



Annual report for 2023

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Produced by the Parochial Church Council for the Annual Parochial Church Meeting,
to be held on Tuesday 21st May 2024, 7.30pm at Elmdon Church.

Church Information

Address Elmdon Church, Church Lane, Elmdon Park, Solihull B92 9EJ

Rector Revd Bekah Clark (from March 2023)

Licensed Readers Robert Dean, Richard Huss, Karen Matthews

Churchwarden Carol Janes

The business of the Church is carried out through the Parochial Church Council (PCC). This met eight times in person during 2023: six regular meetings, one PCC vision day, and one meeting immediately after the APCM to appoint PCC officers. Further decisions were taken by email, in accordance with the provisions of the Church Representation Rules. The role of the PCC remains one of co-operating with the Rector in promoting the mission of the church: pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical.

PCC members

Revd Bekah Clark (from March 2023) Chair

Carol Janes Churchwarden, ex officio member

Karen Matthews Reader, appointed by the 2022 APCM

Christine Arnsby Deanery Synod, ex officio member

Cheryl Doyle Deanery Synod, ex officio member

Jamie Oldham Deanery Synod, ex officio member

Elected Members to serve until APCM in:

2024

Lesley Huss
Graham Smye
Sue Kimber

2025

Alan Doyle
Martin Hewings
Anne Milne

2026

Sarah Leckie
David Maguire
Vacancy

Officers appointed by the PCC, 2023 - 2024

Safeguarding
PCC Treasurer

PCC Secretary

Lay Vice-Chair

Parish Identify Verifier

Electoral Roll Officer

Lesley Huss

Alan Doyle

Christine Arnsby

Graham Smye

Lesley Huss

Jamie Oldham

PCC and Diocese

Rector's Introduction

At the joyful occasion of my licensing as Rector of Elmdon (& Vicar of St Mary's, Hobs Moat, held in plurality) in March 2023, I spoke of how I was looking forward to partnering and also 'partying' with the PCCs and congregations of both churches in the work of the Gospel. It is '...good news that will cause great joy for all the people...' (Luke 2.10, NIV) that is the heart of the Christian faith. What follows is an overview of some of the ways in which Elmdon Church has been seeking to live out that 'good news' over the last year, made possible by our partnership in the Gospel – all the volunteers who so generously enable ministry and mission – and the encouragement of sustaining rhythms of prayer, worship and fellowship – reminding us that in the joys and the challenges, 'the joy of the Lord is [our] strength' (Nehemiah 8.10).

Sunday sermons usually follow a series, with sermons in 2023 on 'The Childhood of Christ', 'Giving It Up', 'A Life of Joy' (Philippians), 'Journeying with Jesus', 'True Friendship', 'Inside the Christmas Story' and 'Saying Yes to God' (Family Services). Average Sunday attendance is around 50, with all generations represented most weeks. We have begun exploring ways in which we can be more truly intergenerational, enabling all ages to be able to fully participate in worship. The Tuesday Service welcomed newcomers and visitors throughout 2023 and its gentle and relaxed format makes it especially accessible for those for who would prefer a quieter, less busy setting in which to connect with God and others.

In October, the first joint monthly prayer with St Mary's, Hobs Moat was held. Open to everyone, lasting for an hour, and beginning and ending with a song, we pray for the needs of the world, our local communities and our two churches as we seek to work in complementary ways to be as effective as possible in ministry and mission. Attendance is usually around 12-15 and those who join this meeting are blessed by the opportunity to take time out together with God in the middle of our weeks.

A new addition to the Elmdon Church calendar was our first 'Light Party' on 31st October, inviting primary-school age children and their parents or carers to celebrate All Hallows' Eve (Halloween) by focusing on Jesus the Light of the World. The teatime event included crafts, activities, a Bible talk, outdoor light trail and party tea. Lots of fun was had by all who attended and by the team. This is set to be a firm fixture in the Elmdon calendar.

Elmdon Church has a particular ministry in caring for the bereaved with regular burials and burials of ashes taking place in the churchyard. The reintroduction of an Annual Memorial Service in November was well received, with the loved ones of those for whom we've taken a service in the previous 12 months receiving a letter of invitation. Attended by over 50 people and followed by refreshments, the service was an opportunity for reflection, comfort and to hear the hope of the Gospel.

Much of 2023 was, for me, spent making connections and getting to know the local community, including our local schools. Half-termly assemblies took place at Damson Wood Infant and Nursery school and we also accepted an invitation to have a stall at their Summer Fair, where we provided a craft activity. Members of Elmdon Church and friends at St Mary's, Hobs Moat crocheted and knitted an impressive

200 angels and stars to be given to each child at Damson Wood Infant and Nursery School to share the joy of Christmas. December also saw us welcome to church Reception and Year 2 from Valley Primary School, to participate in our 'Encounter Christmas' trail beautifully prepared by members of Elmdon Church and giving the children and their teachers the opportunity to experience the Christmas story as a journey.

We also opened the church to the community as part of the 'Oaks and Shires' event in Elmdon Park and the PCC approved the use of the church building for English Classes, as we seek to be a place of welcome for newly arrived communities.

Alongside the 'events' highlighted here, much of our ministry and mission happens in individual conversations and unseen acts of kindness, as church members care informally for one another. Connect Groups are an especially valuable place of support and encouragement.

Whether gathered together for services, events and activities, or 'scattered', at home, at work and out and about in our community, there is much to give thanks for and celebrate in the life and witness of Elmdon Church.

There are, of course, challenges too, in particular the maintenance of buildings and the pressure on our resources, both our finances and our volunteers. In all things we seek first to be led by Jesus and in September the PCC spent a morning together to begin the process of discerning direction and renewing our vision, asking what God is calling us to as a church community at this time, in the 'up' (worship), 'in' (fellowship and discipleship) and 'out' (mission and evangelism) dimensions of the life of Elmdon Church. A survey sought the views of the wider congregation and the PCC have since agreed new mission, vision and values statements to increase our unity in the Gospel and set priorities as we look to the future.

