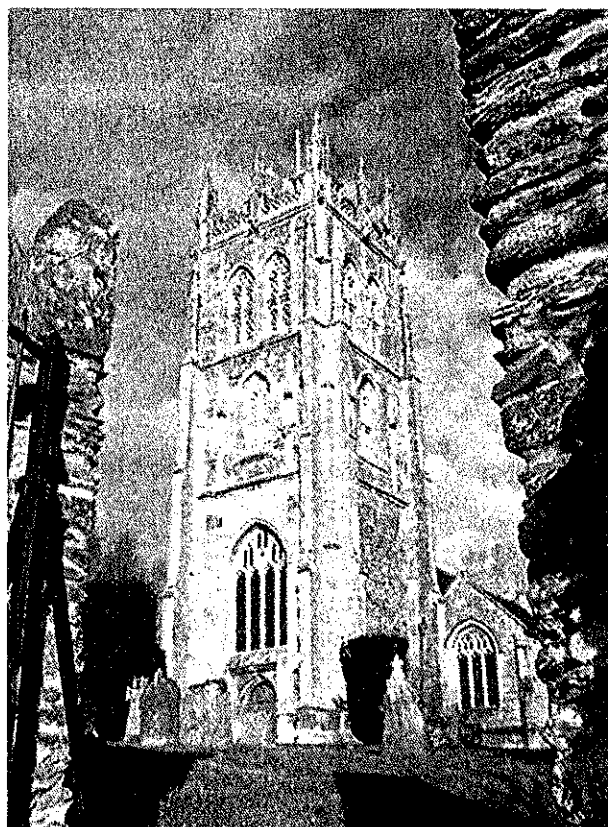


**Church of
St. Mary the Virgin
Kingston St. Mary**



**Annual Reports and Financial Statements of the
Parochial Church Council
for the year ended 31st December 2023**

**Church of
St. Mary the Virgin
Kingston St. Mary**

Rector – Rev'd. Jim Cox

PCC Treasurer

Mr. J Earp

Tall Trees

Cheddon Road

Taunton, TA2 7QT

Independent Examiner

Mr M Shaw

2 Waterleaze

Taunton

Correspondence Address:

The Benefice Office, The Vicarage, Kingston St. Mary,

Taunton, Somerset. TA2 8HW

Bankers:

National Westminster Bank plc

49 North Street, Taunton

THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) of Kingston St Mary has the responsibility of co-operating with the incumbent in the promotion, within the ecclesiastical parish, of the whole mission of the church; pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. It also has the responsibility for the maintenance of the Church of St Mary the Virgin, its services and the surrounding graveyard.

Administration

St Mary's Church is situated in Church Lane, Kingston St Mary. TA2 8HW. The Benefice Office, which serves all four Parishes, is located at the Vicarage, Kingston St Mary. TA2 8HW. Telephone 01823 451257.

MEMBERS OF THE PCC

Members are either elected by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM), or are ex-officio, in accordance with the Church Representation rules.

The following served as members of the PCC during 2023:

Ex-officio

Rector	Rev'd Mary Styles	until April 2023
Associate Vicar	Rev'd Jim Cox	appointed Rector November 2023

Churchwardens	Mrs Jan Holmes (vacancy)
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Representatives on the Deanery Synod (2 permitted)

Mrs Julia Hammett	
Mrs Barbara Stokes	Vice Chair

Elected members	Mrs Dorothy Earp	Secretary, retired & re-elected 2021
	Mrs Lucy Hay	retired and re-elected 2023
	Mrs Rosalie Hughes	retired and re-elected 2023
	Mrs Lesley MacKay	re-elected 2022 until July 2023
	Mrs Margaret Way	elected 2023
	Mr. John Earp	Treasurer - Ex Officio

Committees

The Standing Committee is the only committee required by law. It has power to transact the business of the PCC between its meetings subject to any direction given by the PCC

Members: Rector – Rev'd Jim Cox since Nov 2023
Mrs Jan Holmes
Mrs Barbara Stokes
Mrs Dorothy Earp

KINGSTON ST MARY PARISH CHURCH
Annual Meeting of Parishioners in Kingston St Mary church

21st April 2024 at 11.00am
Agenda

1. Welcome
2. Acceptance of the minutes of the Annual Meeting held on 30th April 2023
3. Election of two churchwardens

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

at 11.00am on Sunday 21st April 2024
Agenda

1. Welcome
2. Attendance list
3. Approval of the minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting held on 30th April 2023
4. Election of parochial representatives of the laity to
 - a) The Deanery Synod (TWO positions allocated to our parish)
 - b) The Parochial Church Council
5. Appointment of an independent examiner of the accounts of the PCC
6. To receive the reports as printed in the report pack:

Rector	pg 7
Churchwardens	pg 9
Treasurer	back pages
Business of the PCC	pg 11
Electoral Roll	pg 11
Safeguarding	pg 12 (Full copy of Safeguarding policy pages 18-20)
Deanery Synod	pg 13
Other reports	pg 12-17
7. Safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults – to adopt the Benefice Safeguarding policy
8. Any other questions
9. Other reports
10. Closing prayer

KINGSTON ST MARY PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Parishioners held on Sunday 30th April 2023 in St Mary's Church, Kingston St Mary

Present: Rev Jim Cox, Barbara Stokes (Chair), Dorothy Earp, John Earp, Julia Hammett, Jan Holmes, Rosalie Hughes, Lesley MacKay, Margaret Way.

Apologies: John Leahy, Joan Leahy, Lucy Hay, Ann Bull, Rhoda White, Robbie MacKay.

1. Barbara welcomed everyone to the meeting.
2. Acceptance of the minutes of the last meeting held on Sunday 15th May 2022 in St Mary's Church Kingston St Mary.

It was proposed by Leslie MacKay, seconded by Rosalie Hughes and agreed unanimously that these minutes be approved and adopted.

3. Election of Churchwardens

There was only one nomination for Churchwarden

Nominee	Proposer	Seconder
Jan Holmes	John Earp	Lesley MacKay

Jan was elected unanimously with gratitude for all her work during 2022.

KINGSTON ST MARY PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Parochial church Meeting held on Sunday 30th April 2023

in St Mary's Church, Kingston St Mary

Present: Rev Jim Cox, Barbara Stokes (Chair), Dorothy Earp, John Earp, Julia Hammett, Jan Holmes, Rosalie Hughes, Lesley MacKay, Margaret Way.

Apologies: John Leahy, Joan Leahy, Lucy Hay, Ann Bull, Rhoda White, Robbie MacKay.

1. Barbara welcomed everyone to the meeting
2. Attendance list: See above
3. Approval of the minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting on 30th May 2021

It was proposed by Julia Hammett, seconded by Lesley MacKay and agreed unanimously that these minutes be formally adopted.

