

Celebrating 2023



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Wareham's Church of England Family Annual Report 2023

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Welcome...

Dear Friends,

This is now my tenth and final letter for the annual parish reports, Celebrating Wareham. As well as reflecting back on 2023, it is hard not to reflect on the past decade, looking for common threads also picking out matters that have had a major impact on the parish.

Last Easter we had the devastating theft of our silver, which not only affected Lady St Mary but also St Nicholas, Arne, and St Martin on the Wall (who stored their silver in the safe). Enough has been written about this and so I will not write more but I am pleased to say that the replacement vessels are nearing completion as I write. However, in the Lord's economy, there are always blessings to come out of adversity and in this case the insurance settlement meant that we were able to settle the payments from the fabric fund for repairs and new drainage work for Lady St Mary church. On top of this, and thanks to a couple of very generous anonymous donations, we were able to pay our Fairer Share in full and end the year with a surplus.

Truly, God moves in mysterious ways, often in ways often beyond our imagining. And this has been a common thread throughout the past decade, we have often reached Autumn wondering how we are going to balance the books and then suddenly money appears, and we end the year with all debts paid. It has been truly remarkable, and a wonderful reminder of how gracious and generous God is.

One of my former Treasurers, in a previous parish, used to say, 'God pays for what he orders.' And I believe we can all bear testament to this. But, of course, what underlies this is the need to discern what it truly is that God requires of us at this time and, indeed, at all times.

Over the past ten years the Ministry Team has always done its very best to ensure that we are faithful in carrying out God's wishes and I hope that the reports in this booklet bear witness to this. It is very encouraging to read of different groups from every corner of the parish doing amazing things, showing that God's Kingdom continues to break into this particular corner of his vineyard. There is always more that can be done but this will be down to you, Neil and Deborah and my successor prayerfully seeking the way forward. As we reflect on the past year let also look forward with expectation, as I truly believe there are exciting times ahead for this parish.

Yours sincerely in Christ,

Simon

Churchwardens Report

Hilary and Mike have continued in their roles as churchwardens with responsibility for four of the churches in our Benefice. St John the Evangelist Church, East Holme has its own churchwardens who are Jon Moulton and Leslie Selby.

Reports on individual churches are given in different areas of this report and there is a separate report on the fabric. We are very grateful for the assistance given by our local wardens, Becky Green at St Martin on the Walls, and Barbara Wells at Sandford St Martin and to Ginny Collings who chairs the church committee for St Nicholas Church Arne. We are also thankful for the support of those who serve on the different church committees. Thanks too, to all those who volunteer in different roles including welcomers, Bob Day and Nick Burden on PA, flower arrangers, and Church Guides, Choir and Bell Ringers and those on coffee and other rotas. We are always in need of more volunteers and please contact one of us if you are able to help.

'Guardians and Guides' ceased in March as several of the volunteers felt unable to continue but we are pleased that a new group called 'Church Guides' emerged. This means that there are still volunteers available at some of the times when the churches are open to welcome and assist visitors. It is very pleasing that we can keep Lady St Mary and St Martin on the Walls, Wareham and St Nicholas Church, Arne open every day for visitors.

Sadly, we suffered a major burglary at Lady St Mary in April when 25 items of silver communion plate were stolen from the safe. This included pieces from the 16th and 17th centuries and items from St Martin on the Walls and St Nicholas Church, Arne which were stored at Lady St Mary. An insurance claim has been paid and the PCC decided to commission only eight new items of silver. A Faculty application was submitted to the Diocese in December.

2023 was also a year when we said goodbye to three of our clergy. Our two curates, the Rev Dr Helen Williams and the Rev Solveig Sonet left in the early part of the year. Helen went to Motcombe as Team Vicar in the Shaftesbury Benefice and Solveig went to Guernsey to be Vicar of St John's Church, St Peter Port and Chaplain of Guernsey Prison. Our Team Vicar, the Rev Stuart Cocksedge, left Sandford in August with Rachel and their four children and Stuart was licensed as Priest in Charge of St Luke's Parkstone in September. We are very grateful for to all of them their ministry and contributions to parish life in Wareham.

We are very pleased with the selection of the Rev Deborah Swann and the Rev Neil Kelly to job share as our new Team Vicars and we look forward to their licensing by the Bishop of Salisbury in February 2024.

The reduction from four to one paid clergy has put considerable strain on the Rector and our two unpaid clergy, the Rev Michael Young, and the Rev Hilary Bond, in maintaining our pattern of services and we are grateful to them and to our retired clergy who have stepped in to take services.

We must also give thanks to our faithful and dedicated Parish Administrator, Debs Barclay, who gives us much needed support in our roles as churchwardens and to all of us in our parish.

Hilary Goodinge and Mike Quinlan

Our worshipping communities

St Nicholas, Arne



Ginny Collings

I am a little church far from the frantic world with its rapture and anguish, at peace with nature (Cummings).

Arne church is currently nestled in nature, surrounded by primroses, daffodils, bluebells, and blossom. It's a delight to see and visit and many tourists acknowledge the unique setting and atmosphere of this tiny Saxon church that has been used for 800 years to pray, reflect and be still and sense God's presence.

Our average attendance is 14 but we regularly have visitors and holiday makers at our morning service. We have a few new people attending on a regular basis and occasionally have members of LSM visiting us which has been encouraging. We are enjoying using our new communion silver kindly donated by Nick and Jane Greenwood. Another local family donated a teak bench in memory of their mother. The work required by the Quinquennial is due to be carried out this summer and the inventory is now complete. Last summer we were able to have a successful stall at the East Holme Fete in aid of church funds and made a contribution to the Food Bank from our Harvest Festival service in the Autumn. Our Christmas service was full, and the Easter service well attended. Our visitors book continues to acknowledge appreciation of the church being open and accessible to provide peace and tranquillity for many in these stressful days.

Lady St Mary, Wareham

Hilary Goodinge

The Committee has met regularly throughout the year. Clive Cherrett stepped down after many years of service and we thank him wholeheartedly for his outstanding contribution. Simon Lathwell was welcomed onto the committee as he is now the official Verger, performing his duties very cheerfully and efficiently. Tony Tew also joined the committee and is a very welcome addition.



Early in the year it was decided we return to collecting offerings by collection bags as the practice had been suspended due to Covid. This has proved to be the right decision as our parishioners and visitors have been more conscious of the opportunity to give. We encourage people to use the parish giving scheme which provides a regular income and makes recovery of Gift Aid much simpler. Graham Baynes has been a wonderful help in counting the collection over the years and we are very grateful for the dedication this entails. The task has now been reassigned to the responsibility of the Churchwardens.

Since the shock burglary happening in April, we have improved various aspects of our security. The Church continues to be open from around 9am each day with Church Guides present at different times of the day. The church is closed after Prayers for Peace. Marion Cotton looks after the Sunday afternoon visitors for which we are indebted.

In order to raise funds a clothes party was held on behalf of Lady St. Mary Church as it was requested that each church in the benefice should also take part in initiating fund-raising events. Big fund-raising events in Lady St. Mary now pivot on the concerts we have witnessed, and we were treated to a particularly enjoyable singing performance by a young aspirational singer Gregory Steward who donated a portion of his ticket money.

Mission and Worship - Worship

In the Autumn it was decided that the Church was in need of a good decluttering! The committee were very supportive, and many offers for help came from our members. In October, with the help of Charles Donnelly and the Rector, a great deal was transported to the tip but also there were opportunities to recycle and donate to charity. The Treasury was taken in hand by Pat Cherrett and Simon Lathwell and is now a more useful space.

At the end of the year Eddie Taylor stepped aside as Assistant Verger and Maureen Lever came on board to be officially instated in early 2024. As we look forward to 2024, we are heartened by the positive responses to our services and as the Angel Voices grow, we notice more families getting involved in the life of the church. There is always a need for volunteers to help with flowers, welcoming, reading and coffee making and so we appeal for younger members to come forward to plug the gaps as older folk step down.

Meanwhile I extend my thanks to all who serve on the committee and make such a positive and constructive contribution to deciding matters of concern. Nick Burden does a fantastic job keeping our coffee rota in order and I thank Pat Cherrett for taking the minutes in a year when she has not been so well. The meeting times will be varied next year to accommodate different needs.

Hilary Goodinge. Churchwarden and Chair of the Lady St Mary Committee.

Sandford St Martin's Church

Canon Simon Everett

Sandford St Martin church continues its Sunday services with Breakfast Church at 9am and Morning Worship / Holy Communion at 10.30am. A special service was held to say farewell to Stuart and Rachel and their family and following their departure in August the services continued with the Breakfast Team taking the reins and members of the ministry team assisting and taking the later service.



The congregations have seen some changes with some people moving on to pastures new and other new people joining. The monthly gathering, Going Deeper, continues to attract some of the breakfast service congregation, who want to explore the Bible and go deeper in prayer and worship.

There was a very well attended outdoor service on Remembrance Sunday at the Sandford War Memorial, conducted by the Reverend Brigid Barrett, which was appreciated by many in the local community. There was also a lively carol service, which should have been outside but, due to inclement weather was held in the hall. This involved the children acting out the Christmas story. This was followed by festive refreshments!

Various other activities have taken place at Sandford during 2023, including the friendly Open House meetings for older people each month, and Sandford Seedlings Toddler Group on Tuesday afternoons, which is valued by the families who attend. Also, the Friday Night Youth Group continued to meet when there were sufficient leaders. It continues to attract around 40 young people on Friday evenings during term time.

We are very grateful to all those who give their time to help in the life of the church, including those helping with prayers and readings, music, and worship, welcoming and hospitality, setting up and down, and in many other ways.

Mission and Worship - Worship

St John the Evangelist, East Holme

Jonathan Moulton



This report begins with our Easter Service on the 9th of April 2023, we had 21 in the congregation, and we had our usual easter eggs to give out to everyone who attended.

On the 7th of May we had a lovely afternoon in the village of East Holme celebrating the coronation of King Charles, it was well attended, and the weather was perfect. Everyone came together to put on an amazing spread of sandwiches, cake, and tea. We had planned to play games with the children, but they decided to spend it playing in the river. On the 11th of June we held a coffee morning after church we also served

bacon butties and we had a plant and book stall this was well attended and despite a light rain shower everyone sat and chatted which was lovely to see.

The 9th of July we had another coffee morning after our service and on this occasion, we had a teddy tombola, plant, and book stall plus some produces for sale again it was attended our thanks go to everyone who help set up and ran both events.

On the 23rd of July we had our annual Hymns and Pimms, led by Rev Cannon Simon and we would like to thank him for a lovely service all about the Wesley brothers. There were 41 in the congregation including the choir and we held it in the church yard as it was a lovely evening. My thanks to Nigel Webb for supplying the Pimms, and to the choir for their continued support.