Rooted in the Bible and renewed by the Holy Spirit, our vision is to be a thriving Jesus-centered community playing our part in giving every person the opportunity to encounter, belong and grow in the love of Christ.

We want to be all about Sharing the Love of Christ (our mission statement) and to do this in ways that are real, generous and joyful (our values).

Bekah Clark

Wardens' Report

My thanks go to everyone for all their help over the past year. It would have been harder without people stepping in where needed.

Sadly, the church was broken into one evening with a small amount of damage and mess. This was repaired and new security measures put in place, with additional locks on all three entrances. Anne Milne did a great job with the insurance claim so that things got back to normal very quickly.

The flat roof over the modern extension to the church is in a very poor condition, and it is time for it to be replaced. Preliminary work is being carried out to decide how this is to be done. It will take time as it is not just a question of appointing a builder, but there are many procedures to be followed.

The churchyard maintenance team have continued to keep the churchyard looking very attractive and get much appreciation from those who visit and who enjoy the peaceful surroundings.

All regular maintenance was carried out during the year, and the cleaning teams make sure that the building is clean and tidy each week.

Carol Janes, Churchwarden

PCC Secretary's Report

Under the Church Representation Rules, we are entitled to nine elected PCC members. In addition, our Rector, Churchwardens, three Deanery Synod members, any Readers appointed by the APCM, and any co-opted members serve on the PCC.

On 20th March 2023 Revd. Rebekah 'Bekah' Clark was instituted as Rector of Elmdon and Vicar of St. Mary's Church, Hobs Moat at St. Mary's Church. She led her first service at Elmdon on the following Sunday.

In May 2024, three elected members come to the end of their term and we carried over one vacancy. At the APCM we therefore intend to elect up to four members to PCC.

Every year the PCC appoints a Standing Committee, which meets as necessary and reports to the next meeting of the PCC. Its membership since the 2022 APCM were Graham Smye (Lay Vice Chair), Carol Janes (Churchwarden), Sarah Leckie (Churchwarden), Christine Arnsby (Secretary), Alan Doyle (Treasurer) and Revd. Bekah Clark (Rector, from April 2023).

The members of the PCC are aware of the Charity Commission guidance on public benefits in 'the Advancement of Religion for the Public Benefit' and have had regard to it in their administration of the PCC. The PCC believes that by promoting the work of the Church of England in the parish of Elmdon it provides a benefit to the public by:

- providing a facility for public worship and pastoral care both for its members and for anyone who wishes to benefit from what the Church can offer; and

- promoting Christian values and services by members of the Church and to their communities, to the benefit of individuals and society as a whole

Electoral Roll

The Electoral Roll stands at 66, which is a slight decrease on last year.

Jamie Oldham, Electoral Roll Officer

Safeguarding

The PCC has adopted and complies with the House of Bishop's Safeguarding Policy, Promoting a Safer Church (2017), and the practice guidance issued by the Church of England and Birmingham Diocese.

Elmdon Church is committed to:

- Promoting a safer environment and culture
- Safely recruiting and supporting those with any responsibility for the under 18s and vulnerable adults within the church
- Responding promptly to every safeguarding concern or allegation
- Caring pastorally for victims/survivors of abuse and other affected persons
- Caring pastorally for those who are the subject of concerns or allegations of abuse and other affected persons
- Responding to those that may pose a present risk to others

Policies

During 2023 we revised our Raising Concerns ("Whistleblowing") Policy to make it clearer what the procedure is here in Elmdon, as well as carrying out the annual review of our Safeguarding Policy. These are available on the church website and on the noticeboard in the church corridor.

Training

All volunteers now complete the appropriate mandatory safeguarding training on taking up their role, and refresh their training every three years. This is normally done through the Church of England's website.

Those unable to do the training online are instead supported to complete it by the Safeguarding Co-ordinator.

Domestic Abuse Contact

The PCC has appointed Sarah Leckie as our Domestic Abuse Contact, a role which involves signposting to relevant services, receiving any concerns, and helping the church to be informed around domestic abuse issues.

National Safeguarding Standards

The Church of England has launched five safeguarding standards, showing how our safeguarding activities fit into the bigger picture and helping parishes to identify their safeguarding strengths and weaknesses. They cover creating healthy cultures and leadership, prevention of abuse, recognising and managing risk, responding well to victims/survivors, and ensuring all volunteers receive appropriate safeguarding training and support.

For more information, see

<https://www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding/national-safeguarding-standards>

Lesley Huss, Parish Safeguarding Co-ordinator
safeguarding@elmdonchurch.org

Fabric & Buildings

We currently have responsibility for two properties, one of which is now closed. Our main church building is in the middle of Elmdon Park, and is the venue for our Sunday service, as well as all baptisms, weddings, and funerals.

As mentioned elsewhere, the Gaydon Road hall site was sold during the year. The site of the Coppice Road hall remains vested in the Birmingham Diocesan Board of Trustees who hold property on behalf of (and acting in the interests of) Parochial Church Councils in the diocese. The Elmdon Parochial Church Council owns the building itself, and are the Managing Trustees.

A small finance team, comprising Bekah Clark, Alan Doyle, Martin Hewings and Richard Huss, has included in its work progressing potential projects on the fabric of the church building, of which the most important and urgent is the roof of the 1970s church extension. The PCC has now commissioned Derek Bate MRICS to progress plans for a replacement roof, following a feasibility report giving a variety of options.

Deanery Synod

Elmdon Lay Representatives: Christine Arnsby, Cheryl Doyle, Jamie Oldham. Our electoral roll total qualifies us for 3 seats until Spring 2026.