4. Election of parochial representatives of the laity to

a. The Deanery Synod

The following were nominated and elected.

Nominee	Proposer	Seconder
Julia Hammett	David Way	John Earp
Barbara Stokes	Lesley MacKay	Ann Barford

b. The Parochial Church Council

Nominee	Proposer	Seconder
Lucy Hay	Dorothy Earp	Rosalie Hughes
Rosalie Hughes	Barbara Stokes	Jan Holmes
Margaret Way	Dorothy Earp	Barbara Stokes

5. Appointment of an independent examiner of the accounts of the PCC

John Earp informed the meeting that our present Independent Examiner – Michael Shaw was willing to stand again. He expressed his thanks to Mike who had been very supportive, and this was reiterated by the meeting. The Secretary was asked to write a letter of thanks and give a small token of appreciation.

6. To receive the reports as in the Report Pack:

6.1 Clergy Report.

Barbara thanked Jim and Mary in her absence, for their very comprehensive report.

6.2 Churchwardens Report.

This was received with many thanks to Jan.

6.3 Treasurer’s report.

John was thanked for his clear report. He informed the meeting that the contribution from the Joslin Trust for the running of the Benefice Office had been increased from 10K per annum to 12K and in 2022 the Trust had also funded an increase in Michele’s salary. Thanks were recorded for these contributions. John also expressed his gratitude to The Friends for their financial support.

6.4 Secretary’s report. This was accepted with thanks.

Special thanks were given to John and Dorothy for their contribution to the overall running of the church in so many ways.

6.5 Electoral Roll: Lesley reported that the number on the roll is now 43. She suggested that there should be clarification for applying for inclusion on the roll.

6.6 Safeguarding: The adoption of the Benefice Safeguarding Policy which is displayed on the church noticeboard and also on the church website was proposed by Jan Holmes, seconded Lesley MacKay and agreed. A vote of thanks was given to Lucy our Safeguarding Officer.

6.7 Deanery Synod: Jim’s report was accepted with thanks.

6.8 The many other reports included in the pack were briefly mentioned with thanks being expressed to the members of the church and the community in general who contribute so much to the life and work of the parish. Special mention was made of Tim Zilkha who is devoting time and energy into playing the organ and helping the choir. Margaret Way also offered David’s help with promoting Eco Church.

7.0 Safeguarding See 6.6 above

8.0 Questions. Jim reported that the process for replacing Rev Mary has begun but in the interim he, Maureen and Rev Jane Eastell together with Michele will be “keeping things going”.

The meeting closed at 11.55 with a prayer.

APCM REPORTS FOR 2023/2024

RECTOR'S REPORT

People

This has been a year of upheaval and change as Mary left in April and I took over in December. We also lost Paul the Pioneer, and gained Jane Eastell who, along with the ever-faithful Maureen, has joined us as a retired priest.

As ever, the churchwardens have been magnificent and tireless and I would like to thank them all: Ann and Paul, Diana, Jan and Sally and Pearl. Along with the PCCs and the regular worshipers, they/you are all superb at liaising between church and community and ensuring the profile of the 4 churches remains high.

In addition, of course, I need to mention Michele, who always gives more hours than she should and is often the first face of the church that people see. Her professionalism and pastoral excellence are a huge asset to our work in the benefice.

The Mary Joslin Trust has continued to support the work of the benefice and we are immensely grateful for their on-going and very generous funding towards our costs, without which we would really struggle.

West Monkton has now had a full year of weekly services and we are hugely indebted to Rosie and Peter for keeping worship going there, assisted by 'regular visitors' Ruth Cook and Munna Mitra as well as the worship team who meet frequently to prepare services.

The other great act of faith each Sunday is trying to get music for the services. Paul (Broomfield), Hilary (Cheddon), Dorothy (KSM) and Pearl (WM) have striven all year to try to ensure we have the cover we need and, again, we are grateful to our regular visitors who keep us going. Choral Evensong at KSM continues to be something of a highlight and we continue to remember our late organist David Knight whose inspiration this was. A huge thank you to you all.

Besides this, the diocese appointed a new Bishop – one of whose first tasks was to participate in the enthronement of the King. He came to visit us in December during the floods and met the majority of the joint PCCs who braved the weather.

Contacts

Pastoral work continues with the help of church members who assist with Home Communion, Baptisms, the Singles' Lunches, and Little Seedlings toddler group.

Remembrance Services are well-attended (also at the Titan's Rugby Club).

We continue our modest efforts with younger families. We have 4 schools in which I take school assemblies, on average once a half-term each. We had a Teddy Bears' Picnic, Easter Activity Day and Benefice Picnic as well as ever-popular Crib Services, Animal Service and Carols in churches, barns and on street corners. Each of the churches has a different way to attract people through a range of social activities which maintains our profile within the villages.

In the course of 2023 there have been:

Funerals and crematorium services: 25. Ashes interments: 11

Weddings: 3 plus a full wedding blessing

Baptisms & Thanksgiving for birth of a child: 13 and 1 Thanksgiving

Wider Community

Towards the end of the year the parish council of West Monkton asked me to be part of a bereavement group which they set up in the BACH. Again, relatively modest efforts but still enabling important conversations. Alongside this, I continue as a member of the committee of Cheddon Village Hall and to act as Chaplain to Taunton Titans. We were also asked to hold a commemorative service to mark 80 years since the crash of a Canadian bomber in Broomfield. A remarkable service adorned with a thrilling helicopter flypast and attended by senior Canadian Airforce personnel and others.

Spiritual

We have continued our spiritual and theological journey with the usual round of Lent and Advent groups. This year we have added to these with a Quiet Day, led by Jane up at Broomfield and a series of Reflective Evening Services organised by Alan Cook.

Not forgotten

And finally, we end where we began – with people: we are all only too aware just how many of our friends have died this year. There will be others that we all know, but our office has dealt with

Bez Purdy, Joan Chamberlain, Betty and Tony Stone, Olive Brown, John Dill and Richard Campbell
David Burnett, Inez Dormer, Brian Bradley, Patricia Barrett, Mary Daly, David Hartley

All of whom are a huge loss to our various communities

DEANERY

There have been no major vacancies in the deanery this year – except the House-for-Duty at St John's and my 0.5 post here in the SQB. Julian Laurence has been asked to take pastoral charge of a church in Chard while continuing at HT. There is the usual smattering of curates and very helpful retired clergy who assist in various places.

That said, it has been a fairly turbulent time in the deanery. There has been a lot of new housing across Taunton in recent years which is becoming increasingly difficult to cover by the churches. Besides which, the diocese has been mooting a change in the way the Common Fund is calculated and while this has only been announced after the end of Dec 2023, there has been a sense of unease as we have all been aware that something is afoot.