The 28th of August saw the church decked out in The Best of British for the Flower Festival, again the church looked beautiful and it's all thanks to the volunteers who help create the displays. The day itself was busy and we had several stalls, a raffle, refreshments which were sold out by 3.00pm, a lovely display of tractors and mowers in front of the house, attracted much interest, music was performed by Sophia and friends, and the duck races went down a storm. My thanks go out to everyone who help set up and tidy away and we gave a £20.00 donation to Wareham Scouts for lending us several gazebos which were much needed due to the hot weather, as a thank you to Harriet, Tabitha, Thomas, and Imogen we gave them a £5.00 book token for making scarecrows to help advertise the event, although one did cause a lot of talk to what it actually was meant to be.

The 18th of September we held our church meeting discussing the years events, upcoming services and at last we were able to discuss the Quinquennial. No major works but most of the small tasks have been completed by Leslie Selby, and Jonathan Moulton.

24th of September was the Harvest Festival service we decorated the church with flowers and produces that were donated to the Wareham food bank, we had 13 in the congregation, and it has to be said it was the least amount of people we have had on record attend this service but despite this we took 6 bags of donations to Wareham, so my thanks go to all those who donated generously.

On the 2nd of December we had a wedding taken by Rev Cannon Simon it was a small family affair, but the church looked lovely and was decorated by Jonathan Moulton and Joy Allan, although it was cold the rain held off and it was a lovely service. 24th of December the Carol service took place and we were almost back to pre-pandemic numbers of 80 in the church so as you can imagine it was a bit of a squeeze, Michael Young took the service, and we had our usual 7 hymns and 7 readings plus children bringing the characters from the story of Christ's birth up to the alter. Due to previous experience, we used glow sticks instead of candles for our Christingles, which the children love making and eating. After the service we had Turkey rolls, sausage rolls, mince pies, biscuits and mulled wine which all went down a storm. As usual our collection and presents under the tree went to Julia's house who were extremely grateful for our continued support of such a vital service. Christmas day saw 18 in the congregation and many thanks to Hugh Maddox for taking a lovely service.

Mission and Worship - Worship

Our annual general meeting will be held on the 27th of March, and as usual our thanks go to Nigel and Graham Selby for the upkeep of the churchyard and carpark, to Nigel Webb for playing the organ, and to all the vicars for coming out to take our services and a special thanks go to all those who read lessons. during the service.

St Martin-on-the-Walls, Wareham

2023 has been another busy year at our old little church. We have had lots of visitors coming to visit all year round and a well-attended Wednesday Holy Communion service. We had also an event to commemorate Lawrence of Arabia, in May which featured talks and music which was well attended. The Rainbows came in to learn about the church. We had 1 funeral for the late Mike King who regularly came to our church and the women's section of the Royal British Legion, held a lovely Carol service. This year we also elected Peter Jennings on to The PCC to represent our church. I have an amazing team that help me every week and it is a joy to help run this lovely church.

Becky Green



Parish Prayers

Our hour of prayer on Tuesdays at 7.30 pm has continued weekly either meeting in person in different homes or on Zoom. During the year numbers fluctuated between 6 and 12. Different members shared in leading with a passage of Scripture leading into an open time of worship, thanksgiving, and intercession. In the third week of each month we have been meeting on Wednesdays at 7.30 pm in Sandford School Worship Centre, rather than on the Tuesday.

Garry Guinness

In this way we have been able to uphold the life and witness of our Parish and of our mission partners as well as to bring before our heavenly Father the needs of our nation and wider world.

See weekly notice sheet for details.

Prayers for Peace

Since Russia invaded Ukraine on 24th February 2022 daily prayers have been said in Lady St Mary church, at 5pm. Originally, they were specifically for the situation in Ukraine but after six months it was decided to broaden the scope to pray for all areas of war, conflict, and strife. Numbers have varied between one and eighteen, but it is known that many stop and pray in their homes at this time and so each day a wave of prayer arises from Wareham for the peace of the world. All are welcome.

Canon Simon Everett

Bell Ringers

Jenny Elmes



We ring regularly for Sunday services, sometimes with only enough ringers to ring six bells, but we aim to ring all ten bells. Wedding-ringing has become less frequent. However, our practices have been well-attended, with visitors from Swanage, Wimborne and Sturminster Marshall, whose help is much appreciated. We particularly welcome John and Wendy Boniface to our band who have adopted us as 'their' tower, although they live outside our parish; John is (comparatively) young and a very accomplished ringer who is gradually taking responsibility for teaching and encouraging our learners, particularly the younger ones. Those we taught to 'Ring for

the King' have largely drifted away except for the Wade family, who we are delighted to continue to welcome as a family (Julia, Bea and Bridget and more recently Giles); this has significantly lowered the average age of our local band!

Finally, if you would like to know more - you may like to see the bells or even learn to ring, then please do get in touch (wonderful physical and mental exercise!). It is amazing how few of our church members have any idea of what goes on up in their tower; it is a world of its own with a heritage, tradition, and skill unique to England! Jenny Elmes (elmesjenny@hotmail.com)

Choir (Lady St Mary)

William Day



The choir has met its regular commitment to lead the music at the 10.00 am Sung Eucharist on the 2nd and 4th Sundays during 2023 and the 1st Sunday Family Communion, where we have been able to support the joyful singing of the Angel Voices children.

A small band continues loyally to play with the organ on the second Sunday of each month, joining in the accompaniment of the hymns and mass setting and voluntaries at the end of the service. On the 3rd Sunday choir members support the praise band players and singers for the Praise Communion Service.

At the end of January, we sang CW Evening Prayer for Candlemas Sunday. In July we were invited to East Holme where the congregation again held an outdoor 'Hymns & Pimms' service. The choir led the singing and greatly enjoyed the refreshments afterwards. During the service Simon selected music and readings related to the life and faith of John Wesley.

The Advent Service of Light and the Christmas Carol Service in the latter part of the year are both popular and attract large congregations. Choir rehearsals through the autumn are more intense with the preparation of a repertoire that is larger than is usual through the rest of the year.

I would like to thank all the choir members for their dedication; turning up for practice every Friday evening and for services on Sundays, and to Maurice who takes the lion's share of the organ playing. Also, to the Ministry Team and Church Wardens for their support and encouragement for the work we do.

After a few years of being an ordained pioneer, it seems to get harder to distinguish what is pioneering and what is not, so I am simply going to tell you about some of the things I have done during 2023.

Most if not all of my pioneer ministry seems to be focused on people, or the natural world. During 2023 I spent a fair amount of time in Not Just Sundaes community café, occasionally putting a pinny on and making coffee, but more often simply listening to people who needed to talk. Sometimes that listening leads to pointing people towards someone else who could give them more practical help than I could, sometimes it involves helping to fill in forms, searching for particular things on the Internet, setting up useful meetings, but often, simply sitting with a cup of tea and listening. Despite the fact I rarely wear a clergy collar when I am in the café, it is amazing how often the conversation turns to talk of God and all things spiritual – walking along side people in the café, even if only for a few minutes in passing, is a real gift.

Another people centered bit of ministry that seems to be growing is working with the Gypsy and Traveller community. I am still very much learning about a culture that is different from my own, but like with the café I'm doing a lot of listening to people from within the community, (often by the side of a fire call in and immaculately clean caravan,) and standing up for the rights of people who experience what is sometimes called "the last acceptable form of racism." This bit of my ministry has included helping to run some training for local social workers, visiting local traveller sites around Dorset, helping to organise the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller day in Borough Gardens in Dorchester, (Saturday, June 15 this year if anybody would like to come), and being involved in Roma Holocaust Memorial Day on the 2nd of August.

Moving out into the great outdoors, the fire pit gathering still continues – a once a month outdoor gathering which gives space to connect with God through the natural world, to spend some time in collective silence, to ask questions, and to share experiences for those who want to. (And obviously to drink tea and eat cake!) I also regularly get to visit other people's churches to talk to them about care of creation as an integral part of Christian faith. It is a privilege to be able to share with them something of my story as a lifelong nature lover, and more recent climate activist.

I am hoping that as we move through 2024, ministry in the natural world might be something that expands.

Men's Breakfast

A number of enjoyable men's breakfasts were held at Not Just Sundaes Community Cafe on Saturday mornings during 2023. These breakfasts were enjoyable and well attended by men from several different churches, as well as their friends who were invited along. NJS regularly provided a tasty, cooked breakfast which was enjoyed by all. Some breakfasts included a stimulating talk from a guest speaker. It is hoped that these breakfasts will continue to be an important means of gathering men together, for fellowship, good food, and opportunities explore and discuss our faith. Thank you to Charles Donnelly and Mark Lapper for their work in organising these breakfasts, and to the NJS staff and volunteers for the excellent service they provide!



Home Groups

Garry Guinness

Home Groups seek to enable members from our different congregations to meet regularly to support and encourage one another in our Christian life and to encourage us to reach out in effective witness and caring in our community and beyond. Over 60 members have met in 7 different groups. We have used various Bible Study resources, including Bible Society video courses, some groups meet weekly, others fortnightly, some in daytime, others in an evening.

Friendship and meals, Bible Study and Prayer are key elements of our times together. We have used a variety of Bible Study resources which has proved a great reminder that, as the Apostle Paul wrote, *"all Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that we might be thoroughly equipped for every good work"* 2 Timothy 3:16

We praise God for the encouragements we have received and look forward to Home Groups playing an increasingly valued part in the life of our Churches across the Parish.

New members are always welcome! Please contact the Parish Office or Garry Guinness for details.

Flower Arrangers

Pat Cherrett



Once again, I would like to thank our small group of Flower Arrangers who have undertaken to make sure that we always have flowers in the Sanctuary every Sunday. This year we have been able to welcome some new ladies to the team, but more would be very welcome. The volunteers have again opted to cover a two-week period and also help to do extra duties for our major Festivals. I would also like to thank those who have provided foliage when we have asked especially for the Advent ring. If you are interested in joining us, no experience needed, please contact me.

Mission

Judith Holmes

In 2023 we continued to support our four mission partners through prayer and financial giving. These are: Malcolm and Yanet Taylor and family working with YWAM in San Pedro in the Dominican Republic, Ruth Guinness serving with SIM in Malawi, Terekeka Diocese and St Stephen's School in South Sudan and the Mission to Seafarers.

The Bible Society was our guest mission for 2023 and we held Mission Sunday on Sunday May 28th in Lady St Mary Church. On 29th October we had a guest speaker from the Bible Society, Gareth Davies. He based his talk on Nehemiah, interweaving the varied work of the Bible Society, including resources like the Bible Course and the Romans Course, both of which have been used by different groups in the Parish. There were also short video updates from our Mission Partners. The service was aired on You Tube for those who were unable to come in person. People were encouraged to give financially to our Mission Partners, either in person or online. In addition to the four main partners and the Bible Society, we supported the work of the Blessing Fund and Not Just Sundaes Community Café in Wareham. Although the response was not great (just 18 donors from the Parish), we are grateful to God for all that was given, which totalled £7518.37, including Gift Aid. In addition, the Mission Committee agreed to give £250 to the work of the Bible Society.

A highlight of 2023 was the visit of the Taylor family during July and August. It was a joy to hear of the varied work they are doing in San Pedro with families and young people, radio, and television. They work as a family and the children are involved in several of their activities. While here there were opportunities to meet them at both Sandford and Lady St Mary services and on a Sunday afternoon in the Parish Hall. They have a vision for the building of a centre from which their work can emanate, and we continue to pray and support that this will come to fruition.

