

The Astwell Benefice

Annual Report 2023

www.astwellparishes.org.uk



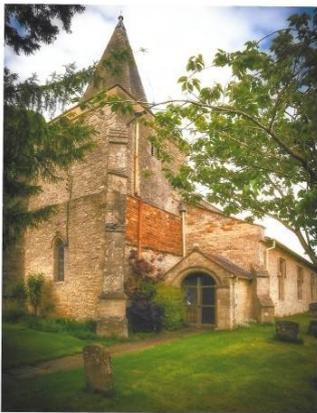
St. Mary Magdalene, Helmdon



St. Lawrence, Chapel of
Ease, Radstone



St Mary & St. Peter, Lois Weeden
& Weston with Plumpton



St. James the Great, Syresham



St. Mary the Virgin, Wappenham



St. John the Evangelist, Whitfield

Vision Statement:

Whilst always respecting the individual histories and identities of our six ancient buildings and their communities, we work as one, together as a united Benefice, in governance, in mission and in ministry. Our aims are:

- **to grow disciples, to reach out into our communities and beyond and to serve Christ in all we do**
- **to increase church attendance, involve children of all ages, share our knowledge, experience and enthusiasm and do all this as one Church in the body of Christ**

We are working together to face each new challenge through Christ, with Christ and in Christ.

The Astwell Benefice - six churches, one Mission

**The Astwell Benefice Parochial Church Council
2023 Annual Report**

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1. ASTWELL BENEFICE FINANCIAL REPORT 2023



Summaries, Balance Sheets & Assets statements for:

The Benefice
Helmdon & Radstone
Lois Weedon
Syresham
Wappenham
Whitfield

The Astwell Benefice

Financial Statement Report for the year ending December 2023

During 2023 the Benefice paid £62,497.30 to the diocese as our Parish Share. This is 90% of our full share. Most parishes either matched their 2022 contribution or exceeded it. We need to work hard to pay our full parish share in 2024.

Other costs were paid in full funded by £6508.50 from Wedding & Funeral fees, £6,064 from Benefice Fundraising, £1248 from the Rogation.

The balance in the books at the end of the year was £6,177, of this £447 is ring fenced for the choir; we are awaiting a final payment from the Diocese of £467 for services during the interregnum.

We have agreed a Benefice budget of £14,100. This covers secretarial pay, organist, and mission and ministry costs and includes £5,000 towards the share.

Accounts prepared by Alice Palmer

Approved for examination by the Astwell Benefice Finance Committee on 15th January 2024.

Accepted by the Benefice Church Council 30th January 2024

Examined by Gill Swinford Broad Street, Syresham

Alice Palmer
Benefice Treasurer

Astwell Benefice

	<u>2023</u>	<u>2022</u>	
Financial Statement 31/12/2023			
BENEFICE ACCOUNT			
Income	<u>£</u>	<u>£</u>	
Contributions from CCS	55,021.94	55239.00	
Donations	0.00	221.21	
Benefice events	2,651.90	1828.78	
Benefice Fundraising	7,946.50	7704.96	
PTO claims from Diocese	1,507.85	0.00	
Sundry	374.74	423.00	
Fees	9,075.00	12524.00	
Choir	0.00	0.00	
TOTAL INCOME	<u>76,577.93</u>	<u>77,940.95</u>	
Expenditure	<u>£</u>	<u>£</u>	
Travel	164.82	1126.35	
Mission & Ministry	89.25	867.98	
Office expenses	128.91	193.00	
Printing	423.20	612.30	
Secretary	3,122.50	2876.00	
Church expenses	660.15	342.56	
Copyright	166.70	260.81	
Website	295.00	313.00	
Benefice events	890.46	436.44	
Fundraising	1,882.52	1434.20	
Charity	790.00	640.28	
Diocese	62,497.30	62714.00	
Fees	2,566.50	4280.00	
Choir	0.00	0.00	
Organists	400.00	400.00	
Visiting Ministers	2,316.05	0.00	
Sundry	704.74	423.00	
TOTAL EXPENSES	<u>77,098.10</u>	<u>76,919.92</u>	
Excess receipts over payments	<u>- 520.17</u>	<u>1,021.03</u>	
Start Balance			
Bank Balance startof year	6,696.88	5,675.85	
Cash in hand	3.22	3.22	
Balance brought forward	<u>6,700.10</u>	<u>5,679.07</u>	
Balances today			
Balance in bank	6,176.55	6,696.88	
Cash in Hand	3.38	3.22	
Closing balance	<u>6,179.93</u>	<u>6,700.10</u>	
*Bank Reconciliation			
Bank Balance at 29/12	£7,226.80	£19,465.86	
Add uncleared income	£0.00	£5,581.16	
	£7,226.80	£25,047.02	
Less unrepresented cheques	£1,050.25	£18,350.14	
	<u>£6,176.55</u>	<u>£6,696.88</u>	
£0.00			
Bank Allocation			
Contributions for Diocese	£ -	£ 62,497.30	£ 0.44
Outstanding fees	£ -		£ -
Donation	£ 154.20		
PTO payment	-£ 467.10		
Ringfenced for choir	£ 447.01		£ 447.01
Actual balance	<u>£ 6,045.82</u>		£ 5,231.62