Nationally, it has been known for some time that the energy, finances and resources are being channelled more towards short-term projects (like pioneers and new worshipping communities) in an attempt to boost congregation numbers. This has inevitably detracted from normal parish ministry and led to some stresses locally. It is far from clear whether this strategy is, in fact, increasing numbers or not. The effect has certainly

been to strengthen the churches close to large population centres leaving the country areas less well resourced.

The diocese continues to ask the deaneries to have conversations about prayers for people in same-sex relationships: not with the aim of reaching consensus, but in the hope of finding a way to live with our different perspectives.

Alan Cook has been instrumental in arranging some reflective evening services across the deanery which are starting to bed in as part of our common life together.

Jim Cox (Rector)

Churchwarden's report for year ending Dec 2023

It was pleasing on many levels to start 2023 not dominated by Covid. Although mindful of the need for care our church services were nearly back to normal. We established a regular pattern of a Holy Communion service each Sunday as well as a choral evensong on the fourth Sunday. The Common Cup was shared by those that wished, while others chose to stay with the intincted wafers, all at the altar rail.

The most significant change in the life of our parish in 2023 was that The Rev Mary Styles left Kingston on Easter Sunday to take up a new post in Suffolk. The Benefice was then in an inter-regnum. Bishop Michael subsequently visited and conducted a joint PCC to lay out the timetable for the new appointment. Throughout the next few months our associate vicar Jim worked tirelessly to cover as many services as possible, but even he can't be in two places at once! Several visiting clergy came to our aid as well as a sizeable input from Rev Maureen Doble and later in the year from Rev Jane Eastell with support from our Readers Rosie and Peter; a strong team working together very successfully.

On Oct 4th The Rev Jim Cox was appointed as the new Rector for the South Quantock Benefice. Kingston was honoured to host his licensing by Bishop Michael on Dec 3rd. The result of Jim's full-time appointment is that we have gone from a Benefice of 4 parishes with 1.5 clergy down to 1 with a decision on where in the deanery the 0.5 will be deployed yet to be made thus leaving a Benefice of 4 widely spread churches with one full time priest. Despite this in Kingston we have maintained our regular pattern of services a tribute to our strong clergy team and the organisational wizardry of Michele in the office in organising visiting clergy.

Unfortunately, 2023 was also significant for the number of conflicts in the world and prayers were regularly offered for peaceful outcomes. On 21st January 2023 our bell ringers joined in a national initiative when across the nation bells were rung in support of Ukraine.

Special services for Easter, The Friends, Harvest, Remembrance, and all the Christmas services (carols, crib and The Midnight Communion) were all well attended with refreshments of drinks and/or food supplied by a willing team of helpers.

In terms of the fabric of the church further work has been carried out on the perimeter wall of the old churchyard, a survey has been completed on the tower and work is due to start in March to repair some parts that have become dislodged or just worn by the weather conditions and the age of the stone. The last item to be addressed on the quinquennial report was the stained glass window in the chancel which was showing signs of deterioration in the lead causing stress cracks in the window. This was inspected in Nov and the work scheduled for early 2024. At this point I would like to thank The Friends Group who have financially supported the maintenance of the church fabric and enabled us to keep our wonderful church in good order.

We had two unwelcome visitations this year, firstly a labour of moles continued to dig up both churchyards and so in July we called in a pest controller who caught several moles and all was quiet for the rest of 2023. A second unwanted visitor came in the shape of a large vehicle that impacted with the gatepost at the bottom of the church path causing significant damage. The post had to be taken down and rebuilt but luckily this damage was covered under our Ecclesiastical Insurance Policy. We took the opportunity to replace the gates and a local craftsman built new ones in the style of the old. We were very fortunate that the cost of the gates was covered by the Lewin-Harris family.

On the technical front the church has now got a blue tooth aerial so that music from phones etc can be played through the sound system and thanks to the hard work of our Treasurer we have now got a permanent card reader in church.

Annual services to the clock, the organ, the lightening conductor, the fire extinguishers and the heating system have been carried out and the electrical appliances were PA tested. Between them Jack Council and Arboricare continue to keep our churchyards immaculate.

Our church is one to be proud of and the numerous comments in the visitors' book give testament to that, but a church is more than the building, it is all the people who make it possible for us to worship here. The choir, the organists, the sacristan, the bell ringers, those who volunteer to read in services, the flower arrangers, the refreshment teams, the cleaners, those that lock and unlock the church and not forgetting the PCC - you all deserve our thanks. If anyone else feels they might be able to help in any of these areas we would love to hear from you.

I would like to re-iterate the delight of the parish as a whole on Jim's appointment and also to register our grateful thanks to Michele, in the office, who goes above and beyond her responsibilities to make life easier in the running of the Benefice.

The required checks including the safeguarding audit have been carried out. The Terrier and inventory are both up to date.

Jan Holmes

PCC SECRETARY'S REPORT FOR 2023

The committee had 7 scheduled meetings during the year at which issues relating to the day to day running of the church were discussed as well as specific areas of concern mainly associated with the church building. There was a Benefice PCC meeting in April chaired by Bishop Michael and a second one in December following Rev. Jim's installation as Rector.

Membership of our PCC remains at 8 which includes the Rector, Church warden and 2 Deanery Synod members with the Treasurer being ex officio, Margaret Way was elected at the APCM and Lesley MacKay has stepped down in anticipation of her impending house move.

At each meeting there are Rector's, Deanery Synod, Churchwarden's and Treasurer's reports which give points for discussion and action.

Our priorities this year have been:

- Decisions relating to the monthly pattern of services.
- Discussion of the MAP
- Arrangements during the vacancy following Mary's departure.
- Organising work on the churchyard wall, repair of a damaged gatepost and preparing for repairs to the tower.
- Further discussions related to possible re ordering in the church.

Whilst our meetings do cover a wide variety of issues as mentioned above, most of the "real work" is undertaken on a daily basis by the clergy, churchwarden and other committed people to whom we are indebted.

Dorothy Earp, PCC Secretary

ELECTORAL ROLL OFFICER REPORT

The number listed on the Electoral Roll stands at **45**.

No new names were added to the roll.

Two names were removed from the list in the year up to 31st December 2023

During the course of the year, Lesley Mackay gave up her role as Electoral Roll Officer. Margaret Way has replaced Lesley. Our thanks go to Lesley for her work maintaining the roll for the past few years.

A completely new Electoral Roll is produced every 6th year and this will fall in 2025. Names are not automatically rolled-over, and new applications are required from everyone who wishes to be on the NEW Electoral Roll next year. In line with regulations, the PCC is responsible for ensuring we manage the production of a new Electoral Roll within the required timescales in the lead up to the 2025 APCM. I will be in touch with everyone on the current Electoral Roll later in the year about this matter.

At the close of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting additional names may be added to the roll, for which application forms can be obtained from me or from the Benefice Office.

