



- 10.00am Morning service and extended junior church groups
Please take Bubbles, Flames and Ignite children straight to the Parish Hall at 10am where they will have an extended session until 11.45am. Sustain will start at its normal time of 10.30am in the Parish Office
- 10.45am Coffee break
- 11.00am Annual Meeting
- 11.45am Break to re-set chairs and pick up children
- 12.05pm International church lunch - everyone is invited to stay
- 12.45pm Group photos; games and quiz
- 1.30pm Finish and clear up

All timings are approximate - but this is what we're aiming for!

St James' by the Park – who we are and what makes us tick

God is calling us to **become** (our vision)

*God is calling us to become a community who embrace
Different expressions of church in order to make
Disciple-making disciples who increasingly reflect the
Diversity of our local area*

To achieve this vision, God is calling us to **be**

Courageous, Whole-hearted, Expectant

What do disciples **do**? (our discipleship triangle)

Up: Go deeper with God

In: grow closer to each other

Out: reach further with the good news of Jesus

God calls us to **believe** (our foundations)

God (loving Father, saviour Son, empowering Spirit),

Bible (God's inspired word, essential for life and faith),

Church (ordinary people following the extraordinary Jesus together)

Our **mission focus areas** (priorities)

*mental wellbeing; environment; older people; financial hardship
children, teenagers and families; Inter-cultural relations*

Annual meeting agenda:

1. Looking back and giving thanks (Dan's review of the year, pages 2-4)
2. Formally required reports and other reports (pages 5-10)
3. Election of church wardens
4. Election of PCC members
5. Financial report (pages 10-12)
6. Appointment of independent examiner
7. Update on buildings
8. Update on leadership teams
9. Questions
10. Apologies for absence
11. Minutes of last year's meeting (pages 15-18)
12. Prayer

Dan's review of 2023

Church life is always a mixture of encouragements and challenges. Let's start with the encouragements!

2023 began in memorable style as we held a **joint service with the Church of Pentecost** to celebrate their taking up the baton of hosting Christian worship in St John's Centre. It is such an answer to prayer to see that building continuing being used for God's glory and the building of his kingdom.

Some of the recent arrivals from Hong Kong hosted an **Alpha course in Cantonese**, with support from English-speaking members of the congregation. There is now a continuing Cantonese-speaking discipleship group off the back of that.

We also ran a **joint Alpha course with St James Road Methodist Church** – using their marvellous venue. It was, in effect, an answer to a prayer from several years ago that we would be able to run a course together. The course was spiritually significant for a lot of the people who attended. There are plans to do another joint course in 2024.

We ran our first **'Holiday @ Home'** – an afternoon of activities for those who cannot afford, or are physically unable, to travel to holiday destinations. This was especially appreciated by older members of our congregation and community. Our Elderberries group (who ran this) continue to do great work at ministering to older people throughout the year.

We also ran our first **Summer Holiday Bible Club** for children – Wonderzone. The church was transformed; a huge and dedicated team (led by our Children and Families Team Leader) came together to run the activities and groups; we were at capacity with many children (including a good number with whom we hadn't had previous contact) loving the week. The week closed with a Holiday Club celebration service and event on the Sunday for families.

After several years of trying to re-establish our links with **Upper Shirley High**, prayers were answered and the doors opened for our Youth Worker to go in two lunchtimes a week, to chat with students informally. We also started up a weekly **Donuts and Drinks** stall outside the church building, serving up to 100 USH students each time. Let's pray that our Youth Worker and the team have wisdom to know how to build on these opportunities. We were also approached by **Richard Taunton Sixth Form College** to run a weekly drop-in for students, which our Youth Worker has now started doing.

We've had a bumper year for **teenage and adult baptisms** – with some memorable stories shared of how people have come to faith in Jesus, and how Jesus has helped

them through incredible trials in life. In total, four teenagers and six adults were baptised or re-affirmed their baptism vows – the largest number since 2007. Praise God that he goes on calling people from all walks of life to faith in Jesus!

Talking of teenagers, one of our teens took it upon themselves to start up **Sustain**, a group for yr 9+ on two Sunday mornings a month. What an encouragement that our young people are wanting to engage with the Bible and questions of faith together – and are willing to get out of bed on a Sunday morning to do so!

We have now re-established a good pattern of monthly prayer gatherings. We're calling these our **House of Prayer** evenings, remembering that Jesus (quoting Isaiah) said, "My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations." The team running these are keen to include a variety of ways of praying and worshipping as part of these evenings, helping us all grow in our prayer life.