In July 2023, the Mission Committee agreed to give £200 to SW Youth Ministries towards the cost of Spree SW 2024 from the Michael Smith Fund; a group of young people from Sandford, Wareham and Lytchett.

Minster had been taken to Spree 2023. In December 2023 a total £696.99 was given at the school carol services in support of the school at Terekeka. The Mission Committee agreed to top this up to £1000 out of the Michael Smith Fund.

In August we said goodbye to Stuart Cocksedge who was both Chair and Secretary of the group. Judith Holmes agreed to become the Chair and Garry Guinness the Secretary. Other members are Simon Everett, Mike Quinlan, Eddie Taylor, and Jane Fowler. Please continue to pray for our Mission Partners.



St Stephen's School, Terekeka



Ruth Guinness



Malcolm, Yanet Taylor, and family

Sunday morning refreshments at LSM

Coffee, tea, and biscuits are served in the Parish Hall after the 10am Sunday service at LSM. The teams of volunteers, comprising of 4 people in each team, do one Sunday a month and many thanks go to these people without whom this would not be possible. 4 people allow for someone in the team to be absent but the remaining 3 are still able to cope.

Everybody is welcome after the service and anyone on their own need not worry as we are very friendly. Lots of people do come after the service for the company and chat as much as the refreshments. We use Fair Trade products as much as possible and all donations received are passed onto charity and church funds.

Over the year several people have had to drop out of the rota and as such we are actively looking for more volunteers. If anyone is interested in joining our rota do, please chat with Nick or Issy or contact Nick at nick@halevet.co.uk

Nick and Issy Burden



Care Homes

During the past year, services were held most months at Pine Martin Grange and Anglebury Court care homes, the exception being when Covid (or other lurgies) prevented us. These have been well received and they give the residents the opportunity to sing some familiar hymns, to hear Bible readings and prayers, and sometimes to share Holy Communion together. When possible, the residents take an active part, but we are also grateful to those of our regular congregation who help out, including Sue Bartholomew, Margaret Leitch, Maureen Lever, and Lesley Milsom.

Canon Simon Everett

Open House

'Open House' at Sandford St Martin's Church'. 'Open House' remains a very active group and I continue to be grateful for the support of both voluntary speakers and several helpers.

We generally meet in Church at 2 pm on the last Thursday (excluding August) of each month and during 2023 we gave a fund-raising donation of £200 to Malcolm and Yanet Taylor.

Following a talk or activity, there is time for a cup of tea, chat, and a raffle for charity.

Come and join us!

Lesley Milsom

Mission and Worship - Outreach

Sudan Link

Mike Quinlan

The parish of Wareham has been supporting Christians in Sudan for over thirty years as part of the Salisbury Diocese partnership. Since 2005 this has been focused on the Diocese of Terekeka in South Sudan and on St Stephen's School, which is a primary and secondary school run by the Diocese.

St Stephen's School provides education at Nursery, Primary and Secondary levels to around 800 children. Although the school is private and charges fees (£12 to £30 per year) about 50% of parents cannot afford to pay.

Bishop Paul Modi is the Bishop of Terekeka and the chair of governors of St Stephen's School. We remember with great joy his visit with his wife Mama Edina to Wareham in August 2022. Bishop Paul told us in February 2023 that 48 pupils had completed their exams and obtained certificates at the end of their Primary education.

We have been supporting the construction of a new classroom block with four classrooms to replace one of their mud-built classroom blocks and it has been good to receive progress photos showing that the foundations have been built. The total cost of this project is around £59,000.

2023 was a difficult year for many in South Sudan due to drought. Bishop Paul lost 15 acres of sorghum cereal. In other years crops are destroyed by flooding and South Sudan is badly affected by climate change.

Bishop Paul wrote in August to say that the school is going well. However, he goes on to say that Terekeka has been hard hit with the issue of cattle raiding and theft, which claims lives and properties due to there being so many guns in the hands of civilians.

Wareham Parish sends money each year to support teachers' salaries, to build and repairs classrooms and to provide teaching materials. We sent £3,000 in February, which included collections from school and church carol services, 50% of the money collected from Sunday coffee in the Parish Hall and other donations. Following the Mission Sunday in May we sent a further £3,520 which included £2,000 from the Michael Smith Mission Fund. We are very grateful for those who give generously to support the work in Terekeka.

South Sudan continues to suffer from communal violence, political instability, and famine due to failure of harvests and flooding. There is also a chronic shortage of medical facilities and access to clean water. About 70% of the population are illiterate.

Please continue to pray for South Sudan, for a lasting peace settlement and an end to tribal violence. Pray too for the Diocese of Terekeka, Bishop Paul Modi and St Stephen's School.



Bishop Paul and Mama Edina at Durlston Castle in August 2022



Proposed new Classroom Block



Progress on Foundations for new block

Wareham's Church Family and ecumenical activities

Canon Simon Everett

To mark the week of prayer for Christian Unity a united Wareham Church Family service was held in Lady St Mary church on 22nd January 2022 and then on Good Friday, 7th April, an ecumenical walk of witness was held in April, which was very well attended by folks from across the churches. It began at St Martin on the Walls, walking through town to the Quay, and was followed by refreshments at the Parish Hall.



The important work of the Blessing Fund and the Foodbank (which is run out of Purbeck Gateway Church) has continued to provide vital support for local people in need. The Community Fridge based at Not Just Sundaes has also provided a vital resource for those struggling to make ends meet, and ensures that food outside its Best Before date, does not go to waste.

With the diminishing number of church leaders in Wareham (and those that remain being spread ever thinner) the Wareham Church Family has ceased to meet for the time being. However, the monthly Purbeck Church Leaders lunch continues to meet and is a valuable source of support and prayer for all who attend.

Hopefully, it will not be too long before the Wareham Church Family is resurrected, and the value of different churches and congregations will be seen and enjoyed again.

Environment Report

Nick Burden

With Helen leaving Hilary Bond has stepped in as the contact with the clergy. This year we have conducted surveys for flora and fauna at the three churchyards namely The Priory Church of Lady St Mary, St Nicholas Arne, and St John the Evangelist East Holme. These surveys are conducted by a group of interested people both from the congregation and wider. The results as before are recorded and put on a national data base, iRecord through "Caring for God's Acre." This year was the first year in which a small area of the churchyard at Lady St Mary's was left unmown until later in the season. The area was not as yet full of flowers but did reveal a much greater diversity of insect life compared with the mown areas. This experiment will continue and if promising possibly increased to other areas. This year the Lady St Mary Churchyard, administered by the Wareham Burials Joint Committee, was awarded a Gold in the South and Southeast Britain in Bloom competition. The results of the surveys have been displayed to the public in association with Sustainable Wareham and a display in Lady St Mary's Church.

A huge thank you goes to everyone involved in the surveys without whom this would not be possible.

Saturday Morning Coffee

Carol Turner

Saturday morning coffee 9am to 12 noon each Saturday of the month.

Another very popular fund-raising event for our church and Wareham. A time for families and friends to get together and socialise (and you can do your vegetable shopping at the same time). We open at 9am and cater for all with teas, coffee, filter coffee, hot chocolate, squash etc., together with a selection of delicious home-made cakes and biscuits. We try to keep our costs competitive, which encourages all to attend. We welcome families with children and young and old alike. (Disabled access).

If you or anyone you know would like to volunteer to help at one or more of these events, please do not hesitate to contact me for further details, we always need volunteers in the kitchen (washing up or using the dishwasher) together with cashier duties, and serving of the cakes and general clearing of tables etc., (free teas and coffee throughout your time)!! There is a signing up board at the back of the Parish Hall or please contact me direct on: 01929 556761 or 07744 937488 for further details.



Mission and Worship - Outreach

Ladies that Lunch and Pray

Linda Everett

Ladies that Lunch and Pray' continued to meet once a month during 2023. The group continues to draw in women from across the whole parish and numbers can be up to 18. We have welcomed some new faces this year which is always good to see. The meetings vary with some having guests leading a time of reflection, and others are in-house, but fellowship and prayer remain paramount. We are presently looking for someone to take this wonderful group over as Simon and I will be leaving the parish in June '24.

Ladies Walking Group

Linda Everett

The ladies walking group continues to meet and although it is not large it provides support and fellowship for its members. Also, it is an opportunity to get out in the beautiful surrounding countryside and enjoy the natural world around and helping us meet one of the requirements of Eco Church. The group meets once a month.

Meals for those in need

Linda Everett

There continues to be a great response from parishioners to provide meals for those in various kinds of needs. There was a good supply in the freezer throughout the past year, stored in the Church Hall freezer. Thank you to everyone who has contributed, this has been a great support to the recipients. If you know of anyone who could benefit from this, please contact Linda Everett or Debs in the Parish Office. We hope that someone will take this on when I leave.

Handbell Ringers

Angela Salter

We continue to meet in the Scout and Guide HQ and have regularly met each week since September. We rang carols one Saturday morning in December standing outside the parish hall which people at the market could listen to and join in with. We rang at the Christmas Tree festival in Swanage, and we also rang on the stage for the Father Christmas parade and at the start of the Purbeck Village Quire concert in January. We also rang carols at Anglebury Care Home. We have occasionally played recessionals with Maurice on the organ in church. Anyone who would like to join us on a Wednesday afternoon would be very welcome. Jenny and I are very pleased that the junior team have been able to ring for the first Sunday of each month in LSM. We now have a really good group of young people and parents who practice for an hour before the service and have progressed amazingly over the last year.

Friday Lunch Club

Carol Turner

Over the last past 20+ years I have been running the Friday Lunch Club for the elderly members of Wareham and the surrounding areas, enabling them to socialise and enjoy with others a home-cooked lunch, dessert, and coffee with their friends. This is a very popular event, and I would like to thank the Lions and the Dorset Disabled Club for all their support and help (together with monetary help at Christmas time) with the transportation on these occasions.

When we first started many years ago this was a weekly event which then went to fortnightly and now to once a month (on the fourth Friday of each month, mainly due to the costs of the hall hire and the food costs). We have a special Easter and Christmas lunch when we see some extra people attend. This social "get together" is a time for those in our community to "get together and share" all of their (general concerns with life) and just have a social chat with others of a like mind and enjoy a great lunch. I cook all of the food on the premises on the day and cater for those with special dietary needs (e.g., vegetarian, gluten-free etc.,) all meat is sourced locally from Curtis Butchers. Volunteer helpers are always welcome to this event where they receive a lunch. (Lunches are £10).

If you or someone you know would like more information, please contact Carol Turner on 01929 556761 or 07447 937448.

Wareham and Sandford Seedling Baby and Toddler Groups

Becky Green

Wareham Toddler group is going very well, and we now have a new team that work well together. The toddler group is very well attended with most weeks having 25 to 30 children and parents are getting involved also by helping with singing and with the setting up and packing away which is lovely to see but we are always open to help with the kitchen and lifting and putting away tables. Sandford toddlers is also doing well it is a smaller group with 8 to 10 children run by the parents. Both groups have a good friendly atmosphere and it is a joy to be involved.