Margaret Way / Dorothy Earp

SAFEGUARDING REPORT 2022

We are pleased to report that we have not had to deal with any safeguarding cases in the Benefice during 2023.

PCC members have been working hard at completing the required training. This year the Church of England have added an extra mandatory training course to the list for PCC members to complete which is Domestic Abuse training. Whilst it is a requirement for PCC members to complete this training as well as Foundations safeguarding training every three years, anybody can access the various training courses through the Church of England training portal.

The Parish Dashboards are still being used and a new hub has been included which enables us to track details of DBS certificates and training courses for those who need to complete them. It has a useful feature that reminds us when people's training and DBS checks are up for renewal. The dashboard also allows us to generate a Parish Action Plan for PCCs to approve the various documents, etc that need approving to ensure that we are compliant with our safeguarding responsibilities. Each parish is at a different stages on this journey. Samm is looking after the dashboards for West Monkton and Cheddon Fitzpaine and Lucy is looking after the dashboards for Kingston St Mary and Broomfield.

The Diocese have now started to use a new DBS checking organisation called thirtyone:eight so if you have previously had to complete a DBS check, it will look a little bit different when you have to renew your DBS, but it is quite straightforward to complete.

If anyone has any queries or concerns they wish to discuss with us relating to safeguarding, please get in touch. Safeguarding is everybody's responsibility.

(A full copy of the Benefice Safeguarding policy is attached)

Lucy Hay and Samm Barge - Benefice Safeguarding Officers

REPORT TO THE PCC OF THE BELLS OF THE CHURCH OF ST MARY THE VIRGIN - MARCH 2023

I have been Tower Captain for a year now and how the time has flown!

We have kept busy, ringing for Easter, the King's Coronation, weddings, funerals, Harvest, Remembrance, the licensing of the new vicar when we were joined by ringers from West Monkton & Christmas together with regular practice night and Sunday service ringing. We also enjoyed a Christmas dinner at The Swan.

John said last year that despite having five new ringers, more volunteers are always needed, and this has been borne out this year due to only one of those five still ringing with us. In addition, we lost one of our regular ringers due to a house move and sadly, John is not able to ring with us as much as I'm sure he would like! We were able to recruit four more ringers, unfortunately two of those are not continuing but the remaining two recently became members of the Taunton Branch of the Bath and Wells Diocesan Association of Change Ringers. So, I will echo what John said last year, more volunteers needed! Anyone who is physically capable (you don't need to be particularly strong) is always welcome.

Tamsin Rayson. On behalf of our band members. 01\3\2024

DEANERY SYNOD

Synod met three times in 2023.

1. The first meeting looked at the new bishop's 4 stakes in the sand:

- a) Value what you have
- b) New worshiping communities
- c) Developing the laity
- d) Growing faith

A new lay dean, Richard Carpenter was appointed.

A new deanery reflective service was being pioneered by Alan Cook.

2. The summer meeting was a eucharist and social. Archdeacon presiding.

3. The third meeting looked at lay education and heard presentations from Ronnie Crossman (diocese), Nick Griffin (St George's) and Robin Lodge (St Andrew's).

But the big issues in the deanery for this year remain the deployment of the 0.5 and the new common fund allocation proposals.

Jim Cox

BAPTISM FOLLOW-UP VOLUNTEERS MINISTRY. January 2023 – December 2023.

Our role on behalf of the church is to improve contact and follow -up with families bringing their children for baptism or for a service of thanksgiving.

We have attended the baptisms during the past year welcoming families and guests to the service introducing ourselves as a representative of the church. Often we are also asked to do the reading.

We then make a phone call to the family approx. 4 weeks after the baptism to ask general questions about how the baptism day went and highlight upcoming events and services at the church.

This phone call is a one-off, assuring families then of our details should they need to contact us again.

The baptisms have usually taken place at noon on a Sunday.

Sometimes the church is packed with godparents and sponsors and at other times a small intimate service for the immediate family. When there is an organist requested the singing fills the church and so far the feedback from families is that it is a very special day they will never forget.

Important links are made then with baptism families invited to specific events in the benefice in the future and with those children who go on to attend any of our Church Schools with Rev Jim Cox present at regular school collective worships.

*Loretta McHugh, Baptism 'helper'
on behalf of Julia Hammett; Sue Anderson & Corrine McMylor*

CHURCH CLEANING AND CATERING

In the aftermath of the pandemic, it has been good to see life in the church returning to normal. It is very gratifying to have some new volunteers for the monthly floor cleaning rota. Hopefully, this is not too great an undertaking, amounting to mopping once or possibly twice a month depending on the state of the floor or very wet weather.

There are three months still unfilled – January, September, and October. Volunteers to fill these slots would be very welcome.

Two group deep cleaning sessions are held each year in March and December. This involves a couple of hours of intensive cleaning followed by a well-deserved coffee!

Refreshments and a chat have now become a regular feature following our 10am church services. There are three members of the congregation who have taken this on board. Again, extra volunteers would make it easier to cover each service and provide an occasional breather for those who regularly perform this task.

A very big Thank You to all who have so loyally offered their services over the years.

The PCC would be very grateful to hear from anyone who would be willing to join the dedicated band who keep our church so clean and tidy.

Please contact Barbara Stokes on 01823 762417 or barbarastokes@tiscali.co.uk

MEN'S GROUP

Men's group continues to meet for modest local activities. We tend to do pub walks and barbecues in the summer and talks and indoor visits in the winter. We try to keep everything local and inexpensive and have had some excellent presentations on Wilton Gaol, Nuclear Power, Magic and the Met. We are immensely grateful to all those who give their time to entertain and inform us.

Rev Jim Cox

MUSIC REPORT APRIL 2023

Music for our now twice monthly Holy Communion Service and monthly Evensong has continued to flourish. We often have only 4 lady choir members for the 10.00 am services but have had as many as 12 for Evensong! In addition to 2 members of West Monkton choir we have 3 from St Andrews who regularly support this service and others join on an ad hoc basis. In addition to Tim Zilkha who has covered many of our services this year, we are also indebted to Sam Baker, Alan Cook, John Bodiley and Derek Jones who have played at various times. The organ continues to perform well adding weighty support to our loyal choir and congregation in excess of what is commonly available in village churches. We are working to keep it that way! However large or small our choir is, we try to do justice to the hymns and anthems we sing and seem to be much appreciated by the congregation.

KINGSTON ST MARY FLOWERS

We again had a good display of lilies at Easter which were donated in memory of loved ones. We decorated the church for special services such as the Friends service in August and Harvest in October and then we had Rev Jim's licensing in November and a great display of candles and greenery at Christmas.