The year closed with another memorable event – a packed **carol service** (many of whom weren't regular church attendees) with a 25-piece orchestra as well as organ and band. The message and the music seemed to connect with people in a deeper way than normal. Praise God that he gives such creative gifts and that the good news of Christmas is still eternally relevant to ordinary people.

Of course, there are many other encouragements as well from ongoing ministries, and we're so grateful for those who faithfully serve in so many ways. I've listed the encouragements above simply because they were signs of new growth or stood out from regular activities.

What about the challenges?

Our 3-D church vision states that we want to create Different expressions of church in order to make Disciple-making disciples who increasingly reflect the Diversity of our local area. Our congregation has indeed continued to become more diverse (praise God!), but we decided to stop doing our monthly Wonder Walks in December. This was one attempt at creating a '**different expression of church**' – but it's clear that it wasn't particularly catching on in sustainable numbers. We mustn't give up – the gospel is urgent good news for lost people, so we need to pray for God to guide us to other creative expressions of church which will work for some of the thousands in Shirley who don't yet know the powerful love of God and the love of a church community.

When it comes to making '**disciple-making disciples**', we are aware that our current midweek small groups (which should be the places where much of our disciple-making happens) are over-represented by those aged over 50 and women. We formed a small review group to pray and discuss about ways to encourage more of our community into small groups and hope to make progress with this in 2024.

Personally speaking, 2023 was one of the hardest years of my ordained ministry, triggered by the House of Bishops of the Church of England encouraging the national governing body (General Synod) to authorise the **blessing of same-sex couples**. This has proved to be extremely contentious, with a very narrow majority in favour in Synod, and a near 50:50 opinion split in our local context. Inevitably but tragically, many LGBTQ+ people feel caught in the crossfire. Lena courageously agreed to take part in a couple of discussion evenings alongside me, as we presented two different sides of the debate. Nationally, the divisions continue to be very deep and serious (and seem to have reached an impasse). Locally, we are reminded that what unites us is far more than what divides us, and our calling is to love and serve each other across our differences, keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith.

As we've adjusted to having a **smaller staff team**, I'm very grateful that I now have a PA working for me for 5 hours a week. That's made a big difference to me as I juggle being vicar here with being Area Dean for the Anglican churches on this side of Southampton.

We have made progress in **starting teams** to oversee the 'Up' (prayer, worship and teaching) and 'In' (welcoming, caring and building community) areas of our church life. The next challenges are starting an 'Out' (evangelism and mission) team and ensuring these teams, together with other existing teams, relate well to each other and the Church Council. I'm convinced that as more of us use our God-given gifts in these ways, we will flourish as a church.

There are the ongoing frustrations with discerning the right next steps with our 3 **buildings** – 2023 seemed to have more no's than yes's – but there are good signs that 2024 will be more positive!

At some points, the encouragements seem to outweigh the discouragements; at other times, the discouragements seem to outweigh the encouragements. Whichever it seems to be, we have a **great promise** to stand on: Jesus said, "I will build my church and the gates of Hades will not overcome it" (Matthew 16:18). Nothing that discourages us takes Jesus by surprise or thwarts his plans. He will go on building his church in whatever way he sees best. And we have a **stirring exhortation**: "My dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labour in the Lord is not in vain" (1 Corinthians 15.58). So let's keep serving him – joyfully, patiently, filled with his Spirit – knowing that nothing we do for the Lord is ever wasted. It's all part of the way he chooses to build his church and grow his kingdom. Hallelujah!

2023 Formally Required Reports

Electoral Roll (formally required)

There were 203 members in 2023. The changes in 2024 are as follows:

No longer members: 6; new members: 3

Therefore, the total number of members enrolled for 2024 is 200

No. of members living IN the Parish – 128

No. of members OUT of the Parish - 72

Theresa Bowen

Church Wardens' Report

Nick and Tracy are both happy to stand for another year as wardens. We have developed a good working relationship with Dan and look forward to that continuing into the next twelve months.

Nick has stepped back from the Building Development Group and Dave Arbery has now taken that on.

Tracy continues to work with the Pastoral Oversight Group. Please do contact Tracy (tracy.king@stjamesbythepark.org) if you or anyone you know needs some more support. The group meets every few weeks and on behalf of the group Tracy wants to thank everyone for their care of each other.

The Prayers of Love and Faith discussion continues to divide people within the Church of England. We are hoping and praying that here at St. James by the Park we can manage these differences with Grace and Love.

We are looking at the structure of leadership within the parish and trying to develop 'teams' that can help grow the various areas of church life. The Pastoral Oversight Group is one of these teams.

We encourage everyone to serve in some way within church life, and if you're interested in being involved with one of these oversight groups or teams, do let us know. If you are interested in helping deepen our sense of being a church community, the 'IN' team may be for you.