Angel Voices

Angel Voices Team -- Mary Appleton, Anne Smith, Eve Baker, and Anne Laking



Angel Voices & children's handbells meet on the First Sunday of the month. Three Angel Voices progressed to the hand bell group during the year. The group practice at 9 am in LSM before joining Angel Voices in the Parish Hall at 9.30. Angel Voices meet in the Hall at 9.15 meet to sing. Just before 10 am we walk to LSM for the Family Communion Service where the children play an active part in the worship. (Izzy Hole, for example, now has the responsibility of handing over the elements at this and the Praise Service.) Angel Voices continues to have a core of very supportive children and parents, with the aim of growing in their faith.

Sun Jan 8th, 2023 'Epiphany' with video created and performed by the Youth Group

Sun Feb 5th 'Light in the Darkness' Rev Solveig's last Family Communion Service

Sun Mar 5th 'New Life'

Sun April 2nd 'Palm Sunday' and saying farewell to Rev Helen Williams

Sun May 7th 'Coronation Celebrations' Bell Ringers Certificates handed out.

Sun June 4th 'Trinity'

Sun July 2nd 'Arthur's Baptism/Building your Life on Jesus'- Hannah Cocksedge's last AV.

Sun Aug 6th 'The Transfiguration' with photos of WOW moments

Sun Sept 3rd 'Talking to God'

Sun Oct 1st 'Mia's Baptism/ Harvest' supporting the Food Bank

Sun Nov 5th 'Be Happy God's Way with drama.

Sun Dec 3rd 'Christingle' with collection for the Children's Society

A children's Christmas Craft Workshop was held on November 25th to make Christmas decorations for LSM. A huge thank you to Marian Cotton for all her help.

'Angel Voices' flourishes thanks to the support of the clergy, choir, audio/visual team, members of the congregation, parentsand most deservedly of all..... the children.

We thank you all for your support.

Schools Work

Hilary Bond

As a parish our involvement with the three local primary schools, Wareham Saint Mary's, Sandford Saint Martins, and Stoborough is very healthy. Between the team we lead four assemblies (now meant to be called collective worship) every week across the three schools.

A big part of what we do in schools that often goes unnoticed is that members of the clergy team, as well as other members of the congregations support the schools either as governors, or as volunteers who help with admin or listening to the children read. This is a very important link between the church and the schools, and the schools are very grateful.

The clergy team also get invited to contribute to the life of the school in other ways. Often it will be an invitation to come and do a class session – particularly when the RE curriculum presents a bit of a challenge – i.e., “year 4 are looking at the Holy Trinity next week – are you free on Thursday?” I (Hilary) love these sessions and during 2023 led class sessions on Christmas, Easter, creation, the Holy Trinity, angels, salvation, harvest, and the relevance of different colours in the church year. We had great fun with the last one as I dressed small children up in my robes to demonstrate the significance of the colours and pictures on my different stoles.

Although much of what we do happens in the school itself, one reception class also usually has an annual mock baptism and mock wedding. The mock wedding happens in LSM, parts are allocated, costumes are worn, and parents are invited. And afterwards confetti is thrown and then we all go back to school for cake.

All of the schools visit the church at various times either for storytelling sessions, simply exploring the church, or for end of term services and carol concerts. This is a great thing to do because it reminds the children that the church is theirs, and that they are always welcome in it just as much as anybody else is.

Friday Night Youth Group

Di Kimble

Friday Night Youth as its name would imply takes place most Friday evenings in term time at Sandford St. Martin's school from 6.30 to 8 pm. Pupils in school years 6 to 8 (i.e., 10- to 13-year-olds) have the opportunity to do crafts, play sports and enjoy some, mostly healthy, snacks. It regularly attracts about 30 to 40 attendees each week.

Last year a small group of the young people went to Spree Southwest in Devon, which is a Christian event for youth groups from churches around the southwest. There they experience lots of fun activities and a spiritual programme for different age groups. The weekend was thoroughly enjoyed by all and many of the children are keen to go again this year.

FNY team.

Children's craft Afternoon

Linda Everett

In the build up to Christmas a craft afternoon was organised by Linda Everett and the Angel Voices Team to encourage children to make Christmas decorations for the church. These included large candles that were then attached to the pillars of Lady St Mary church. They also made a pulpit frontal proclaiming Jesus' birth. There were a good number of helpers and plenty of children from all corners of the parish attended with their parents, and a great time was had by all. Particular thanks go to Marion Cotton who came up with many of the creative ideas and Mary Appleton who provided wonderful support.



Foundation Governors

Canon Simon Everett

The close links we have with our local church primary schools at Stoborough, Wareham St Mary, and Sandford St Martin's, are as vibrant as ever. Foundation Governors and the clergy play a valuable role in supporting the schools in many ways. The clergy go in to the schools most weeks to take Collective Worship (Assemblies) and these are well received. Also, each of the schools held a Christmas Carol Concert which was attended by pupils and parents alike. Retiring collections were taken with all proceeds going to help St Stephen's school in Terekeka.

With the changes in the ministry team, and those to come, our church schools are looking for Foundation Governors – Church people who are willing to serve and encourage the schools, and help to develop their Christian ethos, and strengthen the links between church and school. If you feel that you, or someone you know, would be interested in becoming a Foundation Governor, please contact the Parish Office on 01929 550905.



Lay Pastoral Assistants

Canon Simon Everett

The LPAs have a wide-ranging ministry within the parish, which includes visiting the sick and housebound at home and in hospital, offering support to the bereaved, supporting baptism families, leading home groups, working with children, assisting with services both in church and at local care homes. Some have further training to take communion to those unable to attend church.

All LPAs are trained for their ministry and then commissioned by the Bishop. All are DBS checked and undertake Safeguarding training. At present Mary Appleton, Eve Baker, Debs Barclay, Jean Dixon, Merville Gover, Becky Green, Elaine Orchard, and Margaret Harris serve as our LPAs, and their ministry is greatly appreciated.

Baptisms and Thanksgivings

Mary Appleton



The decision was made at the beginning of the year to offer **Baptisms** and **Thanksgiving for the Gift of a Child** services in [Breakfast@9](#) (Sandford) and the Family Communion Services (LSM) in 2023 Layla was baptised at Sandford Church and Jenson, Felix, Arthur and Mia were baptised in LSM.

Funerals

Debs Barclay

During 2023, our clergy team were still present at 54 funerals, within our parish church and at the local crematoriums or at the Cemetery Chapels.



Marriage Preparation and Weddings

Debs Barclay



In February 2023 we welcomed several couples to our annual marriage preparation day held at Sandford St Martin's Church. Several weddings then took place in our churches during 2023. It is good to get to know and support couples as they prepare to get married, and to share with them in the joy of their wedding day.

Resources and Support

Our Parish Bookstall

Jeannette Guinness

Our parish bookstall based in Lady St Mary, has continued to be a valuable resource for books, cards, and little gifts for both worshippers and visitors. Our special Advent and Lent books, which I'm able to buy in bulk, have continued to go well. I have often been able to supply course materials for our Home Groups.

My agency status with Keith Jones Christian Bookshop in Bournemouth, has enabled me to get a reduction on most sales. Once again profits have enabled us to buy Life Word booklets and offering them free for visitors and others.

Daily Bible Reading notes are much appreciated by a number of folks who order through me.

From time to time, I have taken a selection of books to Sandford services, which has been appreciated by families and older folk.

Please look at the bookstall regularly and enjoy the many reduced bargains both for yourself and to give or lend to others, enabling us to encourage one another as we grow in the knowledge and loving service of our risen Lord.

Parish Hall Report

Carol Turner

This year as always, we have endeavoured to maintain the high standards of the hall for our many groups who use the same. Since Covid the groups have returned and so the costs have increased. Monies raised by Saturday morning coffee and monies raised through the hiring of the hall has paid for necessary maintenance to the hall (boiler maintenance in particular) and with the replacement of broken items, (especially crockery etc.). During our lockdown period over Christmas my brother and I decorated parts of the hall and the doors, and this coming year will see the need for further re-decoration of the interior for the kitchen, hall, and toilets. Our hall proves to be well used by the community and as such the hall funds itself and is not a drain on the general funds of the Church. I would like to express sincere thanks to my brother Maurice Lumber for all his hard work with me and for his support to me as Hall Manager.

Parish Hall Bookings

Debs Barclay

Bookings for 2023 were continuing to grow, with groups meeting regularly. The one-off bookings have continued to come in throughout the year.

We look forward to welcoming our regular bookings and new bookings in 2024.

Parish Office

Debs Barclay

We have had a varied and busy year in the Parish Office, with lots going on. I have my two knowledgeable volunteers helping me in the office, Gay and Alison and I am so grateful for when they are volunteering in the office, their support is truly appreciated. The Parish office is open for external enquiries on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 9.00am until 1.00pm and at all other times email enquiries will be dealt with as soon as possible. It would be nice to have another volunteer to cover telephone calls and face-to-face enquiries on a Monday morning, if this is something that you may be interested in, please contact me.

Fairtrade

Judith Holmes



® Sadly after 43 years of trading, Traidcraft, a UK based Fairtrade organisation established in 1979, went into administration in January 2023. The implications of this were worldwide, for Fairtraders, like me, and producers of crafts and food products. Some Fairtraders continued buying from a variety of different suppliers while others, including me, decided to cease trading. I first began being a Fairtrader in 2003 and with helpers ran a stall in the Parish Hall every Saturday as well as processing orders from the catalogue. Our churches still continue to use Fairtrade for refreshments. I had a Christmas Card stall in November selling cards from We Are

Fairtrade Ltd and Transform Trade. The Wareham Area Fairtrade Group, of which I am a member, re started in early 2023 after a halt due to Covid and in December successfully applied for Wareham to renew its status as a Fairtrade Town. We are also on Facebook as Wareham Area Fairtrade Group, publishing posts about Fairtrade products and events about once a month. Follow us if you are on Facebook!

Fabric Report

Mike Quinlan

Mike Quinlan is Fabric Officer for our churches (except for East Holme) and is supported by a Fabric Committee with the other members being Alan Green, Tim Salter, Phil Stephens, and Simon Lathwell. This has met twice in the year.

Lady St Mary's Church

If I was to choose a single word to describe issues affecting this church in 2023, it would be 'water'! We finally had new drainage installed on the south side of the church with most of the work taking place in the first two weeks of January while the Priory Hotel was closed. We were deeply grateful to our contractors, GSJP Civil Engineering, who persevered in very difficult conditions with nearly 150mm of rain falling during those two weeks. An arboriculturist and an archaeologist needed to be in attendance and inspections were also carried out by our consulting engineers, Godsell Arnold Partnership. The total cost was around £34,000 and we were extremely grateful to Dorset Historic Churches and the Erskine Mutton Funds who gave us grants totalling £19,000. This work appears to have prevented flooding in the Edward Chapel which we believe was linked to the absence of drainage on this side of the church.



Then in February our water supply pipe on the north side of the church sprung leaks and we were threatened with being disconnected by Wessex Water. Again, GSJP came to our rescue at short notice and installed a new pipe at a cost of £4,250.