We have a good team of people who generously supply and help with the flowers for festivals but would appreciate a few more to make sure we can have an individual display at all times in the church. It does not need expertise but it would be lovely to hear from anyone who could commit to one or two weeks during the year. We shall be meeting this Spring to establish a rota.

Many thanks to all

Rosalie Hughes
rosaliehughes@hotmail.co.uk tel :01823 541633

BOOK REVIEWS

I am pleased to say that Peter Wright has joined me on the book review section of the website. I do commend these reviews to you as it is a way of finding out about a wide range of topics without having to read the book yourself! We have done reviews on writers domestic and overseas, on topics covering church life, the Bible, spirituality and Jesus. Have a look.

Rev Jim Cox

Bible Study Group – 2024 Report for ACPM

The Bible Study Group met regularly on a Tuesday evening at the Benefice Office. Our topics for study have varied during the year as has the style of study – but always an informal setting so that everyone feels welcomed and relaxed. No previous knowledge is required and the home group helps those just starting to explore the bible for the first time as well as those who regularly read and study the bible.

During 2023 we continued watching the amazing film series called the “The Chosen” exploring the life of Jesus and the Disciples through the Gospels. Exploring the Gospels through film has helped put us right into the action and given us a deeper understanding of many of the familiar gospel stories.

Following The Chosen we explored the weekly Gospel Reading allowing for a varied range of discussion topics without following any specific course or theme.

We concluded 2023 in advent looking exploring the birth of John the Baptist and comparing and contrasting that with the birth of Jesus.

We are now following a Pilgrim guided study for Lent 2024 themed around the 10 commandments.

Look out on the news-sheets and website for upcoming courses or contact the church office. We look forward to seeing you soon.

Steve Barge – Group member

RIPPLE EFFECT – report for APCM

We have continued to support Ripple Effect this year, but without any major fund-raising event. Thanks to the help of John Earp, we held a small sale at the Christmas Carol service which raised almost £200. when donated as part of a BBC Radio Four appeal We also shared the Harvest festival collection with Water Aid.

We are in regular touch with the Charity through their Newsletters and live Video clips from the farms in Africa and are very impressed with how much their work with individual farmers and families manages to spread out into their surrounding communities.

We are planning to hold a fund-raising evening in May 2024 when Michael Brown, founder and ex-owner of the Brown and Forrest Smokery on the levels, will be giving a talk on his experience in Afghanistan in 1972/3 working with Unicef. This should be an interesting evening in the Village Hall where wine and nibbles will be served.

We would ask that you continue to remember the work of Ripple Effect in your prayers as we know that the lives of the many African families they help are only going to get worse as the drastic effects of Climate change continue.

We would welcome any support you feel able to offer to us to enable us to do more for this worthwhile charity.

Rosalie Hughes and Lucy Hay

CUPPA & CHAT 2023

Once again Cuppa and Chat came to each of the churchyards during August. At least 10 different people came to share a drink and conversation, some even came more than once. The weather was usually kind but we did have to retreat inside once or twice.



In August 2024 Cuppa and Chat will take place only at Cheddon Fitzpaine churchyard on Tuesday afternoons 2-4pm. Do come along and join me as it would be great to get to know you better.

Rosie Brown

BATHPOOL PIONEER REPORT FOR APCM's

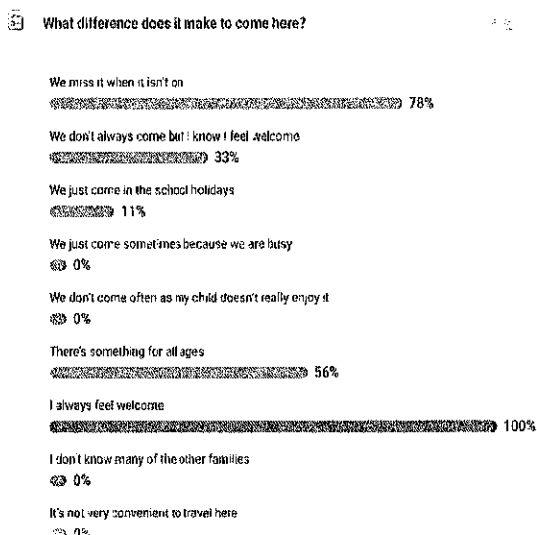
Paul Elliston, Bathpool Pioneer was employed by Bath & Wells Diocese under a 5 year contract. This contract came to an end and Paul left in September to take on a new post for the Environment Agency. Sadly, we did not have a leaving report from him before his departure.

LITTLE SEEDLINGS BABY AND TODDLER GROUP:

Unfortunately, I experienced a period of illness from Jan-March 2024 and we were unable to meet. We are slowly returning to normal and although numbers are as usual (around 6-8 families per week), we have several new babies and expectant families and so this should support us going forwards. We were delighted to see families in March 2024.

I recently asked for some feedback from those families who attend regularly via an app called Slido and here are the results:

Participants could tick as many or as few options as they liked



Which words would you use to describe Little Seedlings? 7 3



Each week I plan a few different activities, often along a theme such as 'spring', 'builders', 'all about me'. Activities might include cooking, shared craft, growing or getting ready for Christmas. We took part in the Christmas tree exhibition at West Monkton church and received a very warm welcome. Rev Jim came along and shared the Knitivity with us. My favourite activity this year was creating a tangled wool spiderweb!

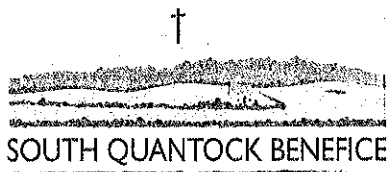
We don't meet on bank holidays (or if I am away), but otherwise aim to meet each week including in the school holidays and I know this is welcomed by the families. We have one Mum who is interested in joining us a volunteer. We know we have supported families in difficult times such as bereavement, challenging behaviour with children and family issues, as well as celebrating exciting times.

Looking forward, we have a number of children who will be off to school in September, so we will be looking for ways to help them, such as supporting early scissor and fine motor skills.

Thanks as ever must go to the wonderful Corinne who gives her time so generously, to The Mary Joslin Trust, especially Julia and Tim and to the Cheddon Memorial Village Hall committee who accept that we can't cover the weekly cost but are happy to receive whatever we can give.

Emma Booker - March 2024

(Little Seedlings Baby and Toddler group was started in 2019 for the families in the Northwalls Grange area. In Autumn 2021, Rev Tracey, with an eye to the future, started to look into the possibility of applying for support from the Mary Joslin Trust to enable the group to continue if she moved to a new parish in January 2022. In October 2021, it was agreed that Little Seedlings would continue under the leadership of Emma Booker (Community Support Worker) and Corinne McMylor (volunteer)



South Quantock Benefice Safeguarding Policy.

(The United Benefice of West Monkton with Kingston St Mary, Cheddon Fitzpaine and Broomfield Parishes, Somerset.)