6th June 2023 – Christ Church, Sparkbrook

We met as a newly elected Deanery for the first time so we elected officers, including Lay Chair, Secretary and Treasurer. Barston put forward a proposal which was held over to the next meeting due to its obvious need for wider discussion. The meeting topic that day was “Tell: To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom”, one of the marks of mission for the Diocese based on a quote by Jesus from John 20:21 “As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.”

Suzette Maguire, Pioneer Minister for Solihull Parish and a Church Army Officer, told how she started meeting as a group of 2 people in a cafe in the parish, to what had become 24 members meeting twice weekly in a pub for friendship and chatting over meals, walks, board games and more. Some came from local churches, but many came with no regular church background. It was drawing people into Bible study and events in the church. She said, “This type of event should not be seen as church, but by building relationships it can feed into church life. The ministry is for the long term, for God to use as He sees fit.”

Caroline Mara, Deanery Children and Family Mission Enabler, said her aim was to help the church family, leaders and volunteers grow faith amongst families, children and young people. Two questions she asked were “Why does it matter to me personally that the church grows younger?” and “What possibilities have we to do so?” Her main point was to emphasise the importance of creating a bridge between Church, home and school for ‘telling’ about Jesus and growing faith amongst

children, youth and families: In the last 6 months she had been training four teenagers to lead worship and provided take-away discipleship questions.

Matt Vaughan, Interserve Mission Partner, said “Don't forget Muslims!” Having worked in Pakistan he moved about before taking up his present job in Ward End – part of the Diocese with the most Muslims, so probably having a parity in numbers with Christians. Matt said ministers had a remit of cure of the souls for the whole parish, not just the Christians. Outreach was more awkward as people want to engage but do not know how, despite most Muslims being open, friendly and chatty. No-one has refused him the offer to pray for them. Muslims being in Britain was no accident for God – He had a purpose in it all but we should ask for wisdom in what it was and what our response should be.

Revd. Steve Johnson (Assoc. Vicar, Knowle) concluded the talks by speaking of his experience using CPAS resources to create a Learning Hub. He said it was all about culture, not courses. Some of the initiatives were: Praying for 5; Evangelism prayer; Sharing faith stories and Resetting expectations.

20th July 2023 – St. Swithin's House, Barston

Nick Parker's time as Area Dean was celebrated as he had become Priest in Charge (Rector Designate) of Solihull Parish and after a 'bring and share' supper together he was presented with a cake and gift before more mobile members went walking and chatting together, leaving the others in the garden sunshine.

19th October 2023 – St. Alphege Junior School Hall, Solihull

The Ven. Gordon Steele, a retired archdeacon assisting Archdeacon Jenny as Auxiliary Archdeacon” until a new Archdeacon of Aston was appointed, introduced himself and indicated that Archdeacon Jenny had asked him to convene Deanery Chapter and share with the Lay Chair in chairing Deanery Synod until a new Area Dean was appointed. The Ven. Gordon Steele explained that as it was the first meeting of the new triennium, and that Deanery Officers and Standing Committee needed to be elected. Mark Johnson proposed adopting those lay members elected too early at the last meeting 'as a slate', which was seconded by Jamie Oldham and approved unanimously.

The meeting continued with discussion on the proposal by Barston for “urgent discussion with the bishop and diocesan synod and other stakeholders as to how parochial worship may be adequately spiritually and sacramentally enriched and resourced and by whom these services may be led.” The proposal was brought about as a result of how they perceived parishes were struggling to cope with limited Clergy and insufficient people licensed to give Holy Communion. Time was allowed for everyone to share their viewpoint before a secret vote resulted in the proposal being forwarded to the Bishop for discussion. Bishop Anne has since requested more clarity which is being drawn up between the Auxiliary Archdeacon, Barston PCC, Deanery staff and their minister, Revd. Stuart Dimes.

6th February 2023 – St. Margaret's Church, Olton

“Transform – the 4th Mark of Mission”. Fred Rattley, Community Regeneration, said that too often churches talk about social action and dismiss it, although it is at the heart of the gospel. There is only one gospel and its message is about helping the poor, oppressed and marginalised. 'Thrive Together Birmingham' was a movement of people rather than organisations and a call to people in churches to come alongside those in poverty in their local neighbourhoods; not employing

organisation to do it for us but supporting Christian activities that alleviate poverty and disadvantage. In Birmingham, 300,000 out of 1M people and 50% of children lived in poverty. Solihull was no exception with a poverty profile that exactly matched England as a whole, according to research.

The simplest way to engage the local community and take the first step in alleviating suffering was to host local community coffee mornings as isolation was recognized as a major social problem. It was not only those with mobility problems who felt isolated, but also immigrants and refugees. When they arrive in a busy city, where do they start to make friends and fit in? How are churches you know responding to the challenges of poverty?

New Area Dean. Sunday, 3rd March. an announcement was made that Revd. Tony Rindl had been appointed vicar of St Leonard's, Marston Green and Area Dean of Yardley and Solihull. Our Deanery boundaries are also being redrawn to include Marston Green. He will take up his role in July and we await news of his collation and induction before he takes up the mantle as our Area Dean.

Life at Elmdon Church

Kids in Christ

Kids in Christ is our Sunday morning group for children under 11, meeting on the 1st and 3rd Sundays of each month. Kids in Christ is an invaluable part of our Sunday worship, giving children the opportunity to learn about being a follower of Jesus and to explore the Bible and pray in an age-appropriate way, often involving craft!

Sessions usually follow a similar theme to the Sunday sermon series and the group runs from after the first song until the end of the intercessions, when we come back together as all ages for Communion.

At Elmdon Church we are passionate about every person having the opportunity to encounter, belong and grow in the love of Christ. Recent research¹ suggests around 75% of practicing Christians come to follow Jesus for themselves under the age of 18. Please do be praying for Kids in Christ, and for the wonderful team of helpers and leaders, and please do speak to Bekah if you would like to find out more about how you might be able to support our children's ministry.