In September, J Spiller & Sons replaced a gutter junction on the south side of the church which required a new lead junction section to be made and installed at a cost of £2,727. This has hopefully resolved the issue of damp on the wall above the Anthony Trew monument and will allow us to repair this monument later in 2024 or in 2025.

The total cost of these three 'water-related' items was around £41,000 which after deduction of grants of £19,000 has completely exhausted our Fabric Fund and necessitated payments from the General Fund.



New and old lead junction sections

Resources and Support

Finally, to top off the water theme, the heating header tank in the choir vestry fell off the wall during a choir practice on 22nd December, fortunately not causing any injuries but deluging the floor with water. More on that in next year's report!

Sadly, we suffered a serious burglary in April and 25 items of silver were stolen from the locked safe. Repairs included a leaded glass window in the sanctuary, purchase of a new safe and introduction of new security measures. These were covered by insurance, and we agreed a cash settlement for the loss of the silver, though this only covers replacement values rather than the full historic value of the items lost including items from the 16th and 17th centuries and silver from both St Martin's Church, Wareham and St Nicholas Church, Arne. The PCC agreed to purchase 8 new items of silver and an application for a Faculty was made on 11th December.

A Quinquennial Inspection was carried out by our inspecting Architect, Daniel Cantrell, on 4th May 2023. He acknowledged the progress made since the last inspection in 2018 and said that the church is in a better condition than in 2018, but he goes on to say that there are still numerous repairs to be undertaken. Phil Stephens has made and installed a beautiful case to house a ceramic poppy from the 2014 display round the Tower of London and given in memory of Dougie McNeill. Phil has also made new doors for the top of the stairs to the tower and at the NE corner of the chancel, though these have yet to be installed and he and Tim Salter have repaired the door from the tower stairs out onto the north side aisle parapet gutter.

St Martin on the Walls

Progress has continued very slowly on the scheme for installation of new heating, replacement of the electrics and new stone flooring. We applied in February for Planning Consent to install an air-source heat pump against the north wall of the chancel. However, at a meeting with the Conservation Officer and the Inspector of Ancient Monuments for Dorset and Somerset in May, they raised questions about possible vaults or foundations below the floor of the church or round the perimeter and requested further information about the proposals for underfloor heating and routes of pipes and excavation of trial pits. They asked us to withdraw the planning application for the air-source heat pump, though advised that they could see no objection to installing it. The Inspector of Ancient Monuments is involved as the sanctuary area of St Martin's is designated as an Ancient Monument and we require their consent to carry out any works. A fuller design needed to be prepared with drawings showing proposed plans and sections and an application for consent to excavate trial pits was submitted on 21st December 2023.

An application was submitted to the Archdeacon for consent to carry out external repairs as recommended in the February 2022 Quinquennial Report and approval was received in November. As the repairs can only be carried out in warm weather the work was delayed until 2024.

St Nicholas Church Arne

An application was submitted to the Archdeacon for consent to carry out external repairs as recommended in the September 2019 Quinquennial Report and approval was received in September. As the repairs can only be carried out in warm weather the work was delayed until 2024.

Permission was also obtained from the Archdeacon to install a bench in memory of Joyce Kosinski, who was a resident of Arne and attended the Church. The bench was donated by her family and has been installed. The permission also covered the purchase of a picnic bench to be installed on the north side of the church and this should be purchased and installed in 2024.

Sandford St Martin's Church

There have been no significant works carried out at Sandford St Martin's Church in 2023.

Re-ordering Committee

Canon Simon Everett

With all of the repairs to Lady St Mary church in the early part of 2023 and the financial demands that this put on the parish, the Re-ordering Committee met only three times during the year. With little money in the coffers, it was decided to go ahead with looking into re-ordering the west end of the church and to do this in a staggered way as and when the money is available.

At the end of the year, it was decided to have apply for a pre-application visit from Dorset Council to see if they would look favourably on toilet facilities being built on the north side of the church, accessed through the choir vestry. This meeting is still to take place.

Report on Parish Finances for 2023

Mark Lapper (PCC Treasurer)

Review of the Year

This year our income from donations and regular giving declined by **20.3%**. This is in large part due to the loss of some generous givers and more or less stable numbers attending churches. However, the generosity of our parishioners was demonstrated by a gift day which generated twice the income received in 2022.

We are grateful to all those who volunteered during the year and made a significant contribution to our income from the parish hall, refreshments, and other activities.

The expenditure in the parish increased by **2.6%** compared to last year. This is actually a good result considering that inflation reached a level not seen for some years.

The major expenditures were on our buildings, running and admin costs, and our diocesan parish share.

Please see the tables below for a detailed breakdown of the finances. You will notice the exceptional item 'Insurance settlement £53,669'. This relates to the break-in and theft of silverware from the safe in Lady St. Mary church. We will need to spend around £15,000 to replace some of the lost items. This item is the major contributor to our end of year surplus. Without this payment we would report a loss of £7,576.

We supported local charities and our mission partners, including Ruth Guinness and St Stephens school in South Sudan. The total donated was over £17,000, mainly from restricted funds.

I should thank Debs Barclay for the work she put into preparing the accounts and to David Cracknell for his valuable assistance.

Reserves Policy

We try to hold a balance in Unrestricted Funds equal to at least 4 months of our annual expenditure to smooth and cover future fluctuations. At the end of the year this cover was approximately 7 months.

Financial

The PCC makes policy decisions, deals with legal issues, and controls the finances of the Parish. It is our policy to invest funds in the CBF C Of E Global Equity Income Fund

Position of our funds at the end of 2023

	Unrestricted & designated funds (general funds)	Restricted funds	Endowment funds	Total funds
Income	246,648	45,247	0	291,895
Expenditure	200,555	80,088	0	280,643
Surplus before investment gains/losses	46,093	(34,841)	0	11,252
Carried forward	162,536	132,408	47,132	342,076

Income and expenditure analysis (unrestricted and designated funds)

Income	£	%	Expenditure	£
Gift Aided planned giving	54,590	22.1	Diocesan parish share	117,415
Donations and gifts	34,203	13.9	Church running	33,641
Tax recovered and recoverable	20,537	8.3	Administration	31,710
Collections	17,501	7.1	Parish hall running	6,545
P.C.C. fees	11,500	4.7	Clergy	6,222
Parish hall hire	8,340	3.4	Building & fabric repair	1,937
Gift day	16,020	6.5	Sundries	1,020
Offertory boxes	7,593	3.0	Miscellaneous	837
Other non-gift aided planned giving	4,378	1.8	Staging fund raising events	568
Refreshments	5,760	2.3	Schools/Youth work	410
Parish fund raising	4,670	1.9	Home & overseas mission	250
Insurance settlement	53,669	21.8	TOTAL EXPENDITURE	200,555
Other	4,955	3.2		
TOTAL INCOME	246,648	100.0		

Looking forward

The pressure on our finances will continue. We have proposed a 2024 budget which shows a deficit of £47,215. Utility costs will increase, our historic buildings will require expensive maintenance work. The Quinquennial reviews identified many items where work is required, and although not all of it is urgent, we will be expected to address the remedial work in a timely manner. We are actively seeking grants to ease the burden on our parishioners and have faith that the Lord will provide.

No-one will be surprised that 2024 is going to be another difficult year for church finances. There is little scope for savings, and our ancient buildings continue to make great demands on our maintenance budgets. Our congregations are not growing significantly and asking more from our members when domestic finances are stretched is difficult. We need to be innovative and come up with new ways of raising funds to keep our churches functioning. On a positive note, the card reader in LSM is bringing in new donations from those who carry little or no cash with them. We hope to develop this, as well as using QR codes on pew sheets and elsewhere. These permit anyone with a Smartphone to make a quick and easy payment from their account. We go forward in faith: He will provide.

Finance Committee

Canon Simon Everett

The Finance Committee met only twice during 2023. The main task of the committee was monitoring our income and expenditure against our annual budget.

The greatest part of our giving (by a considerable margin) is to the diocese for the Fairer Share (which pays for our clergy's stipends and pensions, clergy housing, training etc.). This is calculated with a formula that was devised about twenty years ago and takes into account the number of worshippers in the parish, the ability to pay and the number of clergy. Many consider this outdated and so the Finance Committee took part in a diocesan review to consider if there is a better way of calculating the Share – a hybrid formula has been devised which will decide the 2025. At present we do not know the implications of this for the parish of Wareham.

The installation of a contactless giving machine in Lady St Mary church got off to a slow start but with a change of location, this is now being used more and is generating an increasing income.

We were very grateful for the grants received from Dorset Historic Churches Trust and the Erskine Mouton Trust to help towards the renewal of the church drainage system in January 2023.

Although it was shocking and most upsetting to have our communion silver stolen last April the money received from the insurance company, Ecclesiastical Insurance did help stabilise our parish finances, which up to that point had looked rather precarious. The PCC and Finance Committee agreed that some of the money should be used to replace some of the stolen items with the remainder going to the general fund to help offset the budget deficit.

Information about the PCC

Objective and Activities

The Parish of Wareham's PCC has the responsibility of co-operating with the incumbent, the Reverend Canon Simon Everett, in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish the whole mission of the church, pastoral, evangelistic, social, and ecumenical. It also has the maintenance responsibilities for the Parish Hall, Wareham.

PCC Statement of Purpose

"We are a group of Trustees who, together with the Clergy, oversee the life of Wareham Parish to ensure that we are focused on what Jesus Christ is calling us to do. In all that we do, we aim to seek God's will, work well with one another, reflect our values, and take positive action for the future."

PCC Mission statement

We are here to show God's love and to make Jesus known by reaching out to our local community in the power of the Spirit, prayerfully meeting the needs of the parish, and enjoying fellowship, feeding on God's word.

This mission statement is not just for the PCC but for all parishioners, for we are a parish that encourages all members to live out their faith in the community, workplace, and family home. Being a Christian means being Christ-like and we know that Jesus came, *'not to be served but to serve'* and so it is our responsibility to serve those around us as a demonstration of Christ's love.

The parish church has always belonged to the people residing within its boundaries (and on the electoral roll) rather than the Church members (the members simply make most use of it!). However, it is the responsibility of the PCC to ensure that the church is well run, financially viable, in right relationship with the Bishop of

Salisbury and the wider Church of England through Deanery and Diocesan Synod. At the same time making sure that all legal and Charity Commission regulations are complied with, and Canon Law. Especial attention is paid to ensuring that we provide a safe environment for all those who worship, visit, or attend our churches and to this end the PCC have adopted and implemented the House of Bishops' Safeguarding Policy 'Promoting a Safer Church' (Mrs. Debs Barclay being our Parish Safeguarding Officer).

Here in the parish of Wareham we have responsibility for five church buildings, four of which are of historic significance. These were built to give glory to God and to be the spiritual home of the communities in which they are set. The PCC tries to ensure that they still witness to God's glory by the worship that takes place within but, also by being open for prayer. We seek to maintain them as holy places. But if the past year has taught us anything it is chiefly that, whilst our church buildings are glorious and inspiring, the Church in reality is the body of Christ, the people of God, who can worship and witness online, over the telephone or wherever God chooses.