I have examined the Receipts and Payments account as at 31st December 2023. In my opinion the Account gives a true record of the state of affairs of the Astwell Benefice as at 31st December 2023.

Signed:



Date:

7-2-24

Helmdon and Radstone's Financial Statement Report for the year ending December 2023

The closing balance at the end of 2023 was £8,747. Of this £247 is from the Christingle collection and due to be paid to the Children's Society. Restricted funds were £4,729 for the churchyard and donations for the Organ and Children's Church fund (currently standing at £3,893).

During 2022 Helmdon paid the sum of £22,000 and Radstone £500 towards the Diocesan Share. Another £200 was paid directly to the Benefice and allocated to us. In total £22,700 constituted 96% of Helmdon and Radstone's Share allocation, an increase on the previous year.

During the year Radstone's separate bank account was closed and £145 transferred to Helmdon's account. This, together with collections from two services held in Radstone, resulted in a total income of £372. At the year-end a total £483 was being held in Helmdon's accounts for Radstone.

Donations received included those from the Friends of St Mary Magdalen, including covering roof repairs and a generous contribution to improvements to the sound system. The Parish Council also contributed a grant of £250 to the sound system improvement. Regular giving was £14,580, with collections and wall box contributing a further £3,963. Over £4,600 was raised during the year through a variety of activities including a jazz evening, Summer Fete, and Christmas Fair. A Diocesan grant received the previous year made a substantial contribution towards energy costs.

£1,880 was donated to charity, primarily reflecting donations from a memorial service held at the end of the previous year and to British Legion from collections made on Remembrance Sunday.

Accounts prepared by Ann Netten

Approved for Audit by Astwell Benefice Finance Committee on 15 January 2024

and approved by Helmdon Church Council on 15 January 2024

Audited by Chris Thorpe, Station Road, Helmdon NN13 5QT

Ann Netten

Treasurer St Mary Magdalene Helmdon Church Council

St Mary Magdalene Helmdon

31 December 2023



Financial Statement:

Income	2023		2022
	Restricted	Non-Restricted	
Regular Giving		14,580.00	15,590
Collections & wallbox		3,963.36	4,920
Gift Aid		5,107.76	4,301
Donations		6,931.33	2,355
Fundraising		4,650.45	3,402
Organ & Children's Church	850.11		3,641
Grants	0.00		755
Churchyard	557.62		557
Restricted Income			
Radstone	372.48		1,430
Sundry		1,118.86	936.15
TOTAL INCOME	1,780.21	36,351.76	37,887
		38,131.97	
Expenditure			
Benefice & Diocese		22,000.00	21,500
Radstone Benefice Contribution		500.00	500
Insurance		2,160.36	2,024
Fabric		8,571.49	3,333
Organ & Children's Church	0.00	0.00	529
Utilities	755.00	551.20	1,271
Churchyard	566.58		212
Charitable Donations		1,888.00	550
Radstone Expenses		0.00	702
Events		614.63	280
Sundry		1,420.46	1,163
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	1,321.58	37,706.14	32,064
		39,027.72	
BALANCE		-895.75	5,824
Start Balance 1/1/23			
Bank		9,643.07	3,820
Outstanding cheque		0.00	
Balance brought forward		9,643.07	3,820
Balances Today			
Bank Balance		8,747.32	9,643
Cash			
Closing Balance		8,747.32	9,643
Actual Bank balance		8,747.32	
Add uncleared lodgements			
Less unrepresented cheques		0.00	
TOTAL		8,747.32	
Bank Allocation			
Churchyard		836.12	
Radstone		482.85	
Organ & Children's Church		3,893.21	
Actual balance		£3,535.14	