Music

We were pleased in 2023 to be able to use live music in church most Sundays, and to use our band on a monthly basis. A huge "thank you" to all involved in this ministry.

Under the new church mission and vision, "joyful" is one of our values, and we are keen to play our part in enabling this within our church life. We are keen to use songs that are congregationally singable and that help us all to express our faith and our praise musically and joyfully. We have continued to introduce newer songs periodically, aiming to select songs that have biblically-faithful lyrics and singable melodies.

Music is chosen, on a rota, by members of the band, aiming to pick hymns and songs that fit with the theme of the service and Bible reading, whilst keeping the church familiar with a core repertoire of music in a variety of styles.

On Sundays when we are still singing along to recorded music, this is normally because our musicians are required to be serving elsewhere instead; everyone involved with the music also serves on other teams within the church. To help us out, you don't actually need to be able to sing, or play an instrument - volunteering in another area would really help too, by easing pressure on other rotas.

Do get in touch if you'd be interested in finding out more about how you can help and what would be involved in joining us.

Richard Huss

¹ 2022 Talking Jesus Report

Connect Groups

Connect Groups are small groups which meet during the week for fellowship, prayer and Bible study. Currently there are 3 Connect Groups and 17 church members belong to a group. The groups all meet on different days, with 2 meeting in the evening and 1 during the daytime, and 2 meeting via Zoom and 1 in person.

Connect Groups are a place to share life's ups and downs with other Christians in a deeper way than is possible on a Sunday, and to be supported and encouraged as a disciple of Jesus. Being a member of a Connect Group is one of the best ways to feel part of the church family and current members would highly recommend being in a Connect Group to all church members.

Each group follows its own programme and in 2023 groups studied the 'Fruits of the Spirit', Luke's Gospel, 'Meeting the Spirit', the Pastoral Epistles, Ruth, Jonah, Colossians and the Psalms.

In 2023, Graham Smye stepped back from co-ordinating Connect Groups. We are thankful for Graham's oversight of this area of ministry during the Vacancy and for the energy he brought to the role. I am delighted to be able to share in this report that Sue Kimber has agreed to take on the role of Connect Group Co-ordinator.

Please do speak to Sue or Bekah if you would like to try out a Connect Group.

Tuesday Service

The Tuesday afternoon service started at the church in Coppice Road for people unable to attend the main Elmdon Sunday worship service.

After Covid and the closure of the former Coppice building, Tuesday afternoon moved to Elmdon church to enable worship for those unable or uneasy to worship in the main Sunday service.

With the absence of Covid restrictions and falling attendance the service is now under review.

Open Church

We have continued to open the church every Sunday afternoon, from 2 till 3.30pm in the winter and 2 till 4pm in the summer, to welcome people in and to have some refreshment. This is offered free of charge as an example of the church's hospitality, although donations freely offered are welcome.

Many have come in at different times; families out walking in the park, rambling groups, those visiting graves, church members and friends. We have got to know some regulars too. Some come and like to sit quietly and think, some ask questions about the history, some just want some company.

There is also an opportunity to increase the use of the building for other things at the same time and take advantage of a drink and a cake; such as help with required training, conversations with bereaved families following interment of ashes, wedding couples and baptism enquiries with Bekah,

small meetings and setting up equipment or putting up decorations. Some have a game of draughts and sometimes the piano is played.

All are welcome.

Cheryl Doyle

Churchyard

The Churchyard team were hard at it from April to the end of October 2023. They split the days between Tuesdays and Wednesdays and made sure there was a minimum of two people at all times. They have access to the Church for the facilities, which will need to continue.

Lots of interaction was made between the team and people visiting the Churchyard; everyone, without exception, was thrilled with how the Churchyard was looked after.

This will continue throughout Summer 2024 and into the Autumn.

Sarah Leckie

Mission Support Group

Crosslinks - Maria "Emi" Fernandez

Crosslinks is an Anglican missionary society which enables partnerships with all churches, denominations and networks which share its convictions. Crosslinks also supports and enables the training of pastor/teachers and evangelists in less well-off countries, through their BEST (Bursaries Enabling Strategic Training) programme. Under this programme we support Maria "Emi" Fernandez, who is studying at The Centre for Pastoral Studies (CEP), Santiago, Chile. Our commitment is to support Emi in her studies, through prayer and financial giving, in the amount of £600 per annum, for three years.

We continue to receive updates and prayer requests from Crosslinks and Emi.

Wycliffe Bible Translators - Gift and Kathryn Asiku

We also partner with Gift and Kathryn Asiku, working for Wycliffe Bible translators in Uganda. Gift serves as Language Programmes Coordinator and Kathryn as Literacy Coordinator, supporting Wycliffe's vision through overseeing and facilitating Bible translation and literacy activities in local languages. The family send us regular prayer and news updates which are handed out with our church prayer sheet, and in turn they pray for us as a church here in Elmdon.

Highlights of 2023 include:

- Gift attended the joyful celebration to launch nine portions of the Old Testament in Aringa
- Gift and James travelled with colleagues to western Uganda for the lively launch of four Old Testament books in Lubwisi, with all church denominations collaborating to organise the event.

- Kathryn organised story-writing workshops for the Lunyole and Lugwere speaking communities, as part of the literacy project “Let’s Read Together!”. The stories have been turned into colourful illustrated books for the new children’s reading groups at churches, promoting and teaching literacy to young primary school children.

Ripple Effect

Ripple Effect works with farming families in six African countries so that they can learn more, grow more and sell more. Rural Africa is rich with opportunity: with resourceful communities and land from which food and futures can grow. But families face poverty that is extreme, unjust, and worst of all, unnecessary. The charity is creating a ripple effect of positive change in rural Africa. It starts with bringing farmers together to learn new skills and share knowledge, so they can improve their livelihoods and thrive. Each farmer who works with Ripple Effect promises to share what they know and what they have with their families and communities, which enables thousands to experience the benefits.