We also recognise that the Church exists for all people and the worship that we provide within our five churches seeks to meet the needs of all traditions and all ages. We believe that the strength of the Church of England is its breadth and depth, providing a welcome for all.

In short, we seek to fulfil our vision by:

- Reaching out to our local community in the power of the Spirit.
- Prayerfully serving those in need.
- Enjoying fellowship together.
- Growing as disciples of Christ as we feed on God's word.

Information about the PCC

Structure, governance, and management

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

During the year, the following served as members of the PCC.

Incumbent: The Reverend Canon Simon Everett

Team Vicar: The Reverend Stuart Cocksedge (*Until August 2023*)

Assistant Curates: The Reverend Dr Helen Williams (*Until April 2023*) and The Reverend Solveig Sonet (*Until May 2023*)

Pioneer Priest: The Reverend Hilary Bond.

Church Wardens: Hilary Goodinge and Mike Quinlan
East Holme - Jon Moulton Leslie Selby

Members: Sue Bartholomew *Until 2024*
Virginia Collings *Until 2024*
Simon Lathwell *Until 2026*
Peter Jennings *Until 2026*
Nick Burden *Until 2024*
Barbara Wells *Until 2024*
Tony Tew *Until 2026*
Priscilla Spurling *Until 2026*

Treasurer: Mark Lapper

Deanery Synod Representatives: *Until 2026*
Margaret Harris
Jon Moulton
Paul Harrison
Rebecca Green
Hilary Goodinge

Electoral Roll Secretary: Deborah Barclay

PCC Secretary: Deborah Barclay

Committees and subgroups

As with previous years, the PCC elected a number of sub committees to act on their behalf. These groups are as follows:

Standing Committee:

2 Clergy (The Reverend Canon Simon Everett (Chair) and the Reverend Stuart Cocksedge *Until August 2023*)

2 Churchwardens (Hilary Goodinge) (Michael Quinlan)

PCC Treasurer (Mark Lapper)

PCC Secretary (Debs Barclay)

Fabric Committee:

Fabric Officer (Mike Quinlan)

Phil Stephens

Alan Green

Tim Slater

Health & Safety Officer (Mike Quinlan)

Simon Lathwell

Team Rector Canon Simon Everett

Finance Committee:

Team Rector (Canon Simon Everett) (Chair)

Team Vicar (Stuart Cocksedge *Until August 2023*)

PCC Treasurer (Mark Lapper)

Arne Representative (Nick Greenwood)

East Holme Representative (Jon Moulton)

Sandford Representative (Barbara Wells)

Lady St Mary Representative (Hilary Goodinge)

St Martin-on-the-Wall Representative (Rebecca Green)

Parish Hall Sub Committee:

Parish Hall Manager (Carol Turner)

Booking Secretary (Debs Barclay)

Caretaker (Zoe Gover)

Hilary Goodinge (Churchwarden)

Maurice Lumber

Rebecca Green

Team Rector Canon Simon Everett

Mission Committee:

Team Vicar (Stuart Cocksedge) (Chair) *Until August 2023*

Team Rector (Canon Simon Everett)

Mike Quinlan, Judith Holmes, Garry

Guinness, Eddie Taylor, Jane Fowler

*New Hall and LSM Re-ordering
Committee:*

Team Rector (Canon Simon Everett) (Chair)
Team Vicar (Stuart Cocksedge *until
August 2023*)
Alan Green (Secretary)
Hilary Goodinge
Mike Quinlan
Phil Stephens
Sue Bartholomew

Environment and Eco church:
Assistant Curate (Helen Williams
until April 2023)
Hilary Bond
Nick Burden

Children and Youth Committee:
Team Vicar (Stuart Cocksedge)
Hilary Bond
Becky Green
Helen Williams *until April 2023*
Simon Lathwell

FROG (Fundraising committee)
Pat Cherrett (Chair)
Gay Young
Liz Day
Paul Harrison
Carol Turner
Hilary Goodinge

Children's and Young People's Worker
The Reverend Hilary Bond

Parish Safeguarding Officer
Deborah Barclay
Assistant Safeguarding Officer
Team Rector (Simon Everett)

Congregational Committees:

Arne *The Reverend Michael
Young*
Judy Leach (PCC
Representative)
Nick Greenwood (Local
Treasurer)

Heather Duncan
Jane Ambrose (Secretary)

East Holme William Bond (Treasurer)
Gillian Christopher
Venn Goldsack
Jon Moulton (Chair)
Leslie Selby
Canon Simon Everett

Lady St Mary Hilary Goodinge (Chair)
Pat Cherrett (Secretary)
Phil Stephens
Simon Lathwell
Liz Day
Jean Dixon
Carol Turner
Paul Harrison
Sue Bartholomew
Canon Simon Everett

Sandford Team Vicar (Stuart Cocksedge
until August 2023)
Canon Simon Everett
Maureen Lever
Lesley Milsom (Secretary)
Erica Payne
Joyce Austin
Diane Kimble
Barbara Wells
David Kimble
Adrian Hale
Betty Bingham
Joyce Austin
Steve Wells

SMoW Hilary Goodinge
Davina Thomas
Becky Green (Chair)
Hazel Walters (Secretary)
Canon Simon Everett

Information about the PCC

Minutes of the Meeting held in 2023

Wednesday 3rd May 2023
in the Parish Hall at 7pm Annual Vestry Meeting followed by the
Annual Parochial Church Meeting

ANNUAL VESTRY MEETING

1. **Opening Prayers:** Canon Simon Everett
2. **Apologies:** Les Selby, Sue Bartholomew, Paul Harrison, Hazel Walters, Nancy Baynes, Priscilla Spurling, Becky Green, Debbie Davis, John Davis, Lesley Milsom, Eve Baker, Caroline Snell
Apologies from the floor: Graham Baynes, Rachel Cocksedge, Linda Everett, Maurice Turner, Erica Payne

There were 36 attendees as attached list.

3. **Minutes of the meeting held on 27th April 2022:**
All agreed who were present at the last APCM that these minutes were a true account of this meeting.
Proposed by Mike Quinlan and Seconded by Michael Wardle – All Agreed

5. **Election of Churchwarden Results:**

Nominations received from:

Jonathon Moulton and Leslie Selby for the Parish of St John the Evangelist, East Holme, Wareham.

Due to the 6-year maximum term and under exceptional circumstances. All agreed. that there would be of a suspension of the Churchwardens Measure 2001

Jonathan Moulton

Proposer: Nigel Webb

Leslie Selby

Proposer: William Bond

Seconded: Jennifer O'Brien

Seconded: Nigel Webb

Nominations received from:

Hilary Goodinge and Mike Quinlan for the Parish of Wareham.

Hilary Goodinge

Proposer: Michael Quinlan

Michael Quinlan

Proposer: Hilary Goodinge

Seconded: Deborah Barclay

Seconded: Nicholas Burden

All were duly elected as Churchwardens, unopposed and a unanimous decision.

Canon Simon Everett thanked all the Churchwardens for all they do for the Parish and our churches, and they have been a great support to Simon and the Ministry Team.

Information about the PCC

Annual Parochial Church Meeting

1. Minutes of last year's APCM – Wednesday 3rd May 2023

All agreed who were present at the last APCM that these minutes were a true account of this meeting and were duly signed by the Chair, the Reverend Canon Simon Everett.

Proposed by: Mike Quinlan and Seconded by Michael Wardle

2. Treasurer's Report and adoption of the Accounts for 2022

Report on Parish Finances for 2022

Mark Lapper (PCC Treasurer)

Review of the Year

This year parish finances returned to a more 'normal' situation as we began to put the privations of Covid-19 behind us. Overall, our income from all sources increased by **8.3%**. There was a strong bounce back in income from collections and donations, vestry & church hire, PCC fees, parish hall hire & refreshments, offertory boxes and gift day. On the minus side, planned giving, our major income source, declined by 5.6%, a worrying trend. We also lost income from Covid grants. Although big events such as Creech Grange parish day did not take place, there was a sell-out concert in LSM given by the Maltese tenor, Joseph Calleja. This was greatly enjoyed by all. Inevitably, our costs rose significantly during the year, and although our diocesan share was capped at 5.0% our overall costs rose by **33%** (all funds). Significant spending was required on repairing LSM and the parish hall. We would have reported a small loss on our unrestricted funds but for investment income which moved us into a positive position.

We supported local charities and our mission partners, including Ruth Guinness and St Stephens school in South Sudan. The total donated was over £20,000, mainly from restricted funds.

I should like to thank all who gave generously throughout the year, and also those who give their time to running events in the parish hall, such as the popular Saturday morning refreshments. I should also thank Debs Barclay for the work she put into preparing the accounts and to David Cracknell for his valuable assistance.

Reserves Policy

We try to hold a balance in Unrestricted Funds equal to at least 4 months of our annual expenditure to smooth and cover future fluctuations. At the end of the year this cover was approximately 6 months.

Financial

The PCC makes policy decisions, deals with legal issues and controls the finances of the Parish.

It is our policy to invest funds in the CBF C Of E Global Equity Income Fund

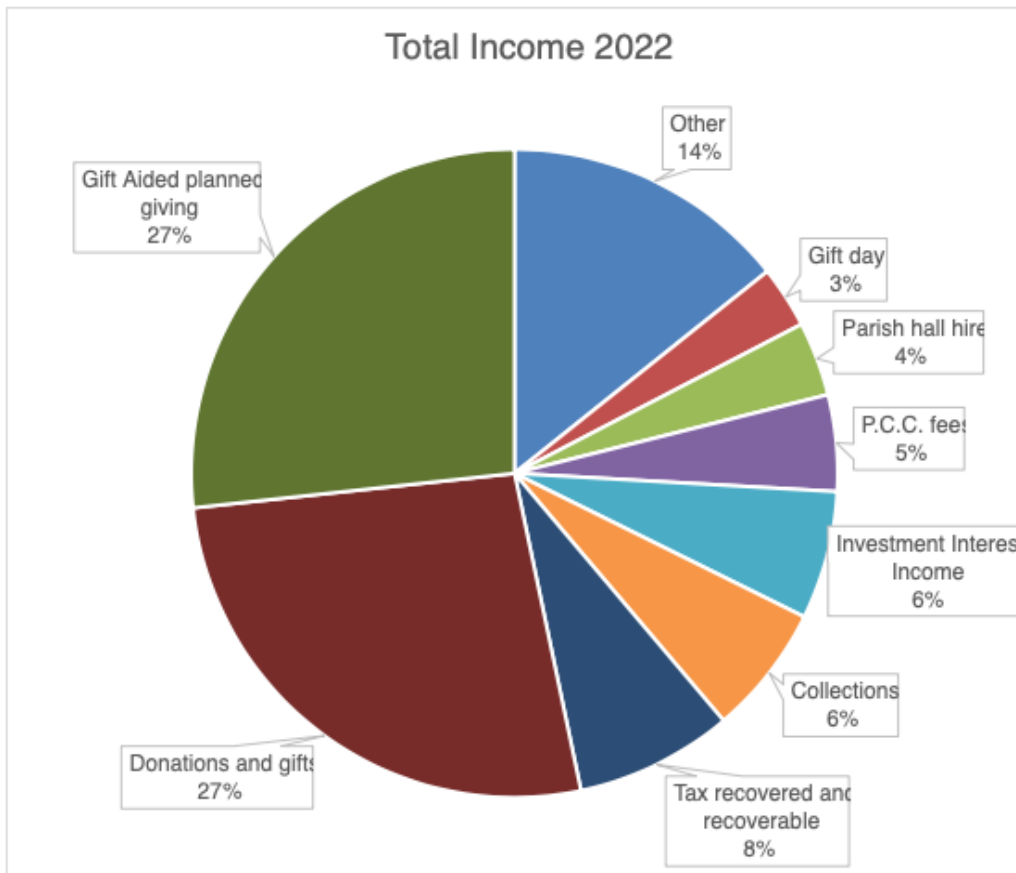
Position of our funds at the end of 2022