We are thankful to Angel and Josh for all their hard work with our children and young people. If you can offer any help with our lively and lovely younger generations, please do get in touch with Angel or Josh.

The pace of life within modern British society seems to have got faster and we want to provide resources and relationships that help parishioners as they navigate this pace of life in a Godly way.

Please do speak to either of the Church Wardens if you have any questions...we may not know the answers, but we will go away and seek clarification on your behalf.

John 13.v34-35. A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know you are my disciples, if you love one another.

Tracy King & Nick Smith

Parochial Church Council Report (formally required)

The PCC is made up of people from our church who are elected to the position each year at the annual meeting. They are considered 'trustees' by the Charity Commission. They are responsible (with the vicar) for discerning the vision and direction for St. James' by the Park and making major decisions to help bring that vision to fruition. Each meeting starts by looking at a bible passage and with a time of prayer led by different members of the PCC. Each meeting ends with a time of prayer.

The PCC had 9 full meetings in 2023 as well as a meal together in May to help the new PCC start to get to know each other.

During 2023:

- A safeguarding update was given at every meeting; either with a scenario to work through or an update from the team's meeting.
- Paul Thaxter, from the External Missions group attended a meeting to give an update on the External Missions we were supporting including information about the hope to adopt Myanmar Diocese.
- There was an ongoing conversation about shared leadership. This came about due to the realisation that we needed to re-think leadership following the loss of 3 members of staff and 1 changing his role to make sure that ministry was allowed to flourish, and Dan didn't become overwhelmed.
- As part of shared leadership, teams started to be set up for different ministry areas.
- The PCC reviewed the implementation of ChurchSuite, our data management system.
- The ongoing issue of the 'reverter', the part of the proceeds from St. John's sale that was donated for a specific use was discussed at times throughout the year. Legal advice was sought as to whether we were entitled to it. This is still ongoing.
- 'Living in Love and Faith', the discussions held by the Church of England on whether to allow the blessing of same sex marriages was an agenda item for the PCC throughout the year.

- The Building Development Group continued to look into the possibility of re-building the Parish Hall. It was a frustrating process as we constantly came up against a brick wall when submitting plans to the council. Because of this the PCC started to think about refurbishing the hall instead and a Building Vision Group was set up to start this process.
- The PCC agreed to extra PA help for Dan.
- At the start of the new PCC following the 2023 annual meeting, Dan set out the priorities for 2023-24 PCC. They were focussing on buildings, leadership structures, reaching younger people and the 2024 budget.
- The PCC agreed to replacing the communion table with a newer, lighter table and matching side tables. Southampton Wood Recycling Project will provide these.
- The PCC looked at proposals to re-develop our website and gave the go-ahead for this work to start.
- Staff pastoral care was discussed and plans were put in place to update the staff handbook.
- Josh, Angel and Dan fed back from a youth, children and families training day which they had all found very inspiring. The weekly Zoom prayer meetings on Monday mornings has been one of the outcomes from this day.
- A review of cell groups was started.
- The budget for 2024 was agreed.
- A slight change to the service pattern from January 2024 was agreed.

Theresa Bowen

Deanery Synod Report (formally required)

The Deanery makes up the collection of the Anglican churches in the City of Southampton, seeking to discern God's vision for the City as we work together to enable 'His Kingdom Come...' Each Parish in the Deanery elects a number of representatives dictated by the number of people on its electoral roll. St James' by the Park has three elected reps, David Bates, Rosie Brooks and me. Simon and Esther Clift are also members of Deanery Synod because of their position on General and Diocesan Synod respectively. One of the roles of Deanery Synod reps is to elect lay members to those "higher" Synods.

The Deanery is currently headed by Joint Area Deans, of whom Dan is one and Simon Robertson from Bitterne Park is the other. Erica Roberts (Assistant Minister at Highfield and City Chaplain for Older People) is Assistant Area Dean.

Each Synod has, as a main item, a topic which is relevant to all churches in the Area, news from around the deanery, including clergy comings and goings, and a time of worship.

There is often a report on the deliberations of Diocesan Synod (Diocesan Synod papers are available on the Diocesan website Resources From Previous Meetings of Diocesan Synod - Diocese of Winchester (anglican.org)).

Administrative matters, approval of minutes etc. are kept to a minimum. Meetings are not restricted to Synod members and anyone is welcome to attend.

During the year, the Parishes of Millbrook and Freemantle were merged and Revd. Karen Linington was appointed as Rector of the United Parish of Freemantle with Millbrook. The church building of Holy Trinity, Millbrook is to be sold to the Romanian Orthodox Church. The parish of St Barnabas has been merged into the parish of St Mary's, City Centre.