**Helmdon and Radstone
Financial Statements**

**For the year ended 31 December 2023
Statement of Assets and Liabilities at 31 December 2023**

	Unrestricted General fund	Restricted funds	Total 2023	Total 2022
Assets				
Current account	£ 4,018	£ 4,729	£ 8,747	£ 9,788
Churchyard Fund - 158 shares at valuation		£ 3,572	£ 3,572	£ 3,265
Churchyard Trust - 97 shares at valuation		£ 2,193	£ 2,193	£ 2,004
Mission fund- 97 shares at valuation		£ 2,182	£ 2,182	£ 1,994
CBF Deposit Funds		£ 2,591	£ 2,591	£ 2,393
Total	£ 4,018	£ 15,267	£ 19,285	£ 19,444

Liabilities

£247.00 Funds raised due to Children's Society

LOIS WEEDON PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL
FINANCIAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 2023

Commentary

As at the 31st December 2023, our total cash reserves stood at £8,836, divided between restricted funds of £6,490 and unrestricted funds of £2,346.

Total income year-on-year has fallen by £1,400. However, within our income total is an exceptional one-off amount of £1,750 from a grant provided to us by **Benefact Trust** towards the restoration and repair of the Chancel Window. Therefore, in real terms, our year-on-year income has fallen by £3,150.

Fund raising events in 2023 were once again curtailed by the increasing cases of COVID within our community which unfortunately led to the cancellation of the harvest supper. However, in April 2023, we successfully launched the monthly Coffee Morning event held at the Village Hall which singularly provided £2,173 to our funds. Thank you to all those volunteers that gave up their time and energy to provide all the delicious treats and of course, to all those that attended the event. It has proven to be very popular.

Income from Regular Giving and Service Collections has overall remained relatively stable when compared to the previous year.

Donations are significantly down on the previous year by more than £2,100.

Total expenditure year on year increased from £13,667 in 2022 to £16,042 in 2023 – an increase of 17.5%.

Much of that increase is accounted for by the costs (so far) to fix the Chancel window and the cost of a required electrical inspection and resulting repairs. In all, £5,901.64 has been spent on these items alone. However, we have been able to recover £983.73 from the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme to offset some of the costs.

Notwithstanding the reduction in our income and the increase in costs, we were able to support Astwell Benefice with a contribution of £4,918.

Chancel Window

In November 2022, a large crack was discovered above the Chancel Window and urgent temporary repairs were carried out in early January 2023.

Subsequently, professional services were procured to investigate the crack and it is estimated that the total costs to fully repair the Chancel Window will be in the region of £16,850 (including a £1,500 contingency).

We have applied to 4 grant providers to help with the costs and one, **Benefact Trust**, has generously provided a grant of £1,750. We await imminent responses from the remaining 3 providers. In addition, the Friends of St Mary & St Peter have generously committed to providing at least 50% towards the physical building repair costs.

We have so far expended £3,731.44 from our own reserves and recovered £621.91 as part of the monies received from the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme. A further £2,000 has been set aside from our reserves and currently, we anticipate a funding shortfall of circa £3,400 which we hope will be easily satisfied by the remaining 3 grant applications.