	Unrestricted & designated funds (general funds)	Restricted funds	Endowment funds	Total funds
Income	200,144	62,086	0	262,230
Expenditure	192,722	80,782	0	273,504
Surplus before investment gains/losses	7,422	(18,696)	0	(11,274)
Carried forward	124,087	149,640	43,046	316,774

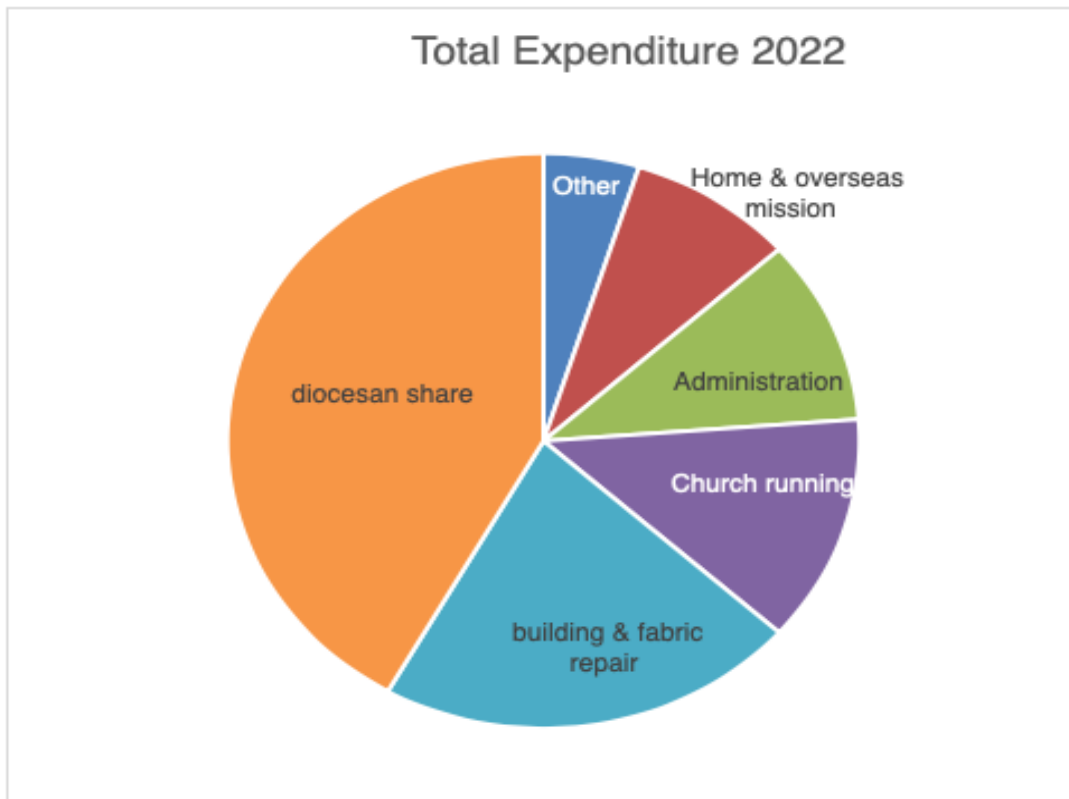
Information about the PCC

Income and expenditure analysis (all funds)

TOTAL INCOME 2022	Amount	Percentage	TOTAL EXPENDITURE 2022	Amount	Percentage
Gift aided planned giving	69833	26.6%	Diocesan parish share	113995	41.8%
Donations & gifts	69674	26.6%	Building & fabric repair	59078	21.6%
Tax recovered	20629	7.8%	Church running	34973	12.8%
Collections	17026	6.5%	Administration	28377	10.4%
Investment interest income	16804	6.4%	Home & overseas mission	23203	8.5%
PCC fees	12500	4.8%	Other	13878	4.9%
Parish hall hire	9596	3.7%	TOTAL	273504	100.0%
Gift day	8058	3.1%			
Legacies	7500	2.9%			
Offertory boxes	7472	2.8%			
Home/Overseas mission	7109	2.7%			
Miscellaneous	16029	6.1%			
TOTAL	262230	100%			



Information about the PCC



Looking forward

No-one will be surprised that 2023 is going to be another difficult year for church finances. There is little scope for savings, and our ancient buildings continue to make great demands on our maintenance budgets. Our congregations are not growing significantly and asking more from our members when domestic finances are stretched is difficult. We need to be innovative and come up with new ways of raising funds to keep our churches functioning. On a positive note, the card reader in LSM is bringing in new donations from those who carry little or no cash with them. We hope to develop this, as well as using QR codes on pew sheets and elsewhere. These permit anyone with a Smartphone to make a quick and easy payment from their account. We go forward in faith: He will provide.

The above information was depicted in a Power Point presentation by Mark Lapper, questions were taken from the floor.

The Parish Accounts for 2022 were Adopted as below.

Proposed by: Mark Lapper and Seconded by: Maureen Lever All in favour.

Thanks were given to Mark Lapper and Debs Barclay.

- 3. Appointment of the Independent Examiner or Auditors for this year's accounts**
Fletcher and Partners Accountants were appointed as External Examiner and Auditor
Proposed by Canon Simon Everett and seconded by Mark Lapper - All in favour.
- 4. Team Vicar's Report**
Stuart read out a verse from scripture, 1 Thessalonians, chapter 5, verses 15 - 18 and then showed his Power point report and thanked everyone for their support and encouragement throughout the last year.

Information about the PCC

5. Churchwardens Report

It was good to return to near normality in 2022 after two years of Covid restrictions and great to see the numbers attending church increasing although some have not felt able to return to church in person. Hilary Goodinge and Mike Quinlan have continued in their roles as churchwardens with responsibility for four of the churches in our Benefice. St John the Evangelist Church, East Holme has its own churchwardens who are Jon Moulton and Leslie Selby.

Reports on individual churches are given in different areas of this report and there is a separate report on the fabric. We are very grateful for the assistance given by our local wardens, Becky Green at St Martin on the Walls, and Barbara Wells at Sandford St Martin's. and to Ginny Collings who chairs the church committee for St Nicholas Church Arne. We are also thankful for the support of those who serve on the different church committees. Thanks too, to all those who volunteer in different roles including welcomers, Bob Day and Nick Burden on PA, flower arrangers, Guardians and Guides, Choir and Bell Ringers and those on coffee and other rotas. We are always in need of more volunteers and please contact one of us if you are able to help.

Two particular events should be noted in 2022. Clive Cherrett retired as Verger on 25 September after 26 years in the role. We were pleased to mark this with a special service with our Archdeacon, the Venerable Antony Macrow-Wood preaching the sermon and the Bishop of Sherborne, the Right Rev Karen Gorham joining us for lunch afterwards. We are all very grateful to Clive for his faithful service over so many years and wish him the best in his retirement. It was a pleasure to commission Simon Lathwell as our new Verger and he has benefitted greatly from support and advice given by both Clive Cherrett and Eddie Taylor.

The second event was the celebration of 1,000 years of St Martin on the Walls. This was marked by the unveiling of a commemorative carved stone plaque on 01 June. This was carved by a local sculptor, Jonathan Sells. We are grateful to those who contributed to the costs. On 09 November we welcomed the new Bishop of Salisbury, the Right Rev Stephen Lake at a special service to commemorate the millennium and at a lunch afterwards in the Parish Hall.

Thanks are due to our clergy team and for their faithful service throughout the year. We were sad to say farewell to the Rev Brigid Barrett who moved away but good to welcome the Rev Solveig Sonet who joined us as a curate. We must also give thanks to our faithful and dedicated Parish Administrator, Debs Barclay, who gives us much needed support in our roles as churchwardens and to all of us in our parish.

Hilary Goodinge and Mike Quinlan

The church inventories were checked in March and 25 pieces of Silverware were stolen from Lady St Mary church in April.

Fabric Report from Mike Quinlan

Mike Quinlan is Fabric Officer for our churches (except for East Holme) and is supported by a Fabric Committee with the other members being Alan Green, Tim Salter, and Phil Stephens. This has met four times in the year.

Lady St Mary's Church

Planning Permission was granted in March for adding a zinc covering over the Becket Chapel roof, but only for five years and this was not seen as being worthwhile. The PCC agreed at their meeting on 1st June that we should postpone further work to the Becket Chapel due to the high cost (over £21,000 has been spent since 2015) and limited benefit to the life and mission of the church. A Faculty was granted, for repairs to the Anthony Trew Monument in April but with the condition that the works should not be carried out till 12 months after the damp problem and lack of drainage affecting the south wall of the nave had been resolved. This work has therefore been.

Information about the PCC

postponed until at least 2024. A Faculty application was submitted in February for laying-up of a third Royal British Legion Standard and displaying a ceramic poppy that had been donated to the church from the display at the Tower of London to commemorate 100 years from the outbreak of WW1.

Much time has been spent on trying to resolve the lack of underground drainage on the south side of the church. Planning Permission for the original scheme involving a soakaway was received in January but an Arboricultural Report, which was a condition of the Planning Consent, revealed that a soakaway could not be built due to the extent of the protection zone for the Holm Oak tree in the corner of the Priory Hotel garden. Wessex Water refused permission for us to connect into the adopted sewers in Church Green, so the only alternative was to drain directly down the lane into the river. A new scheme was drawn up and permission sought from the Environment Agency. Quotations were obtained and GSJP Civil Engineering appointed to carry out the work starting in January 2023. The total cost of the drainage works including contractor's costs, archaeological and arboricultural work and professional fees is likely to be around £34,000.

Our underground water supply pipe on the north side of the church developed a leak in January. This was repaired by J Spiller and Sons, but the plastic pipe has thin walls and may develop further leaks (this occurred again in January 2023).

Water has been leaking through the south aisle roof over the bookstall and PA desk. This was found to be due to a broken tile which was replaced by J Spiller and Sons. A schedule of certain repair works to roofs and walls, that were identified in the 2018 Quinquennial Report was priced by J Spiller & Sons but due the lack of money available in the Fabric Fund, these works have had to be postponed. Repairs involving replacement of valves on the Choir Division were carried out to the Church Organ in January.