There were three meetings of Deanery Synod in 2023.

The March meeting was held in Ascension Church, Bitterne Park at which Revd. Jemima Lewis, who heads up the Diocesan Communications team, gave a presentation on the work of her department and how they help to support churches. They are always looking for news items and publish a weekly newsletter to which you can sign up at this link: [Weekly Newsletter - Diocese of Winchester \(anglican.org\)](http://Weekly Newsletter - Diocese of Winchester (anglican.org))

In May we were at St Mary's, Sholing and Keith Fox (Highfield) led Synod in an exploration of how care for the environment is an essential part of our Christian Faith and Witness.

October saw us in St Alban's, Swaythling where Erica Roberts facilitated a session on "Making Church Accessible to all". A number of people with disabilities made moving contributions and discussions included awareness of mental health issues and hidden disabilities as well as practical/physical barriers to inclusion.

As noted in previous reports, Synod has a fund, "the Deanery Collaborative Working Fund", which can be accessed by two or more churches in the Deanery wishing to explore new collaborative ventures.

David Wagstaff

Fabric and Building (formally required)

The building maintenance team is headed up by Steve Condell as our Building Maintenance Manager. Martin Caveney joined Steve in March 2023 as our building maintenance person. He carries out general maintenance in our buildings and grounds; between them they try and keep our buildings in a good state of repair either by carrying out the work themselves or arranging for other people to come and do it. Steve also organises all the regular checks we need to carry out in our buildings.

Work that has been carried out over the last year includes:

- Surge protection for the church lightning protection system was installed.
- A broken exterior plinth around the base of the church was repaired.
- Damaged church window arches were repaired and restored.
- Church boiler room door was replaced as the wood had rotted.
- Church interior around the kitchen hatch/sound desk area was repainted.
- Church vestry has been reorganised and tidied.
- The trees in the church grounds were inspected by a tree surgeon and some pruned.
- Crack on interior church gallery window was repaired.
- Stair edging on church gallery escape stairs repaired.
- PAT testing done on the electrical appliances in our three buildings.
- 5-year electrical inspection completed on our three buildings.
- Repairs related to the above inspection completed and new fuse boxes were installed in the parish hall and office – to comply with modern electrical legislation.
- Church clock mechanism was dismantled and then repaired, cleaned, lubricated and reassembled and is now in good working order.
- Unjammed church fan light windows and closed them to keep the heat in.
- A new company (Crown) was sourced to maintain our church boiler and it is now working more efficiently than it did with the previous company.
- Light bulbs in the church changed to LED.
- Lights in the parish hall replaced.
- New baby changing unit installed in church toilet.
- Guttering at the office and parish hall cleared.
- The office front room was repainted, and new curtain poles and curtains put up.
- The church bells were inspected by Church of England bell experts and were found to be in good condition.

Work that is currently in progress includes:

- Church boiler room pipes are being lagged.
- Holes in the foyer ceiling have been filled in and these will be finished off and the ceiling repainted.
- We have Faculty approval to restore the church clock dials and are looking into grants for this. We may end up doing only one dial as refurbishment of all 3 faces will be very expensive.
- Martin is working on repairing a section of wall in the left church stairwell which has some damp.
- We have started clearing the office rear garden.
- We are asking for quotes to have the church clock serviced on a regular basis.
- As the Church is a listed building, we can claim back the tax paid on work done there. A claim for £1278 has been submitted.

Work that is planned for the future:

- The lime tree on the corner of Bellemore Road and St. James Road will need to be pollarded.
- Research into future grants for restoration and repairs to our church buildings.
- Looking at ways to improve and modernise the church lighting.
- Putting together a more structured maintenance plan for our buildings.
- Martin is going to organise a work party to tidy the church grounds.
- Looking for ways to make the electrical systems safer in the church.
- We will be tackling the damp areas behind the altar.
- The emergency lighting in the church will need to be updated.

Steve Condell

Financial Review (formally required)

Overview

The church's total income for 2023 was £277,921 – of this £260,106 was for our general funds and £17,815 was interest earned on the funds from the sale of the St John's Church building in July 2022. Total expenditure was £285,831. This resulted in a net deficit for our general funds of £25,725 and an overall net deficit of £7,910 (when we include the interest on the St John's funds).

The figures for 2022 are shown below for comparison:

	2023	2022
	£	£
Income for general funds	260,106	276,195
Expenditure	285,831	284,283
Net deficit on general funds	(25,725)	(8,088)
Income for funds from St John's sale	17,815	433,037
Net surplus/(deficit) on all funds	<u>(7,910)</u>	<u>424,949</u>

The balance sheet, which gives a snapshot of the finances at 31 December 2023, shows that the overall funds of the church, including our fixed assets, was £686,790. Of this, £132,080 was cash reserves and £450,852 was restricted funds (from the sale of St John's).