It is hoped that all work on the repair (which cannot proceed until we hear from all grant providers) will be completed in Q1 2023

Report prepared by

Clive Johnson

Treasurer, Church of St Mary & St Peter, Lois Weedon Parochial Church Council

St Mary & St Peter Lois Weedon

Financial Statement as at 31/12/2023



		2023		2022	
		Restoration	General	Restoration	General
Income	Regular Giving	370	2,802		3,281
	Collections & Wallbox	11	2,526	182	2,672
	Gift Aid		1,986		1,684
	Donations	53	1,116	1,776	1,579
	Fund Raising		2,247		1,965
	Floodlight Sponsorship		120		110
	Grants Received	2,372	362		755
	Sundry Credit	70	83	755	755
Total Income		2,876	11,241	2,713	12,801
Expenditure	Benefice & Diocese		4,918		6,102
	Insurance		2,347		2,111
	Fabric	4,518	2,480	2,059	963
	Utilities		1,535		1,543
	Sundry Debits	70	174	0	889
Total Expenditure		4,588	11,454	2,059	11,608
Balance		-1,712	-213	654	1,193
Start Balance 01/01	Bank Balance	8,203	2,559	7,549	1,366
	Cash	0	0	0	0
	Total Balance	8,203	2,559	7,549	1,366
End Balance	Bank Balance	6,490	2,346	8,203	2,559
	Cash	0	0	0	0
	Total Balance	6,490	2,346	8,203	2,559
Reconciliation	<i>Actual Bank</i>	6,490	2,346	8,203	2,559
	<i>Add uncleared lodgements</i>	0	0	0	0
	<i>Less unrepresented cheques</i>	0	0	0	0
	TOTAL	6,490	2,346	8,203	2,559
Bank Allocations	<i>JMB Contruction (Chancel Repair)</i>			1,859	
	<i>Energy Grant Accrual</i>				629
	<i>Chancel Repair Grant</i>	1,750			
	<i>Chancel Repair</i>	2,000			
	Available Balance	2,740	2,346	6,343	1,930

The Priory Church of St. Mary & St. Peter, Lois Weedon

Financial Statements
For the year ended 31 December 2023

Statements of Assets and Liabilities at 31 December 2023

	Restoration fund	General fund	Total 2023	Total 2022
	£	£	£	£
Assets				
Bank current account 7807848		2,345.95	2,345.95	2,559.43
Bank restoration account 7804652	6,490.39		6,490.39	8,202.79
Cash account				
Total cash	<u>6,490.39</u>	<u>2,345.95</u>	<u>8,836.34</u>	<u>10,762.22</u>

Other Monetary Assets

Gift Aid tax debtor £2,117.35

Liabilities

Independent Examiner's fee £102.00

Approved by the Church Council on 11 January 2024 and signed on its behalf by

H. R. B. White

.....
Revd. Dr. Hugh White
Rector

Francis Hunter

.....
Francis Hunter
Chairman & Churchwarden

The notes on Page 7 form part of these accounts.

SYRESHAM

FINANCIAL STATEMENT REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDING

DECEMBER 2023

INCOME

Our Regular Giving decreased this year , however collections and donations increased.

We managed to hold fundraising events on both the hottest and coldest days of the year raising just £2062 of the £3000 hoped for.

We received donations from the Madge Payne Trust Fund, The Friends of St James and the Parish council to pay for maintenance works in the church and churchyards.

Our Steeple fund has so far received £5414 plus £5233 carried forward. We also have pledges of a further £19,000. We are further grant applications will be successful to help us repay a loan. We are still looking for £5000 to meet the full cost but could manage this from reserves if necessary.

EXPENDITURE

A total of £13,415 paid of our Parish Share, an increase on last year but still short of our full target.

We have spent a huge amount, £32,122, on Fabric this year, this includes £12,000 on our Sound System and £18,700 on Quinquennial works.

Charitable donations were made to the amount of £825, from Harvest, collections for DEC Disasters , Remembrance and Christingle Services

BALANCE

Our general spending balance at the end of 2023 was £2006 with £8955 reserved for the Steeple (some architects fees have been paid already) £4081 for other Quinquennial works and £4853 to cover maintenance work in 2024.

Accounts prepared by Brenda Faragher

Approved for examination by the Astwell Benefice Finance Committee 15th January 2024

Approved by the Syresham Church Council 22nd January 2024

Examined by Mr N Towers of Whitfield.