Our Mission: to know, share and spread the love of God.

Introduction

Christian communities should be places where all are welcomed and feel safe.

All people have the right to:

- be treated with respect and dignity
- have their privacy respected
- be able to lead as independent a life as possible
- be able to choose how to lead their life
- have the protection of the law
- have their rights upheld regardless of their ethnicity, gender, sexuality, impairment or disability, age, religion or cultural background
- be able to use their chosen language or method of communication
- be heard.

The commitment of the Benefice

We are committed to the care, nurture of, and respectful pastoral ministry with, all people, and especially with regard to the safeguarding and protection of all vulnerable people (a child, young person or vulnerable adult). We will seek to foster a safe, caring community which provides an environment where there is a culture of informed vigilance regarding the dangers of abuse, and where victims of abuse can report or disclose abuse and find support. We will strive to promote best practice that contributes to the prevention of abuse and we are committed to the national church guidance as laid out in "Promoting a safer church"

The responsibility of the Benefice

The welfare of any vulnerable person is always the primary concern and we will act promptly whenever a concern is raised about a vulnerable person or about the behaviour of any adult in a position of trust or authority. We are also committed to the support of those who have been abused and to listening to the voices of survivors, who can help the church learn lessons from the past. Any allegation, disclosure or statement, something seen or something heard must be recorded and acted upon. Complaints can be taken from alleged victims and third parties.

Areas of responsibility

This Benefice accepts that, through its workers and volunteers, it is responsible for vulnerable people during church activities when in a church building, on church property and other premises being used by the church, and also when in contact with people via social and other media or when home visiting. Responsibility extends to travel between places, when it is organized by the church. However, the church is not responsible for private arrangements.

Whole church responsibility

The safeguarding and protection of vulnerable people is everyone's responsibility, not just parents or those who have formal leadership or caring responsibilities. Procedures and formal processes alone, though essential, will not protect children and adults. The community, including all its members, needs to be aware of the dangers and be prepared to report concerns and take action if necessary.

Recruitment

We will carefully select all those with any responsibility for vulnerable people within the church in line with safer recruitment principles, including taking up references and the use of criminal records checks (DBS). All blemished DBS checks will be referred to the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor for advice. A clear DBS form does not guarantee the appointment of a volunteer; and a blemished DBS is not an automatic disqualification. All confidential data is kept locked in the benefice office.

It is the policy of this Benefice that if they reach the criteria:

- all those who regularly work with vulnerable people including those who work on a rota, should have enhanced DBS checks;
- those who work only occasionally will be asked to apply for a DBS check;
- those who manage or supervise people who work with vulnerable groups will be required to be DBS plus Barred List checked.

All those recruited must maintain training in line with diocesan guidance.

Our policy on the recruitment of ex-offenders is in line with the diocesan policy. A copy of this is available at <https://w.w.bathandwells.org.uk/diocese/safeguarding/safe-recruitment>

Who to contact

Benefice safeguarding officers:

Mrs Lucy Hay 01823 451 204 safeguardingsqb@gmail.com

Mrs Samm Barge 07976 415337 safeguardingsqb@gmail.com

Rector: The Rev'd Jim Cox. 01823 802790 (07967 817337) jimcox11@gmail.com

Diocesan Safeguarding Team: Ben Goodhind / Safeguarding Manager 01749 588917;

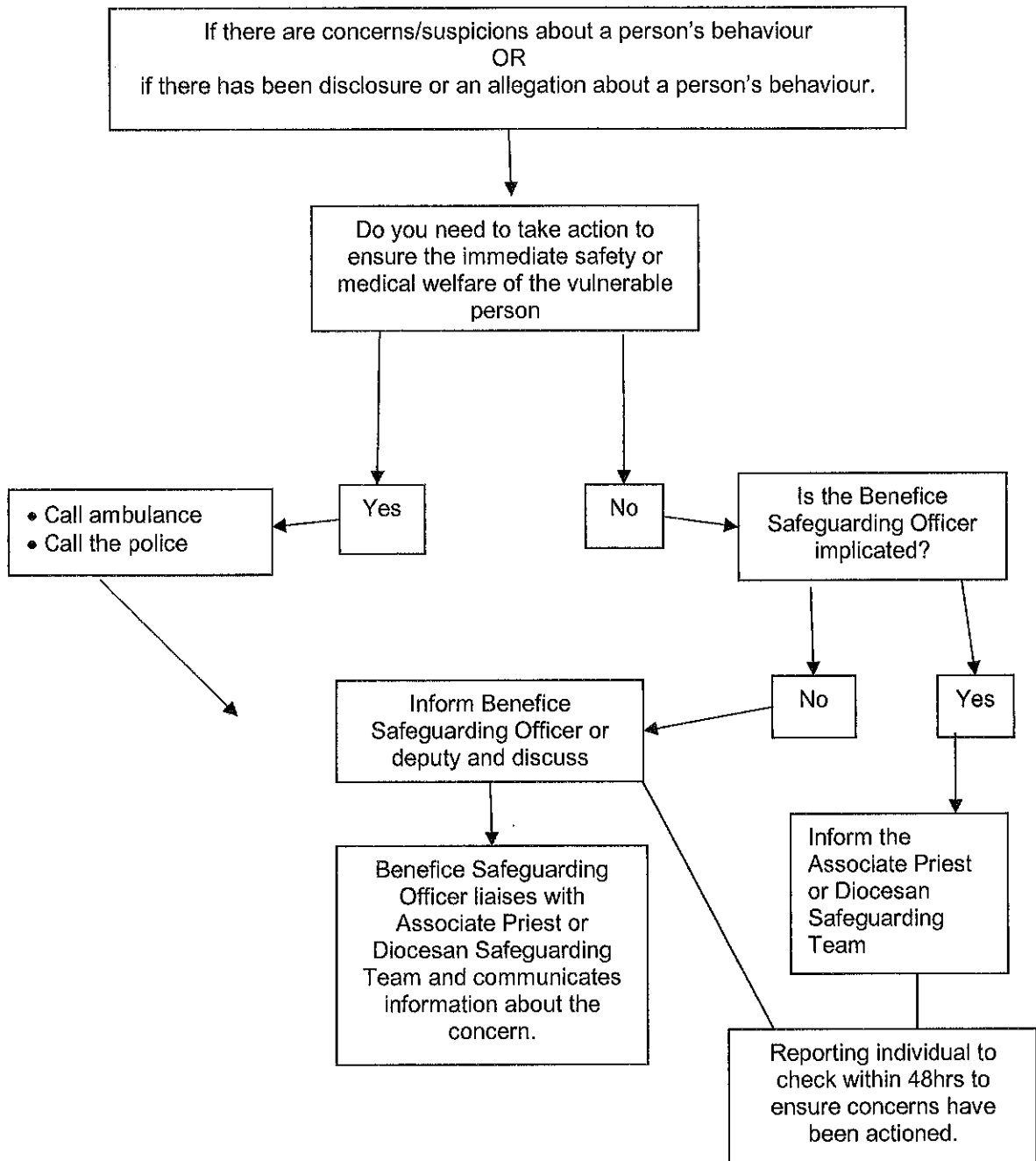
Email: safeguarding@bathwells.anglican.org

Emergency calls or concerns:- the Diocese of Bath and Wells has partnered with thirtyone:eight to offer out of hours safeguarding support. They operate from 17:00 to 09:00, Monday to Friday, 07:00 to midnight on Saturdays and Sundays, bank holidays and other absences. During these times you are advised to call 0303 003 1111 for any emergency safeguarding queries. Please note this is not manned 24-hours a day, but if you leave a message you will receive a call back as soon as practicable.