As a church we have raised many thousands of pounds over the years we have been involved with the charity, by collecting small change and from occasional donations. Thank you to all who have given so faithfully and continue to do so. For those new to Elmdon Church, there is a basket in the Wilberforce Hall where you can deposit your small change.

Please also visit www.rippleeffect.org for further information and uplifting stories about farmers who have benefited from their association with Ripple Effect.

Helping Hands

We have been able to transport a significant amount of foodstuffs and other required items to the Helping Hands food bank at the Renewal Church on Lode Lane, Solihull. Of course we do not record the amounts of goods we give to them but they seem very grateful for the regular giving we are able to give.

We are told by the volunteers that last year they supplied 2,000 boxes of food regularly to around 35 families who rely on these supplies to enable them to be fed. All the clients of the Food Bank are supplied, vetted and recommended by local agencies.

We would like to thank all contributors to our basket in the Church and whole heartedly encourage them to carry on this work, with God’s encouragement and Grace. We continue to keep the Helping Hands and its clients in our Prayers and pray for a day when this scheme will no longer be required.

Richard & Lesley Huss, Eli Malkin and Rob Dean

Hatchford Brook Churches Together

Member churches include: Lyndon Methodist; Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG); St. Giles, Sheldon; St. Thomas Moore; Sheldon Community Church (SCC) and St. Mary's Hobs Moat besides ourselves. Other churches meet in the area but do not participate in HBCT activities.

The aim of HBCT is to be a visibly united witness of faith in Christ Jesus to dispel myths and confusion among members and outsiders caused by our separateness and differences in worship style. We seek to fulfil Christ's command in John 13:35 "By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

We support each other in prayer and other ways in order to win people for Christ.

With HBCT still in 'limbo', there were no volunteers to chair the group and therefore no annual meeting but that didn't stop us witnessing to Christ together. Roger Hancock continued to act as Secretary, Christine Arnsby as Treasurer paid our annual subscription to Churches Together from HBCT funds, while Brian Atkins and Roger liaised with ministers and members to organise activities.

Carol singing by a group of about 20 inside the entrance to Tesco's on Lyndon Road was well received again last year. Although we were set off to one side of the entrance this time, which proved more difficult to connect with the shoppers, some not only stopped to enjoy our singing but also joined in. Afterwards we enjoyed fellowship, sharing what each church was doing.

During the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity we prayed for the other Churches in the HBCT area.

The Walk of Witness on Good Friday enabled us to join with congregation members of St. Mary's Hobs Moat, to join believers in celebrating God's work in Jesus on our behalf, meeting up outside Savers on the Coventry Road opposite the Wheatsheaf. It was also a good opportunity for Bekah to meet other ministers in the Churches Together area.

Rob Dean organised the SonRise Service by the beacon in Elmdon Park again this year with help from HBCT members for musical accompaniment, readings etc., from a later start of 6.30 am due to clocks going forward that morning. Fellowship was enjoyed over refreshments served in the Wilberforce Hall afterwards, to warm us up.

HBCT representatives for the year were Christine Arnsby and Elaine Malkin.

Finance

Treasurer's Report

The PCC is responsible for the church's finances, though it delegates management of these to the PCC Treasurer, Alan Doyle who, also oversees a separate fabric fund account.

Income

Most of our income usually comes through stewardship, primarily the Parish Giving Scheme but also standing orders and donations. Other sources of income have typically been wedding and funeral fees plus occasional legacies, social events and hire fees for use of the Church hall. Two unusual events occurred during 2023, we were very fortunate to receive a legacy a little in excess of £32,000 and we completed the project of obtaining planning permission and the sale of our site in Gaydon Road. The site was sold for £500,000 which resulted in a net figure of £420,000 when all fees and expenses were accounted for.

Although our finances are now much healthier there are a number of maintenance and improvement projects that need to be undertaken and we must therefore plan and budget for a continued increase in giving in the years ahead. This will ensure, not only our own financial viability, but also that we can bless other churches in more straightened situations and places. We pray for even more generosity from existing church members and for many new people to join us as well, that they might become sacrificial givers in their turn.

A "Giving Station" device is installed in the Church allowing donations to be made by card and information about all the methods of supporting the church are available at church and on our website.

Fees paid for church work

In 2023 the church paid an organist's fee for weddings and funerals at which the organ was played. Where required a vergers received a fee for duties carried out at these services. A sexton was also paid a fee for digging plots for the interment of ashes and occasionally appropriate visiting clergy fees were also paid.

Financial Reserves Policy

The Charity endeavours to maintain finances at an appropriate level to facilitate day-to-day activities and also to finance upkeep of our buildings.

Annual Report of the Elmdon Parochial Church Council for 2023

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO ELMDON PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL (THE PCC)

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the charity for the year ended 31st December 2023 which are set out on pages 17 to 25.

