	-	1,941	
Charity Partnership Fund	3,761	144	-	-	3,905	
St Helen's Fellowship Fund	304	474	(519)	-	259	
Specific collections	-	1,571	(1,571)	-	-	
	19,171	10,161	(7,197)	-	22,135	
Total Restricted Funds	20,782	10,312	(7,197)	-	23,897	
Designated Funds						
Fabric Fund	14,058	1,005	(12,876)	-	2,187	
Income Reserve	50,653	1,937	-	-	52,590	
Capital Reserve	75,990	2,907	-	-	78,897	
Development Fund	6,787	17,805	(5,100)	-	19,492	
Roof Fund	40,491	1,740	-	10,000	52,231	
Energy Fund	6,044	2,220	(8,264)	-	-	
	194,023	27,614	(26,240)	10,000	205,397	
Unrestricted Funds						
General Fund	68,572	206,525	(192,256)	(10,000)	72,841	
TOTAL FUNDS	283,377	244,451	(225,693)	-	302,135	
Notes						
Endowment Funds						
These are the Fenwick and Bracey bequests, the investment of which is mainly in the CBF Investment Fund shown in the Balance Sheet. Income from the Fenwick bequest is for the church and churchyard upkeep. These funds, and their annual movement in value, are included with the restricted funds.						
Community Fund						
This fund is from collections at weddings and baptisms, and some donations, which are set aside to provide assistance to those in need mainly in the parish of Wheathampstead.						
Bell Fund						
For the renovation, repairs and maintenance of the bells, including handbells, and related structures, fixtures and fittings, plus the support and development of the bell ringers.						
Music Fund						
Money set aside by PCC and other donations for music and choir purposes within the church.						
Charity Partnership Fund						
Donations set aside by the PCC for work on the Kimbilio Project and and future projects with our Charity						
Fabric Fund						
This fund is for major work to the Fabric of St Helen's church.						
Income Reserve and Designated Capital Reserve						
As the Diocese recommends, the PCC maintains designated funds as a reserve against sudden total loss of income and unforeseen capital expenditure. Reserves were set at an initial level of £60,000 each in 2005 with interest to be accrued to the funds as a protection against inflation. In 2020 the PCC reviewed the Reserves Policy and decided to reduce the Income Reserve by a transfer of £25,000 to the General Fund						
Development Fund						
Donations set aside by the PCC for improvements to the interior of St Helen's. Two unrestricted legacies were added to the fund in 2023.						
Roof Fund						
Transfer of funds for future repairs on the roof of St Helen's						
The cash related to the restricted funds is held in the PCC bank accounts.						

**Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of
Wheathampstead Parochial Church Council**

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of Wheathampstead Parochial Church Council (the Charity) for the year ended 31 December 2023 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities, the Balance Sheet and related notes.

This report is made solely to the charity's trustees, as a body, in accordance with section 145 of the Charities Act 2011. My work has been undertaken so that I might state to the charity's trustees those matters I am required to state to them in this report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, I do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charity and the charity's trustees as a body, for my work, for this report, or for the opinions I have formed.

Responsibilities and basis of report

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

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

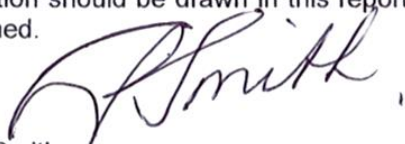
An independent examination does not involve gathering all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently does not cover all the matters that an auditor considers in giving their opinion on the financial statements. The planning and conduct of an audit goes beyond the limited assurance that an independent examination can provide. Consequently I express no opinion as to whether the financial statements present a 'true and fair' view and my report is limited to those specific matters set out in the independent examiner's statement.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the Charity as required by Section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a true and fair view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

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



G P Smith
14 Stanhope Road
St. Albans
Herts AL1 5BL

13th March 2024

Trustees of Wheathampstead Church School Trustees Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2023

The Rector and Churchwardens are trustees of a fund, the beneficiary of which is St Helen's School, Wheathampstead, and manage a fund invested with the Church of England Central Board of Finance (CBF) through CCLA. The income from the investment is used to contribute towards the Governors' liability for the external repairs to the School.

During this year, the total income was £246. According to the mid-market prices as per the statements provided by CCLA Investment Management Ltd at 31st December 2023, the total value of the two funds at that date was £9,339. Together with cash held in the bank of £2,581 the total assets of the Trust stand at £11,920.

Rev'd Richard Banham, Mr David Hartley and Mrs Hilary Hollick
Trustees 25 March 2024

Fund Account for the year ended 31 December

	2023 £	2022 £
Dividends received:-		
Fixed Interest Securities Fund	36	46
Income Investment Fund	210	208
	246	254
Changes in market value of investments:-		
Fixed Interest Securities Fund	88	(245)
Income Investment Fund	659	(935)
	747	(1,180)
Net movement in fund during the year	993	(926)

Statement of Assets and Liabilities as at 31 December

	2023 £	2022 £
Investments at cost 1999	5,862	5,862
Investments at valuations:-		
Fixed Interest Securities Fund	1,672	1,584
Income Investment Fund	7,667	7,008
	9,339	8,592
Cash at Bank	2,581	2,335
Fund assets at 31 December 2022	11,920	10,927

Independent Examiner's Report

I confirm that the above financial statements accord with the bank and investment records of the Trust.

Peter Slater BA(Hons) ACA 25 March 2024 , Harpenden