St Martin on the Walls

A stone plaque to commemorate the millennium of the church in 2020 was fixed to the south porch and unveiled in June. Progress has continued on a scheme for installation of new heating, replacement of the electrics and new stone flooring. BJP Consulting were appointed to design the heating and electrical works in March. They prepared an initial Options Assessment Report which recommended a combination of underfloor heating supplied by an Air Source Heat Pump to provide background heating and fan convectors in trenches to increase the temperature for services and other events. This was submitted to the Diocesan Advisory Committee, who were broadly in favour, and discussed with the specialist conservation expert for the wall paintings, Tobit Curteis. We have issued instructions for the detailed design and for making a planning application for the Air Source Heat Pump to be located against the north wall of the chancel. The report on the Quinquennial inspection which was carried out in February was received in September. Some repairs are needed, and a schedule is being drawn up for pricing.

St Nicholas Church Arne

A schedule of repairs has been drawn up addressing defects observed in the September 2019 Quinquennial Inspection report. It is intended to carry out this work in 2023.

Sandford St Martin's Church

A new wooden cross has been made by Steve Wells to replace the Perspex cross that hung from the ceiling but was not particularly obvious or visible. Thanks are due to Steve for his wonderful craftsmanship in making and fixing this. Steve has also made a new stand for the keyboard, which is much appreciated. The interior of the church was re-decorated in the summer.

6. Deanery Synod Report

The Purbeck Deanery Synod met three times during the year of 2022.

7. Electoral Roll Officer's Report *Electoral Roll*

Electoral Roll

Information about the PCC

Our Electoral roll currently stands at **248** persons. We have had **1** new member added to the roll since last year (**Sandford 1**). Taking into account those who have left the church or have died this gives an overall decrease to the Parish Electoral roll of **12**.

Individual church memberships are as follows.

The Priory Church of Lady St Mary, Wareham 151
Sandford St Martin's Church 35
St John the Evangelist Church, East Holme 23
St Nicholas Church, Arne 24
St Martin On the Walls Church, Wareham 15

At this time, we take a moment to remember all those who are no longer with us in our Parish of Wareham.

Let us pray.

Heavenly Father we give thanks for the lives of those who have died, and we now miss from our church communities.

David Harris, Rosemary Everett, Lyn Dowdall, Edna Farley, Judith Nott, Joyce Bennet, Elizabeth Ann Ridout, Richard Bedwell, Jennifer Haworth, Sheila Walters

hear our prayers and thanksgivings for all whom we remember this day;
fulfil in them the purpose of your love; and bring us all, with them, to your eternal joy;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

8. Appointment of Electoral Roll Officer for 2023

Deborah Barclay to be appointed as Electoral Roll Officer

Proposed by Canon Simon Everett and seconded by Hilary Goodinge - All were in favour.

9. Team Rector's Report:

Canon Simon Everett opened his report by thanking the Ministry Team, Churchwardens and all who volunteered their time in our churches within the Parish for all that they have done over the past year and was careful not to forget anyone. He then continued to read his report as below:

The Rector's Report to the Wareham Annual Parochial Meeting 2023

As I was preparing for this meeting, reflecting back on the past year and looking ahead to the coming year, a verse from St Paul's epistle to the Philippians sprang to mind, *'I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want.'*

Over the past couple of years with the Covid virus coming in waves, bringing about lockdowns and other restrictions, we have adapted and tailored our ministry to work within the constraints and to meet the demands made of us. We have discovered new ways of doing things, discovered whole new ministries (namely the YouTube online services) and continued to proclaim the Gospel in word and deed.

Despite the hardships there have been, the parish remains in rude health, hopefully offering something for everyone of all spiritualities and churchmanship as well as the enquirers. And as I look back, I think in many ways

Information about the PCC

—the past couple of years have been a time of plenty. We have been blessed with a wonderful Ministry Team: Debs as Administrator, two excellent Churchwarden's, and not one but two Curates, a pioneer priest and, until the end of last year when Brigid left, two Assistant priests, as well as Stuart and me as your stipendiary priests. With such ministerial resources we were the envy of many teams and parishes.

However, the times they are a Changin, as Bob Dylan would sing, just last week Helen was licensed as Team Vicar to the Shaftesbury Team, and within the next couple of months Solveig will be leaving us for pastures new. Then a couple of weeks ago it was announced that Stuart would be moving to Parkstone in the late summer. Within twelve months we will have gone from having seven priests in our team, to having three (and only one of those full-time and stipend). *I know what it is to have plenty, and I know what it is to be in need. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation.* — to tweak St Paul's words.

Some people have already asked, how will we manage? The answer is, I do not know. But I do know that we will. The verse from Philippians 4 that I have been quoting continues by saying, *'I can do all things through him who gives me strength.'* Paul is speaking from his own experience, but from my 34 years as a parish priest I can vouch that it is the same for church congregations, **we can do all things through him who gives us strength.**

There is no reason why the parish should not grow in the next year, parish growth and ministry are not entirely dependent on the clergy. Clergy are there to encourage the growth and ministry of the parishioners, so that when they move on growth and development should continue. The truth of the matter is that it is not down to the clergy as to what happens in a parish, it is down to each and every member of the church. St Peter talks of the priesthood of all believers. And whilst clergy have been ordained to lead small corners of God's vineyard and oversee the sacramental ministry entrusted to it, their role is also to ensure that every member of their flock uses their God given gifts to help the Church grow. Truly, **we can do all things through him who gives us strength.**

And if we genuinely believe this and have confidence in Christ, then we should be excited by the challenges that the rest of the year will bring. I hope that we will see our parish grow as we all reach out and minister, as God has equipped us. Hopefully we will all discover new gifts and see God work in wonderful ways, as we depend on him more and less on ourselves (and our clergy). But it will depend on each one of us being willing and responsive to God's call.

And on the matter of Stuart moving on, I have spoken to the Bishop about what we can expect, and she is hopeful that an appointment can be made fairly swiftly after his departure, although what that will mean in practice, we shall have to wait and see. It is important to get the right person for the post.

Changing the subject but keeping with the theme of knowing what it is to have nothing or plenty. Following the break-in to Lady St Mary, two and half weeks ago we now have to accept the fact that practically all of our silver for LSM, St Nicholas Arne and St Martin on the Wall, has been stolen. It just goes to show the total disregard that some in society have, not just for historic institutions but also for sacred spaces. Which highlights for us the great need for the Gospel to be proclaimed all the more passionately, so that people may turn from their wickedness and be saved.

It's tragic to think that we have been custodians of some of that silver for over 500 years, much of it given to the glory of God and in memory of a loved one. And now it is gone and unlikely to be seen again. There are some who argued that the Church should not have such riches, especially if they are seldom seen or used. That argument is now academic, but we will need to replace at least some of the items that were stolen, and great care will be given to that task, and it will be discussed by the PCC, in consultation with the DAC and Insurance company.

Now moving from Church matters to the wider community and society the past year has certainly been a tough time for many, with the cost of living rising sharply and with no happy ending in sight. Whilst many have weathered the storm so far, there are a significant number struggling and even despairing. Our local charities, the Blessing Fund, the Wareham Relief in Sickness and Need charity, the Food Bank and community fridge have been able to

help in some situations, but there are many for whom there is no quick fix. I have never known a time when I have had so many cries for help from people facing unemployment, homelessness or eviction. And I know it is even

Information about the PCC

—worse for my colleagues in inner city areas and those in more remote rural parts of the country. It is often hard to know what can be done apart from praying for them – and I do urge you all to play your part in doing that; as well as lobbying your MP.

With war in Ukraine and now Sudan and many other places such as Syria and Yemen, and other parts of the world experiencing civil unrest and strife; and then climate change on top of this; the world is in a very unstable and precarious state. It would be easy to despair, but this is not the Christian way. Last week I was preaching in Salisbury cathedral, one of the texts was Mark 13:5-13, which says, *'When you hear of wars and rumours of wars, do not be alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquakes in various places, and famines. These are the beginning of birth pangs.'* Those birth pangs continue to this very day and Jesus said that despite these, and other hardships that we may face, the Gospel must be preached (v10).

That is what we should be about, preaching the Gospel in word and deed. Shining as lights in the darkness, giving hope where there is despair. I conclude with a favourite quotation from Rick Warren given in his book 'The Purpose Driven Church':

'We must learn to share the Gospel in ways that show it is both "good" and "news". If it isn't good news, it isn't Gospel. The Gospel is about what God has done for us and what we can become in Christ: it's about a personal relationship with Christ being the answer to our deepest needs. The Good News offers lost people what they are frantically searching for: forgiveness, freedom, security, purpose, love acceptance, and strength. It settles our past, assures our future, and gives meaning to today. It is the best news in the world.

'Crowds always flock to hear the good news. There is enough bad news in the world that the last thing people need is to hear more bad news when they come to church. They are looking for anyone who can give them hope and help and encouragement. Jesus understood this and felt compassion for the crowds. He knew that they were 'harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.' (Matt 9:36)

There are many around us today who are harassed and helpless, let us be good news to them and the world around. Amen.

Garry Guinness wished to thank Linda Everett for all her hard work in the Parish.

10. Election of members to serve on The Parochial Church Council:

PCC Nominations:

Lady St Mary Church (3 places vacant) – 2 places were filled by Anthony Tew and Simon Lathwell, there is still 1 vacancy.

Sandford St Martin's Church, (2 places vacant) – 1 place was filled by Priscilla Spurling, there is still 1 vacancy

St Nicholas Church (1 place vacant) – 1 place remains vacant.

The above were proposed by Mike Quinlan and seconded by Michael Wardle

The above members were duly elected.

11. Election of members to serve on Deanery Synod

5 Vacancies – These vacancies were filled by Rebecca Green, Paul Harrison, Hilary Goodinge, Jonathan Moulton and Margaret Harris

The above were proposed by Simon Lathwell and seconded by Colin Appleton

Information about the PCC

12. Closing Prayers and Blessing

Meeting finished by 8.30pm

Signed..... Chair..... Date

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Agenda for the APCM Meeting to be held in 2024

THE PARISH OF WAREHAM ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING WEDNESDAY 24th April 2024 at 7pm

AGENDA

ANNUAL VESTRY MEETING

1. Opening Prayers
2. Apologies
3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 3rd May 2023
4. Election of Churchwardens for East Holme and Wareham

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

1. The Minutes of the Meeting held on 3rd May 2023 (Please read prior to meeting)
2. Treasurer's Report and adoption of the Accounts for 2023
3. Appointment of the Independent Examiner or Auditors for this year's accounts
5. The Churchwarden's Report, including Fabric Report
6. The Deanery Synod Report
7. Electoral Roll Officer's Report (Debs Barclay)
8. Appointment of Electoral Roll Officer for 2024
9. The Rector's Report
10. Election of members to serve on The Parochial Church Council
 - 3 *Vacancies - Lady St Mary church, Wareham*
 - 2 *Vacancies - Sandford St Martin's church*
 - 2 *Vacancies – St Nicholas church, Arne*
11. Election of members to serve on Deanery Synod
No Vacancies at this time
12. Any other Business – a minimum of 48 hours' notice should be given to the PCC secretary (Debs Barclay) of any items to be raised
13. Closing Prayer and Blessing