Income

The income for our general funds has fallen by £16,089 compared to 2022. This is mostly due to a decrease in income from regular giving and gift aid recovered. However, we are aware that increases in the cost of living have made giving more difficult for many people, and we are grateful that so many have continued to give to the church despite these challenges.

Additional income of £17,815 was earned as interest on the £433,037 received from the sale of the St John’s Church building in July 2022; these funds are restricted to use locally within the parish. This sum represents 79% of the net proceeds of the sale. It is being held and invested by the Diocese of Winchester on our behalf and can only be spent with our authorisation. The remaining 21% (£115,111) of the proceeds are the subject of a reverter clause that was put in place when the money to buy the land was gifted to the PCC. Our entitlement to this portion of the sale proceeds is still awaiting clarification and it cannot yet be recognised as income. This portion is also being held by the Diocese of Winchester whilst this process takes place.

In the light of rising interest rates, the PCC has moved some of our reserves to obtain a higher rate.

Expenditure

Total expenditure increased by £1,548 compared to the previous year but was lower than the predicted expenditure set in the annual budget (£291,807).

The main areas of cost were:

	2023	2022
	£	£
Contribution to Diocesan Common Mission Fund	84,177	86,020
Lay staff salaries	97,623	102,437
Buildings (maintenance, improvements, insurance and utilities)	55,151	43,448

The payment of £84,177 to the Common Mission Fund was as requested by the Diocese, and represented a decrease of £1,843 from 2022.

Annual salary costs decreased by £4,814, predominantly due to Paul Lambert having finished his paid role in order to train for ordination.

Annual expenditure on buildings increased by £11,703 overall. This expenditure included £8,800 on structural repairs on the main church building and £5,346 on refurbishment of the tower clock. There was a 45% increase in the cost of utilities of £5,703 to £18,284, reflecting the continuing increase in the cost of energy during the year.

Expenditure on the planned redevelopment of the church buildings consisted of £4,980 on architect’s fees.

We were able to give away £11,500 to various mission partners (£3,000 to Scratch, £1,500 to Arocha UK, £4,000 to CMS Mission Hub, £1,500 to Enable Busoga and £1,500 to Myanmar). In addition, our Christmas appeal raised over £3,500, which was divided

between CLEAR, working with refugees in Southampton, and Bethlehem Bible College, working with families in Gaza.

Summary and outlook

The deficit difference of £25,725 between general fund income and expenditure in 2023 is better than expected in the light of the operating budget set for the year, which predicted a deficit of £34,022. This was due to income being a little higher and expenditure being a little lower than expected.

This outcome reflects the resilience and generosity of our donors, to whom we are very grateful. Our healthy cash reserves allow us to be bold in our plans for our ministry and buildings, whilst continuing to be good stewards of what has been entrusted to us. In the light of this the PCC has agreed a deficit budget of £28,000 for 2024. However, we are mindful that yearly deficits of this size will use up our reserves within 5 years or so and are therefore not sustainable long-term. We are hopeful that a growing and vibrant ministry together with prudent use of our resources will enable us to address this.

The restricted funds obtained from the sale of the St John's Church building in 2022 continue to be invested until development of the remaining buildings is ready to begin.

Marie Gray

Safeguarding

The Safeguarding Team consists of Rosemary Brooks - Safeguarding Officer, Josh Cook and Suzanne Bochel - Safeguarding Administrator and we meet once a half term.

The safeguarding team reviews the Safeguarding policy for the church and provides support and guidance to the PCC. We have provided support for the running of Holiday Club, Holiday at Home, Easter Story, Live and helped with a whole church service focusing on Safeguarding.

One of the tasks for the Safeguarding Team over the last year has been the maintenance of the Parish Safeguarding Dashboard which the Diocese introduced last year.

The Parish Safeguarding Dashboard is split into three levels:

Level 1 - Safer Foundations;

Level 2 - Safer Activities;

Level 3 - Safer Practices.

We have completed all 3 levels of the dashboard and are now alerted to policies, activities and practices which need to be reviewed annually. This includes checking all volunteers for the activities run by the church are up to date with training, DBS checks

etc... checking risk assessments are up to date and policies and procedures are up to date.

- * 21 DBS applications have been made from 3 April 2023 to 18 March 2024
- * 6 DBS applications have been renewed from 3 April 2023 to 18 March 2024
- * 28 people have been safely recruited from 3 April 2023 to 18 March 2024
- * 26 people have complete safeguarding training courses from 3 April 2023 to 18 March 2024

Suzanne Bochel

Environment

2023 saw several very encouraging new environmental activities in the church as well as the continuation of a wide range of other positive action from cells and individuals.