Responsibilities and basis of report

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

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

Independent examiner's statement

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

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

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

Jeremy Kitson FCA
Prime Chartered Accountants
Corner Oak
1 Homer Road
Solihull
B91 3QG

Date:

**ELMDON PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL
RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT - GENERAL FUND
YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023**

	Notes	2023		2022	
		£	£	£	£
Receipts					
<i>Voluntary Receipts</i>					
Planned Giving	5	46,242		40,649	
Loan received		-		-	
Collections and Donations		<u>4,548</u>		<u>3,578</u>	
			50,791		44,228
<i>Receipts from Activities for generating funds</i>					
Sundry Income		<u>524,035</u>		<u>3,540</u>	
			524,035		3,540
<i>Receipts from Church Activities</i>					
Wedding and Funeral Fees		<u>6,879</u>		<u>7,216</u>	
			6,879		7,216
<i>Receipts from Investments</i>					
Investment Income	6		<u>5,349</u>		<u>1,026</u>
Total receipts			587,054		56,010
Payments					
<i>Church Activities</i>					
Apportionment	7	97,049		16,580	
Building repairs		4,043		1,113	
Charities	8	2,777		3,227	
Church running expenses		106		32	
Church and Churchyard	9	14,889		12,037	
Loan repayments		4,000		-	
Printing, postage and stationery		1,167		1,405	
Sundry Expenses	10	5,684		7,710	
VCC planning fees		<u>24,688</u>		<u>9,766</u>	
			154,403		51,870
<i>Governance costs</i>					
Accountancy			<u>2,010</u>		<u>1,860</u>
Total payments			156,413		53,730
Transfers to / (out of) general fund			(18,000)		-
(Deficit)/Surplus of Receipts/Overpayments			<u>412,641</u>		<u>2,280</u>
Bank Balances 1 January			<u>6,450</u>		<u>4,170</u>
Bank Balances 31 December			<u>437,091</u>		<u>6,450</u>

**ELMDON PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL
RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT - RESTRICTED FUND
YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023**

	Notes	2023		2022	
	£	£	£	£	£
Receipts					
<i>Voluntary Receipts</i>					
Collections and Donations	<u>903</u>		<u>1,544</u>		
		903		1,544	
<i>Receipts from Activities for generating funds</i>					
Sundry Income	<u>-</u>		<u>-</u>		
		-		-	
<i>Receipts from Church Activities</i>					
Wedding and Funeral Fees	<u>5,204</u>		<u>5,050</u>		
		5,204		5,050	
Total receipts		6,107		6,594	
Payments					
<i>Church Activities</i>					
Church running expenses	3,800		2,735		
VCC planning fees	<u>-</u>		<u>-</u>		
Total payments		3,800		2,735	
Transfer from general funds		18,000		-	
(Deficit)/Surplus of Receipts/Overpayments		<u>20,307</u>		<u>3,589</u>	
Bank Balances 1 January		<u>26,503</u>		<u>2,337</u>	
Bank Balances 31 December		<u>8,503</u>		<u>6,196</u>	

**ELMDON PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL
RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT - DESIGNATED ACCOUNT
– FABRIC FUND**

YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

	2023		2022	
	£	£	£	£
Receipts				
<i>Voluntary Receipts</i>				
Transfer from Funds		2,200		-
Sundry income		-		1,000
Interest on CBF Appeals Fund		<u>39</u>		<u>15</u>
Total receipts		2,239		1,015
Payments				
<i>Church Activities</i>				
Transfer between funds	-		-	
Music Fund	250		295	
Bank charge	40		60	
Wedding fees costs	-		-	
Total payments	<u> </u>	<u>290</u>	<u> </u>	<u>355</u>
(Deficit)/Surplus of receipts/overpayments		<u>1,949</u>		<u>660</u>
Bank Balances 1 January		<u>2,034</u>		<u>1,374</u>
Bank Balances 31 December		<u>3,983</u>		<u>2,034</u>

**ELMDON PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL
CONSOLIDATED RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT
YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023**

	General £	Designated £	Restricted	2023 Total £	2022 Total £
Receipts					
Planned Giving	46,242	-	-	46,242	40,649
Collections & Donations	4,548	-	903	5,451	5,123
Teas	-	-	-	-	-
Sundry Income	519,834	2,200	-	522,034	2,200
Wedding & Funeral Fees	6,879	-	5,204	12,083	12,266
Investment Income	5,349	39	-	5,388	1,041
VAT refunds/Insurance claims	3,490	-	-	3,490	-
Income from Organisations	-	-	-	-	-
Outside Bookings	-	-	-	-	-
Miscellaneous	-	-	-	-	-
Rents	313	-	-	313	2,340
Functions	398	-	-	398	-
Grants & Donations	-	-	-	-	-
 Total Receipts	 <u>587,053</u>	 <u>2,239</u>	 <u>6,107</u>	 <u>595,399</u>	 <u>63,619</u>
Payments					
Apportionment	97,049	-	-	97,049	16,580
Charities	2,777	-	-	2,777	3,227
Church Running Expenses	106	-	3,800	3,906	2,767
Church & Churchyard	8,326	-	-	8,326	4,329
Printing, Postage & Stationary	1,167	-	-	1,167	1,405
Sundry Expenses	5,684	-	-	5,684	7,710
Accountancy	2,010	-	-	2,010	1,860
Building Maintenance & Repairs	4,043	-	-	4,043	1,113
Bank charges	-	40	-	40	60
Loan repayments	4,000	-	-	4,000	-
Light & Heat	1,348	-	-	1,348	2,832
Water	593	-	-	593	531
Insurance	3,139	-	-	3,139	2,897
Telephone	1,483	-	-	1,483	1,448
Music fund	-	250	-	250	295
VCC planning fees	24,688	-	-	24,688	9,766
 Total Payments	 <u>156,413</u>	 <u>290</u>	 <u>3,800</u>	 <u>160,503</u>	 <u>56,820</u>

**ELMDON PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL
CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES
AT 31 DECEMBER 2023**

	Total £	General Fund £	Restricted Fund £	Designated Funds £
Monetary Assets				
CBF deposit fund	425,554	406,295	18,000	1,259
Bank current accounts	23,079	11,851	8,504	2,724
Bank deposit accounts	<u>945</u>	<u>945</u>	-	-
	449,578	419,091	26,504	3,983
Investments (at valuation at year end)				
CBF Share Portfolio	39,668	39,668	-	-
CBF Fixed Interest	<u>181</u>	<u>181</u>	-	-
	<u>489,427</u>	<u>458,940</u>	<u>26,504</u>	<u>3,983</u>

Other Assets

Properties vested in the Birmingham Diocesan Board of Trustees on behalf of the PCC:
St Stephens Church Centre and Valley Church Centre

ANALYSIS OF DESIGNATED FUNDS

	Total £	Fabric Fund £	Valley Church Centre £	St Stephens Hall Users £
CBF deposit fund	1,259	1,259	-	-
Bank current account	2,724	2,724	-	-
Bank deposit account	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
	<u>3,983</u>	<u>3,983</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>

These Financial Statements were approved by the Parochial Church Council on

7th May 2024 and signed on behalf of the Council by:-

Bekah Clark Chair

**ELMDON PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023**

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

The financial statements of the PCC have been prepared in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations issued in 2006 using the Receipts and Payments basis, the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) and the Charities Act 2011.