The Church of England, in all aspects of its life, is committed to and will promote the safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults. It fully accepts and endorses the Children Act 1989 & 2004 & The Protection of Freedoms Act 2012. This Benefice agrees to follow the Practice Guidance from the House of Bishops on safeguarding matters, and to adopt the Diocese of Bath and Wells Safeguarding Policies (found at <http://www.bathandwells.org.uk/diocese/safeguarding/>)

Concerned about a child or vulnerable adult?

If you are concerned for the immediate safety of a vulnerable person or they are afraid to return home, you must contact the Police (999) or Children Social Care (0300 123 2224) without delay.



Remember to involve the person at risk throughout the process wherever possible and gain consent for any referrals to social care if the person has capacity

It is the responsibility of the diocese to report to the Charity Commission of a safeguarding Serious Incident;
(and of the churchwardens or incumbent of a non-safeguarding Serious Incident).



**The South Quantock Benefice
Comprising the Parochial Church Councils of
Broomfield, Cheddon Fitzpaine, Kingston St Mary, and
West Monkton**

**Annual Report and Unaudited Financial
Statements of the Parochial Church Council
of
The Church of St Mary the Virgin, Kingston
St Mary.**

For the year ended 31 December 2023

**The South Quantock Benefice Comprising the Parochial Church Councils of Broomfield,
Cheddon Fitzpaine, Kingston St Mary, and West Monkton**

**Annual Report and Unaudited Financial Statements of the Parochial Church Council of
The Church of St Mary the Virgin, Kingston St Mary.**

For the year ended 31 December 2023

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**Annual Report and Unaudited Financial Statements of the Parochial Church Council of The Church of St Mary the Virgin, Kingston St Mary
For the year ended 31 December 2023
Trustees' Annual Report**

Structure & Governance

The PCC is a charity exempted from registration with the Charity Commission. The election of PCC members is governed by and set out in the Church Representation rules.

Aim and Purposes

The PCC is responsible for co-operating with the Rector in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelical, social and ecumenical.

Objectives and Activities

We are committed to enabling as many people as possible to worship at the Church of St Mary the Virgin and to become part of our parish community. We have considered guidance on public benefit, including the supplementary guidance for charities on the advancement of religion. Our objective is to enable all people to access worship and prayer, to study the Gospels and to develop their knowledge and trust in our Saviour.

To support this work, it is important that we maintain the fabric of the church and the Benefice Office.

The Trustees (the PCC) confirm that they have referred to the guidance contained in the Charity Commission's General Guidance on Public Benefit when reviewing the Charity's Aims and Objectives and in planning future activities.

Administration

St Mary's Church is situated in Church Lane, Kingston St Mary. TA2 8HW. The Benefice Office, which serves all four Parishes, is located at the Vicarage, Kingston St Mary. TA2 8HW. Telephone 01823 451257.

Membership of the PCC

Members are either elected by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM), or are ex-officio, in accordance with the Church Representation rules. The following served as members of the PCC during 2023:

Rector Rev'd Mary Styles (Until April 2023)
Associate Vicar Rev'd Jim Cox (Appointed Rector November 2023)

Churchwardens Mrs Jan Holmes

Representatives on the Deanery Synod (2 permitted)

Mrs Julia Hammett
Mrs Barbara Stokes Vice Chair

Elected members Mrs Dorothy Earp Secretary, retired and re-elected 2021
Mrs Lucy Hay Retired and re-elected 2023
Mrs Rosalie Hughes Retired and re-elected 2023
Mrs Lesley MacKay Until July 2023
Mrs Margaret Way Elected 2023
Mr. John Earp Treasurer - Ex Officio

Committees

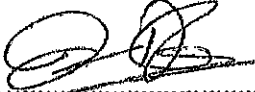
The Standing Committee is the only committee required by law. It has power to transact the business of the PCC between its meetings subject to any direction given by the PCC.

Members: Rev'd Mary Styles (Until April 2023)
Rev'd Jim Cox (from November 2023)
Mrs Jan Holmes
Mrs Barbara Stokes
Mrs Dorothy Earp

Electoral Roll

The number on the Electoral Roll stands at 45. The number of regular worshippers is 32 the average number at services is 25.

Approved on 2024 and signed by the Chair


10.3.24
.....
Rev'd Jim Cox

**Independent Examiner's Report to the Parochial Church Council of The Church of St Mary the Virgin,
Kingston St Mary**

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the Parochial Church Council (the Council) for the year ended 31st December 2023.

Responsibilities and basis of the report

As members of the Council, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

I report in respect of my examination of the Council's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair' view, and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

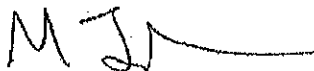
Independent examiner's statement

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

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the Council as required by section 130 of the Act;
or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records.

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

Signed



M Shaw
2 Waterleaze, Taunton

Date 12 MARCH 2024

Financial Review.

The financial statements attached are correct as of 31st December 2023 by direct comparison with the Bank Statements for the year 2023, also there is complete alignment with fees account, but the general account was out by £3.56 shown as £4.00 in the accounts due to rounding (the bank was higher). Additionally, there is complete agreement with the deposit account based on the statements from CCLA.

Overall, the accounts show a different picture to last year. Firstly, both donations and "other income" were down by approximately £4.5k and £8k respectively. In both cases it is difficult to appreciate why this was. For donations it was no doubt impacted by the numbers at services and the loss of some parishioners. On "other income" there is an accounts coding impact in that some items were coded differently in 2022. Even though "other income" was lower than 2022 in 2023 there were two significant items, the transfer of £4k from the deposit account and the donation for the new gates. This could possibly be more correctly designated a donation or legacy and should be referred to as such but as it went into the accounts and out again over a short time period to pay the gate manufacturer it was coded on the "other income" line. This year income from the "Friends" to cover church wall repairs was gratefully received and a VAT recovery related to various works by Glynn's also featured. Whilst last year there were no major works, issues defined as Minor works inflated the Church Running expenses line on the payment side by £8.5k

The Benefice Office activity has continued as normal with no major changes. However, the work by Michele Hardiman during the period between Mary Styles leaving and Jim Cox being appointed was recognised. Last year I reported on the installation of a meter to enable the vicarage electricity use to be measured rather than rely on estimates, this proved very valuable during the period the property was let with the tenant being invoiced directly for power used.