One of our cells started to host the Repair Cafe in the church hall every two months. So far, this has resulted in the repair of over 100 items and saved 295 kg of waste from going into landfill. That equates to 1900 kg of CO2 emissions prevented. The cell host and provide coffee and cakes; this has resulted in tremendous feedback from people visiting and that includes conversations about the refreshments and how they offer them for free. They always say they are part of St James' Church and that has also led to some interesting conversations.

This cell has also encouraged recycling in the church by collecting aluminium foil and Tetra Paks since September 2023. On average they collect a black sack each week for taking to recycling elsewhere. This is in addition to the recycling collections we have for pens and felt tips, and for electrical items through the WEEE waste scheme.

Another cell organised a 'BioBlitz' around the church grounds in June trying to identify all the trees, plants and insects observed. Hopefully this can be repeated this year as part of the national 'Churches Count on Nature' scheme in Big Green Week. This will also help us to establish a Management Plan for the church grounds to promote wildlife.

We have continued to develop the theme of Creation Care in our Worship and Teaching, with regular environmental prayers, and a summer series on 'God's Good Creation' with a supporting booklet providing links to worship songs, resources and environmental tips. Another cell helped with the ideas for this booklet. In 2023 monthly Wonder Walks on 3rd Sunday mornings gave our youngsters time to marvel at God's creation. (These will now occur on 5th Sundays).

The Shirley Community Litter Picking Group continues to do wonderful work. In 2023 they welcomed 70 different volunteers to the litter picking sessions, averaging 14 volunteers (of all ages) at each session, and they collected 152 sacks of rubbish. Some

volunteers have gone on to join in with other church activities. They have also had teenagers taking part towards their Duke of Edinburgh and Chief Scout awards. They enjoy conversing with people they meet whilst out in the community and getting to know each other whilst enjoying refreshments together! Another smaller group litter pick on the Common on the last Saturday of the month starting at 9.30 (Bellemore entrance).

Progress on the environmental impact of our buildings has been hampered by the uncertainty over their re-ordering. As a result of the Energy Audit performed in 2022 the pipework in the church boiler room has been lagged to prevent heat loss. A priority is the replacement of lighting in the church with LEDs. As an interim measure LED bulbs compatible with our current fittings have been used, but those available have a limited light output. Brighter LEDs are available, but this will require replacement of our fittings.

The decision to retain the church office (133) means that we should look urgently at how we can enhance this building's energy efficiency, increase its comfort for staff and reduce its carbon footprint. (Overall St James' is one of the top 600 churches in the Church of England for its carbon footprint, responsible for 25.9 tonnes CO₂e in 2022, with 133 responsible for 14% of this, typical for a large 4 bedroom house!)

Carbon offsetting should be reserved for the final step after an individual or organisation has taken all possible steps to reduce its carbon footprint. Given the restraints imposed by the re-ordering, the PCC has approved using a carbon offset scheme. This particular scheme has been set up by Enable Busoga in association with Transcending Hope Uganda (THU). During 2023, seeds from two tree species were planted at 9 church sites. These were monitored on a monthly basis utilising St James by the Park (SJBTP) carbon offsetting funds donated for 2023. Germination was good and development was helped by good rainfall resulting in nearly 2,500 seedlings growing in situ. THU is planning to expand coverage to other sites in 2024.

St James was awarded a bronze Eco Church award in March 2020. The Church of England has taken significant steps on environmental issues since then including the publishing of a route map on how to get to Net Zero Carbon. Now is the right time to review our activities and take the steps needed in order to reduce our carbon footprint and apply for an Eco Church Silver Award.

Victor Humphrey

PARISH OF SHIRLEY, SOUTHAMPTON
MINUTES OF ANNUAL MEETING OF PARISHIONERS
MINUTES OF ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

Sunday 23rd April 2023
St. James by the Park Church

1. OPENING:

The meeting followed on from the Sunday morning service.

2. PRESENT:

118 people attended the meeting in the building, of these 10 people weren't on the electoral roll. A further 7 people joined the meeting online.

3. APOLOGIES:

Janice Bates, Sally Ann Belward, Chris Glenn, Dave Glenn, Carol Hayward, Chris Hayward, Helen Thaxter, Paul Thaxter, Martin Young and Rachael Young.