Funds

General funds represent the funds of the PCC that are not subject to any special restrictions regarding their use and are available for application to the general purposes of the PCC.

The accounts include monetary transactions, assets and liabilities for which the PCC can be held responsible. They do not include the accounts of other Church groups that owe an affiliation to another body, nor those that are informal gatherings of Church members.

Subject to the above, receipts and payments include income as received and expenditure when irrevocably paid. Income Tax recoverable in respect of the year to 31 December is included in the receipts and payments accounts.

Non-monetary donations to the PCC are not included in the receipts and payments accounts, because they are incapable of being recorded at definite amounts. Where material, such items are referred to in the Annual Report.

Statement of Assets and Liabilities

The following assets are recognised as being under the ownership of the PCC but are not included in the Statement of Assets and Liabilities.

- Movable church furnishings held by the church wardens on special trust for the PCC and which require a faculty for disposal.
- Land and buildings held on behalf of the PCC.
- Other fixtures, fittings and office equipment where the PCC is free to dispose of such assets without faculty.
- Any other amounts owing to the PCC including church hall lettings and insurance claims.
- Legacies where formal notification of entitlement and amount has been received at 31 December by the PCC.
- Income Tax recoverable from HM Revenue & Customs in respect of Gift Aid donations received after 31 December in the year.

Opening and Closing bank balances are shown in the receipts and payments accounts.

**ELMDON PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)
YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023**

2. DESIGNATED FUNDS

The Fabric Fund is designated (i.e. to be used solely) for the purpose of maintaining and improving the Parish Church.

3. REMUNERATION

No person connected with the Parochial Church Council has been paid or is due to be paid any remuneration or other benefits from the Funds of the PCC.

4. TRANSACTIONS WITH CONNECTED PERSONS

There have been no material transactions undertaken in the name of or on behalf of the Council in which any person connected with the Council has a material interest.

5. PLANNED GIVING

	2023	2022
	£	£
Gift aid receipts	25,882	27,244
Income tax recovered	12,902	5,432
Other giving	<u>7,458</u>	<u>7,973</u>
	<u><u>46,242</u></u>	<u><u>40,649</u></u>

**ELMDON PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)**

YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

6. INVESTMENT INCOME

	2023	2022
	£	£
CBF Deposit account interest	-	5
CBF Dividends	1,030	995
Interest on Reserve fund	<u>4,312</u>	<u>26</u>
	<u><u>5,342</u></u>	<u><u>1,026</u></u>

7. APPORTIONMENT

	2023	2022
	£	£
Paid Direct	<u>97,049</u>	<u>16,580</u>

8. CHARITIES

	2023	2022
	£	£
Christian Relief, Development and Agencies	721	149
Churches overseas	2,056	2,286
Home Missions	<u>-</u>	<u>792</u>
	<u><u>2,777</u></u>	<u><u>3,227</u></u>

**ELMDON PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)**

YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

9. CHURCH AND CHURCHYARD EXPENSES

	2023	2022
	£	£
Maintenance and repairs	-	1,113
Water rates	593	531
Telephone	1,483	1,448
Light and heat	1,348	2,832
Insurance	3,139	2,897
Sundries	7,420	3,170
Wine, candles etc	-	46
Curate's House Rent	-	-
Consumer unit test & certification	-	-
Christian Literature	199	-
Readers' Board	-	-
Visiting Clergy	<u>707</u>	<u>-</u>
	<u>14,889</u>	<u>12,037</u>

10. SUNDRY EXPENSES

	2023	2022
	£	£
Fete floats	-	-
Other Sundry Expenses	<u>5,684</u>	<u>7,710</u>
	<u>5,684</u>	<u>7,710</u>

MINUTES OF THE 2023 ANNUAL MEETINGS

Held 23rd May 2023

Attendance at the annual meetings of Parishioners and Church (24)

Revd. Bekah Clark, Rector	Martin Hewings	Anne Milne
Christine Arnsby	Lesley Huss	Jamie Oldham
Sarah Baldwin	Carol Janes	James Rusher
Linda Bird	Rod Janes	Elizabeth Smye
Ann Davis	Sue Kimber	Joyce Taylor
Alan Doyle	Sarah Leckie	Margaret Thomas
Cheryl Doyle	Elaine Malkin	John Tsipouras
Joan Hewings	Karen Matthews	Jean Wooding

A. MEETING OF PARISHIONERS

Bekah welcomed everyone to the meeting and invited all to join in a hymn of celebration and thanks to God.

1. Apologies (5)

Graham Smye (Lay Chairman), Val and Tony Shaw, Rob and Joy Dean.

2. Minutes of previous meeting of parishioners, Tuesday 24th May 2022

Sarah Leckie and Lesley Huss proposed the minutes be adopted. Motion approved unanimously.

3 Election of Church Warden

Carol Janes was proposed by Christine Arnsby, seconded by Cheryl Doyle.

There were no other nominations. Carol agreed to stand as Church Warden for the coming year and was accepted unanimously.