This year the funding of the Benefice Office continued to benefit from an increase in the Legacy from the Joslin Trust which was fixed at £12,800 last year. However, a further one-off payment from Joslin of £250 was received as a gift to Michele for the extra work mentioned above. In April the Church wardens agreed to increase the salary for Michele Hardiman. As normal the Benefice Office activities show a net negative £6,617, which is to be recovered during 2024 from the benefice churches in the proportion split 40,40,10,10.

The Church functioning expenses in total which includes all essential costs (heating, power, insurance, essential maintenance etc) for the year was £28,246. This approximately equates to the receipts by standing order plus planned giving and gift aid recovery, i.e. we just about "pay our way" but given the reductions reported above going forward this needs to be monitored as it may not always be the case.

At 31 December 2023 the Charity had unrestricted reserves made up of the current account, the deposit account, the investments plus the fees owed from other parishes less the fees account which is restricted, amounting to £322,319 (2022; £298,579). Of these unrestricted reserves £273,997 is held as investments leaving £44,351 of free reserves. This plus our continuing regular donations will provide sufficient free reserves to cover the next 12 months of general Church expenditure.

The 4th Qtr fees for 2023 were paid early in January 2024 therefore at the time of accounts preparation there are no fees owed to other parishes.

The PCC elected to purchase a card machine reader for cashless donations towards the end of 2023. This was acquired at a significantly reduced cost of £90.00 (C of E national initiative). This machine uses a sim card which was part of our telephone contract with BT and has sufficient signal at church. From its installation in November 2023 to the end of year £11.80 had been received in the bank account via this route. However £37.00 had been given via the card reader. The balance was received during services towards the end of 2023 so will appear in the accounts early in 2024.

The Parochial Church Council of The Church of St Mary the Virgin, Kingston St Mary
Receipts and Payments Account For The Year Ended 31 December 2023

	<u>Unrestricted</u> <u>Fund</u>	<u>Benefice</u> <u>Fund*</u>	<u>Total</u> <u>Funds</u> <u>2023</u>	<u>Total</u> <u>Funds</u> <u>2022</u>
	£	£	£	£
<u>Receipts</u>				
Donations	15,217	1,040	16,257	20,654
Grants	1,125	0.0	1,125	525
Church Activities	1,358	19,318	20,676	20,115
Other Income	29,009	3,181	32,190	40,021
Investment Income	11,242	0.0	11,242	10,202
Legacy	12,866	0.0	12,866	12,400
	-----	-----	-----	-----
Total Receipts	70,817	23,539	94,356	103,917
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<u>Payments</u>				
Church Activities	8,246	11,943	20,189	19,926
Parish Share	17,065	0.0	17,065	16,730
Church Running Exp	33,103	1,162	34,265	25,883
Benefice Office Costs	0.0	1,853	1,853	1,974
Salaries & Exp	711	18,819	19,530	19,319
Major Capital Expenditure	0.0	0.0	0	21,359
	-----	-----	-----	-----
Total Payments	59,125	33,777	92,902	105,191
	-----	-----	-----	-----
Net (Payments)/Receipts for the year	11,692	(10,238)	1,454	(1,274)
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Cash at Bank at 31 December, Brought forward			50,199	51,473
			-----	-----
Cash at Bank at 31 December, Carried forward			51,653	50,199
			-----	-----

* Denotes Restricted funds

The Parochial Church Council of The Church of St Mary the Virgin, Kingston St Mary
Statement of Assets and Liabilities - For the Year Ended 31 December 2023

	Unrestricted		Restricted funds			Total Funds 2023	Total Funds 2022
	General Fund	Benefice* Fund	Fabric* Fund	Picture* Fund	Endowment Fund		
<u>Cash Funds</u>	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
NatWest Current Account	4,441	-	-	2,445	-	6,886	9,941
Deposit Fund	41,116	-	-	-	-	41,116	37,928
Fees Account	3,651	-	-	-	-	3,651	2,330
Cash in Hand	-	-	-	-	-	0	0
Total Cash Funds	49,208	-	-	2,445	-	51,653	50,199
<u>Assets</u>							
Investment at Cost	210,000	-	-	-	-	210,000	210,000
Investment Land (Conservative Estimate)	-	-	-	-	37,500	37,500	37,500
Fees owed from other Parishes	-	3,971	-	-	-	3,971	3,394
<u>Liabilities</u>							
Fees owed to other Parishes & Diocese	0.0	-	-	-	-	0.0	2,165

As at 31 December 2023 the Stock Exchange Securities shown above had a market value of £273,997 (2022: £251,811).

The financial statements were approved by the Trustees on 5th February 2024.

B. Stokes

S. E.

.....
 Mrs. B Stokes – Vice Chair
 On behalf of the Board of Trustees

.....
 J.E. Farp - Treasurer

The Parochial Church Council of The Church of St Mary the Virgin, Kingston St Mary

Notes to the Accounts

Year ended 31 December 2023

The accounts have been prepared on the receipts and payments basis and in accordance with Charity Commission guidance.

Neither the Trustees, nor any person connected with them, have received any remuneration. Expenses claimed are paid at cost.

The Endowment Fund represents the land at Lodes Lane shown as a conservative estimate based on Greenslade Taylor Hunt advice. The balance at 31 December 2022 was £37,500 (2021: £37,500).

The Restricted Funds are represented by:

The **Benefice Fund**, which is managed under the direction of the rector by the Kingston PCC in support of all four churches in the benefice. It aims to break even over the year with the four churches contributing in the ratio of 40,40,10,10 (Kingston, West Monkton, Cheddon, Broomfield).

The **Picture Fund** arises from the sale in 1996 of a painting. Application has been made to the Diocese to transfer the Fund to a Fabric Fund and is pending. Balance at 31 December 2023 £2,445 (2022: £2,445).

Cash Deposits are held by the CBF Church of England Funds

Investments as at 31st December 2023 were as follows:

	<u>Cost</u>	<u>Shares/Units</u>	<u>Market Value</u>
	£	No.	£
The Church of England Global Equity Income Fund	70,000	38,206.76	115,613.66
Church of England UK Equity Fund	70,000	46,385.14	91,476.13
M & G Charifund	70,000	4,662.524	66,906.75
TOTAL	210,000		273,996.54

[Note: The M&G Charifund was the only fund lower than the original investment. If this remains so we may need to review this investment going forward.]