4. MINUTES OF THE 2021 MEETING OF PARISHIONERS AND THE ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING:

Dan drew people's attention to the minutes of last year's meeting which were within the APCM full report; these were available on the APCM page on our church website as well as paper copies being available. A couple of typos had been pointed out prior to the meeting as follows:

Page 4, item, budget for 2022, bullet point 3, 'thist' should read 'this'

Page 5, item 4 should read 'divisive', rather than 'decisive'.

David Bates proposed that the minutes be approved; this was seconded by Paul Lambert and agreed by the meeting. The minutes will be signed by Dan Clark as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

5. Dan's review of 2022:

Dan had written a review of 2022 which was in the report booklet. He also wanted to thank the following groups of people and individuals:

- Those who pray faithfully for Dan and his family and for us as a Church; he is very grateful.
- All those who serve, and, as well as those who are upfront on a Sunday who often get thanked he wanted to specifically mention the less obvious people who work faithfully behind the scenes on Sundays. These were people who do the children and youth work, the Sunday at 3 team, the Elevate team and Wonder Walk leaders.
- He also thanked the people who serve during the week; office volunteers, the Lunch Club and rest home teams, the people who help at mid-week youth events, cell and missional community leaders, the Safeguarding team, the people who do the book-keeping and payroll and those who organise rotas.
- He also thanked the people involved in pastoral work; those who visit, encourage and pray for others and those who take home communion to people.

To each and every one of those people Dan offered a massive thanks; they are the unsung heroes of our church and it's what they are doing that makes us Church.

Dan went on to say he wanted to thank some individuals:

1. Jacqui Dowdell had stepped up for second term as Church Warden in 2021 and Dan was so grateful for all her support, insight and wisdom, especially through the covid pandemic. Her shock cancer diagnosis in 2022 had been an enormously difficult time for her in every way but through all of that she had set a wonderful example of leaning into God. Technically she had been church warden up until the APCM so Dan offered his grateful thanks.
2. David Phillips had been our treasurer for many years. He had sorted out our finances with great attention to detail and put the church on a solid financial footing. At the same time he had given great freedom to the PCC to spend money and do ministry and approached financial decisions with great faith and with God in perspective. He had seemed to take this all in his stride but it had come at a great cost to him; it had been a genuine act of service. Dan thanked David for his many, many years of hard work.
3. Theresa Bowen had been the church administrator for 20 years, so Dan thanked her for the 20 years of faithful service.

6. FORMALLY REQUIRED REPORTS

Dan drew people's attention to the formally required reports which were part of the APCM full report. He pointed out that these helped us to be transparent about what goes on behind the scenes. This year they included two additional reports:

Safeguarding: This is a hugely important area of work. We have an amazing team who undertake a huge amount of work to keep on top of all the different aspects of safeguarding. Dan was extremely grateful to all of them.

Environment: The Church of England had pledged to achieve net zero by 2030, and we all needed to play our part in that. We have a small group working away to help us achieve that, headed up by Victor Humphrey, who has also been helping other churches. The group are hoping this area picks up speed over the coming months after slowing down through the covid pandemic. Dan offered his thanks to this group.

7. ELECTION OF CHURCH WARDENS

Jacqui had technically carried on as Church Warden until the meeting, but Tracy King had stepped up as assistant warden; Dan was delighted that she had agreed to continue on a formal basis and was also delighted that Nick Smith had agreed to carry on as warden.

There were 2 nominations for Church Warden, details were as follows:

Tracy King was proposed by Jacqui Dowdell and seconded by Ian Dowdell.

Nick Smith was proposed by Rob Crane and seconded by Michael Meaton.

Tracy and Nick were duly elected.

8. ELECTION OF PCC MEMBERS:

There were two people standing down from the PCC; Laura Borthwick and Aimee Whitfield who have finished their three-year term. Dan thanked both of them for their contributions during their time on PCC. Tracy King and Marie Gray had been PCC members in 2022 but had moved to Church Warden and treasurer respectively. Ugochi Okoli had been a co-opted PCC member in 2022 and hadn't been formally elected, this meant there were five PCC vacancies in total. The following people had indicated their willingness to stand:

Pete Evans, nominated by Georgie Taylor and seconded by Gareth Chaffey.

Esther Ridsdale, nominated by Nick Smith and seconded by Paul Lambert.

Keith Watson, nominated by Simon Clift and seconded by Gordon Cockburn.

Pete, Esther and Keith were duly elected.

There was also a nomination paper from Susie Hoare but as she had only just joined the electoral roll she couldn't be elected at the meeting. The PCC will be able to co-opt her at their first meeting and formally elect her after 6 months. She had been nominated by Lynne Lockwood and seconded by Chris Lockwood.

The PCC will also be able to elect Ugochi at their first meeting as a nomination paper hadn't been received.