Thanks were expressed to Carol and Sarah Leckie for their service as Wardens, especially during an interregnum post-lockdown.

B. ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING (APCM)

1 Bible reflection.

Bekah spoke from John 15:1-17, before opening the meeting in prayer.

2 Apologies (5)

Graham Smye, Lay Chairman, Val and Tony Shaw, Rob and Joy Dean.

3 Minutes of the previous APCM held 24th May 2022

Carol Janes and Jean Wooding proposed the minutes be adopted. Motion approved unanimously.

4 Accounts and Financial Statements

Alan Doyle, Treasurer, reported that Planned Giving had dropped slightly but most other income had increased slightly, resulting in a 3% rise in income overall. He then explained some of the challenges for the parish during the past year as it pursued the sale of properties on Gaydon Road involving substantial expenditure and the proposed broad plan for resolving the issues once the imminent sale was complete. There were no questions. Bekah expressed thanks to Alan, whose work often went unnoticed.

5 Report on the revised Electoral Roll

Jamie Oldham reported that the revised roll, published 14th May 2023, contained 67 names which was up from 65 names last year.

6 PCC Reports

Comments were made regarding the following reports:

6.1 Wardens' report

Sarah said that Open Church was continuing to be fruitful in unexpected ways, including donations rising over previous years. Carol reported that the Tuesday afternoon service was also continuing to bear fruit with occasional visitors 'dropping in'.

6.2 Safeguarding Co-ordinator

Thanks were expressed to Lesley for keeping the parish up to date with best practice and working to maintain a safe environment for its members in line with Church of England guidelines.

6.3 Kids in Christ

Thanks were expressed to Elizabeth Smye for the joyful work being done in which Church members could join in and which was enabling the whole church family to grow together.

6.4 Connect Groups

Several members said they found their group encouraging and enjoyable. Bekah thanked Graham for co-ordinating the groups and for people to contact him if they wished to be a member.

6.5 Music Group

Thanks were expressed to the musicians but particularly to Richard Huss for his contributions both to the worship music and technical support of the group.

6.6 Mission Support Group

Eli explained that the parish only supported Emi Fernandez, Crosslinks, as her husband was supported by other churches.

6.7 Fabric Report

Carol reported that there were jobs to be done and a priority list was

being followed. The flat roofs were currently being cleared and repaired. Sarah said the churchyard needed continual maintenance but was very enjoyable work, meeting many people who want to talk about the church, and volunteers were always welcome.

6.8 Hatchford Brook Churches Together

Christine said the group was continuing in its present format, without a Chairman, for the time being as one member had expressed a strong preference for it to do so. The Secretary and Treasurer were happy to continue in post but a new Chairman who could liaise with church leaders and organise events, was needed.

7 Appointment of such Readers as wish to become PCC members

Members approved the motion that Karen Matthews, Parish Reader, be accepted as member of the PCC.

8 Election of lay representatives to the PCC

Three vacancies were available for election to the PCC:

Sarah Leckie was proposed by Graham Smye, seconded by Carol Janes and David Maguire was proposed by Martin Hewings, seconded by Eli Malkin.

There were no further nominations and Sarah and David were duly elected for three years, leaving one vacancy.

9. Election of representatives to Deanery Synod

The parish was eligible for three representatives to Deanery Synod.

Cheryl Doyle was proposed by Carol Janes, seconded by Sue Kimber, Christine Arnsby was proposed by Carol Janes, seconded by Cheryl Doyle, and Jamie Oldham was proposed by Carol Janes, seconded by Elaine Malkin.

There were no further nominations and Cheryl, Christine and Jamie were duly elected for three years.

10 Appointment of independent examiner

Alan Doyle proposed using the same accountants (Prime Chartered Accountants) for the coming year. Martin Hewings seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously with one abstention.

11. Rector's Address

Bekah spoke of her interview process saying how she had explained it to a friend as a 'really fun day' as she felt part of a community of Jesus' followers, and that the warmth of welcome, help and fellowship had continued since her arrival. She viewed Elmdon as an authentic community of Jesus with a big heart and felt very much at home. Bekah then named various members of the many teams in the life of the

church and thanked them all for their contributions, along with those fulfilling unofficial tasks, like being a listening ear, helping with lifts, shopping, welcoming and much more.

Bekah encouraged us to: Abide in Jesus and remain in Him; to know Him and be known by Him and His deep care for each of us; to Grow and bear fruit that comes not from what we've done but from knowing who we are and whose we are. She concluded with a short prayer for the Church family in Elmdon.

Bekah presented a gift and card expressing our thanks to Sarah for her 2 years of devoted work to the Church family. Sarah thanked everyone and said that after lockdown she had wanted to help people come together again and was glad we were there for bigger and better things.

12. There was no other business. After a hymn of celebration, Bekah closed the meeting by thanking everyone for their time before non-members left the meeting, leaving the PCC to continue.

Agenda for the Meeting of Parishioners and Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM)

Tuesday 21st May 2024, 7.30pm at Elmdon Church
Refreshments available from 7pm

Meeting of Parishioners

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of the previous Meeting of Parishioners, Tuesday 23rd May 2023
3. Election of Churchwardens

Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM)

1. Bible reflection and opening prayer
2. Apologies for absence
3. Minutes of the previous Annual Parochial Church Meeting, Tuesday 23rd May 2023
4. Report on the revised Electoral Roll
5. Appointment of PCC Members
 - PCC Members (up to 4)
 - Reader representative
6. Receive APCM reports
7. Appointment of independent examiner
8. Rector's Address
9. Any other business
10. Closing prayer

First meeting of the new Parochial Church Council (PCC)

Election of:

1. Lay Vice Chair
2. Secretary
3. Treasurer
4. Electoral Roll Officer
5. Safeguarding Co-ordinator & Parish Identity Verifier
6. Domestic Abuse Contact