Brenda Faragher

Treasurer St James the Great Syresham Church Council

St James the Great Syresham

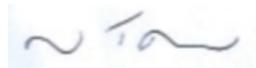


Financial Statement: Friday, 29 March 24

	2023		2022	
Income	Restricted	Non Restricted	Restricted	Non Restricted
Regular Giving		7,155.06		8,157.47
Collections & wallbox		2,591.37		2,084.27
Gift Aid		2,411.27		2,043.18
Donations	7,281.42	705.83	18.75	605.46
Steeple Fund	5,414.39			
Grants	0.00		755.00	
Events		331.00		200.00
Fundraising		2,062.11		2,603.00
Transfers from Trust	0.00		39,205.28	
Sundry		6.00		318.66
Totals	12,695.81	15,262.64	39,979.03	16,012.04
TOTAL INCOME		<u>27,958.45</u>		<u>55,991.07</u>
Expenditure				
Benefice & Diocese		13,200.00		12,950.00
Insurance	2,021.90		1,807.47	
Fabric	32,177.65		1,006.28	
Churchyard	2,014.26		143.98	
Utilities		1,149.09		1,588.46
Charitable Donations		826.00		320.00
Fundraising		295.57		384.66
Printing		0.00		118.13
Sundry		176.07		447.51
Totals	36,213.81	15,646.73	2,957.73	15,808.76
TOTAL EXPENDITURE		<u>51,860.54</u>		<u>18,766.49</u>
balances	-23,518.00	-384.09	37,021.30	203.28
BALANCE		<u>-23,902.09</u>		<u>37,224.58</u>
Start Balance 1/1/22	Bank	43,805.63		6,581.05
	Cash	0.00		0.00
	Balance brought forward	<u>43,805.63</u>		<u>6,581.05</u>
Balances Today	Bank Balance	19,440.85		43,805.63
	Cash	462.69		0.00
	Closing Balance	<u>19,903.54</u>		<u>43,805.63</u>
RECONCILIATION	Actual Bank 29/12	19,744.85		43,443.97
Add uncleared lodgements		0.00		1199.33
Less unrepresented cheques		304.00		837.67
TOTAL	0.00	<u>19,440.85</u>		<u>43,805.63</u>
Bank Allocation	Quinquennial	4,088.90		
	Steeple	8,955.82		
	Maintenance Fund	4,852.84		
	Utilities Grant	0.00		
Actual balance		<u>£2,005.98</u>		

I have examined the Receipts and Payments account as at 31st December 2023. In my opinion the Account gives a true record of the state of affairs of the church of St James the Great Syresham as at 31st December 2023.

Date: 27th March 2024

Signed 

Syresham St James Church

Financial Statements For the year ended 31 December 2023

Statements of Assets and Liabilities at 31 December 2023

	Unrestricted General Fund	Restricted Funds	Total 2023	Total 2022
Assets	£	£	£	£
Current account	2,006	17,897	19,904	43,805
Madge Payne Trust Untouchable		73,0774	73,0774	684,920
Madge Payne Trust Available		6,000	6,000	0
Maud Payne Trust Untouchable		27,500	27,500	26,020
Maud Payne Trust Available				
Hammond Trust		3,642	3,642	3,196
TOTAL	2,006	785,813	787,820	757,941

Assets available for church use: £25,904

St Mary's, Wappenham Financial Statement & Report for the year ending 31st December 2023

Income

2023 fundraising incomes were similar to the previous year. The Fete, on a very hot day in September, raised over £1200, with another successful dog show raising £340. We received £1,000 into the fabric fund from the Wappenham Beer & Music Festival committee in June for which we are very grateful. Regular giving remains similar to the previous year, but lower Church service collections reflect the lack of weddings and other extraordinary services. Gift aid receipts reflect the previous year's donations.

Expenditure

We had little capital expenditure in the year; new south doors, and other small improvements. We purchased a new ride on mower for the churchyard donated by a parishioner who is deferring their regular contribution in lieu of the cost of this large capital expense to assist in our cash flow. Infrastructure works have been delayed but will rise next year as we embark further on addressing issues raised by the Quinquennial inspection, the south roof which needs replacing, and some long overdue work to the churchyard. We are in discussion with the Parish Council in regard to the responsibilities of the churchyard which we hope will assist in a reduction of costs in the future.