9. ELECTION OF DENERY SYNOD REPS.

We only have to elect Deanery Synod reps once every 3 years. These people represent us to the wider Church of England in Southampton. There were 4 reps who were all willing to carry on. Their nominations were as follows:

David Bates, nominated by Theresa Bowen, seconded by Josh Cook

Rosie Brooks, nominated by Fiona Meaton, seconded by Esther Clift

David Wagstaff, nominated by Rhys Brooks, seconded by June Dodge

Esther Clift, nominated by Rhona Shutler, seconded by Michael Meaton.

It was noted that Esther, as part of the Deanery Synod had also been elected on to the Bishop's Council'.

10. FINANCIAL REPORT (YEAR ENDED 31/12/22).

Marie Gray presented the accounts for 2022, she informed the meeting that the full accounts were on the website and an abridged version was in the APCM booklets which were available on the website or at the meeting along with some FAQs for the accounts. She also encouraged people to contact her at any time if they had questions.

Income

Marie showed a pie chart with a breakdown of income. The 2022 regular income was £276,195 in total and in descending order was made up by donations, gift aid, church building hire, wedding and funeral fees and other miscellaneous income. Donations were by far the biggest chunk of these.

Expenditure

The expenditure for 2022 was £284,283. The biggest chunk of this was staff salaries, then common mission fund, buildings running costs and giving away.

Marie pointed out that the amount we give to the Diocese for the common mission fund seems a lot, but we get a lot back; amongst other things, it pays for Dan and his house, along with general support and training.

Taking the income and expenditure into account we ended the year with a deficit on unrestricted funds of around £8,000. This came out of our reserves, which were in a healthy state. Part of the reason for the healthy reserves was that over covid we didn't spend as much as we would have normally done, so they built up. In the light of that, the PCC felt they could set a budget for 2023 where the budgeted expenditure exceeded the planned income. The planned deficit for 2023 was £34,000.

Other areas of expenditure for 2023 included the following:

- The PCC felt it was important that the staff were given a realistic salary increase.
- Extra money was budgeted to meet the increased utility costs.

St. John's

This was sold during 2022 to the Church of Pentecost UK for £560,000.

Marie showed a breakdown of the money received:

1. £11,852 went in fees.
2. £115,111, 21%, was held by the Diocese and was under investigation. This was due to a proportion of the original money that was donated to build St. John's was subject to a reverter clause. This meant that if the gift was no longer being used for

the original purpose, the donors or their heirs could ask for it back. We were looking into this with the Charity Commission to see what we needed to do about it.

3. £433,037, 79%, was held by the Diocese but was ours to use. The only restriction was that it had to be used in the parish. We could request this at any time.

Marie summed up by saying that we were in a stable place from which to move forward with ministry; we had the potential to continue exploring new possibilities with the buildings.

Dan thanked Marie, he said she was a real gift to us as a church and had stepped into the role of treasurer seemingly effortlessly.

It was proposed that the accounts were accepted by Joanne Clements and seconded by Nichola Caveney and was agreed by the meeting.

11. APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT EXAMINER:

Marie proposed that we appointed Abraham and Dobell again for 2023, this was seconded by Nick Smith and agreed by the meeting, so Abraham and Dobell were appointed as our independent examiner for 2023.

12. UPDATES ON PARISH HALL PLANS:

Nick Smith gave an update on where the plans for the parish hall had got to.

An informal application to Southampton City Council for a two-storey building to replace the parish hall had been submitted. We received a negative reply back from the council. Their concerns were partly the heritage aspect with the hall's links to aircraft manufacture and partly that they didn't think the design was high enough quality and wouldn't be in-keeping with area.

Another attempt at a two-storey design will be submitted taking into account the comments from the council. If that fails, we will have to look again at creating more space in St. James. That had previously been a very divisive issue.

Nick pointed out that the rejection didn't come from the councillors, it came from the planning officers. It is the councillors who actually make the final decision, so with the new design we will try and engage the councillors to get a feel for how supportive they would be of the plans. If we get positive feedback from them, we will push forward for a full planning application.

Dan thanked Nick and all of the buildings' group for all the work they have done on this. He stated that we will let people know when we get to the point of submitting the planning application and ask them to pray, he felt this was a spiritual battle as there had been so much opposition to all of our plans.

13. QUESTIONS:

A question was asked about where we were with replacing the lighting with LED lighting; we had had a target to replace it by 2025.

In response Dan stated that the lighting was being worked on; some of the light fittings in St. James had been replaced with LED fittings and the PCC had agreed to spend some of the money from St. John's on the lighting.

14. CLOSE OF MEETING:

Jacqui Dowdell ended the meeting by praying.