Charitable Giving

We were able to send a total of £1,157.65 in support of the following charities:

Children's Society, Cancer Research, Ripple Effect (Send a Cow) & Royal British Legion, Northampton Hope centre, Wappenham Village Hall, MacMillan and SSNAP

Accounts prepared by Philip Thompson (Treasurer)

Approved for Audit by Astwell Benefice Finance Committee on 15/01/2024

Approved by Wappenham Church Council on 23/01/2024

Examined and certified by Benedict Davey of Norwich on 22/02/2024

St Mary the Virgin, Wappenham



Financial Statement: 31 December 2023

Income	2023		2022	
	Restricted	Non Restricted	Restricted	Non Restricted
Regular Giving	0.00	9,821.64	0.00	10,077.00
Collections & wallbox	0.00	3,328.70	0.00	5,151.00
Gift Aid	0.00	3,147.84	0.00	2,985.00
Donations	1,000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Fundraising	2,544.46	0.00	2,817.00	0.00
Coffee Morning	625.04	0.00	0.00	0.00
Bell Fund	30.00	0.00	10.00	0.00
Clock	0.00	0.00	334.00	0.00
Investment interest	0.00	124.73	0.00	0.00
Diocese Heating Grant	0.00	0.00	0.00	755.00
VAT Grant	0.00	0.00	0.00	256.00
Sub Totals	4,199.50	16,422.91	3,161.00	19,224.00
TOTAL INCOME		20,622.41		22,385.00
Expenditure				
Benefice & Diocese	0.00	9,729.00	0.00	9,729.00
Insurance	0.00	2,086.11	0.00	1,841.00
Fabric	287.07	0.00	5,823.00	0.00
Utilities	0.00	3,528.24	0.00	739.00
Charitable Donations	1,157.65	0.00	76.00	650.00
Churchyard	139.92	0.00	0.00	164.00
Alarm & Fire Maintenance	0.00	439.80	0.00	0.00
Organ	0.00	0.00	242.00	0.00
Bank Charge	0.00	62.80	0.00	0.00
Subtotals	1,584.64	15,845.95	6,141.00	13,123.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURE		17,430.59		19,264.00
BALANCE		3,191.82		5,192.70
Start Balance 1/1/22	Bank (Current)	7,957.00		5,004.00
	Deposit	0.00		0.00
	Charity Account	0.00		0.00
	Balance brought forward	7,957.00		5,004.00
Balances 31/12/2023	Bank Balance	11,961.52		10,620.00
	Cash	866.85		359.00
	Coffe Morning Account	9.39		0.00
		12,837.76		10,979.00
	Unpresented Cheques	2,764.50		3,022.00
	Closing Balance	10,073.26		7,957.00
RECONCILIATION	Balance at bank and in hand	10,073.26		7,957.00
BANK ALLOCATION	Quinquennial	1,800.00		
	South Roof Repairs	2,000.00		
	Flag Pole	650.00		
	Masonry Repairs	500.00		
	Churchyard	3,200.00		
		8,150.00		
ACTUAL BALANCE		1,923.26		

I have examined the Receipts and Payments account as at 31st December 2023. In my opinion the Account gives a true record of the state of affairs of the church of St Mary the Virgin, Wappenham as at 31st December 2023.

Date: 22/2/2024

Signed

Ben Davey
Ben Davey

ST MARY THE VIRGIN, WAPPENHAM

Financial statement for the year ending 31st December 2023

Statement of Assets as at 31/12/2023

<u>Assets</u>	General Fund	Coffee Mornings	Fabric Fund	Bell & Clock Funds	Churchyard Fund	Share Account	Total 2023
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Bank Current Accounts	£ 9,197.02	£ -					£ 9,197.02
Cash held at 31 Dec	£ 866.85						£ 866.85
Bank Deposit Account	£ 940.82						£ 940.82
Churchyard Deposit account			£ 686.63				£ 686.63
Coffe Morning Account		£ 9.93					£ 9.93
							<u>£11,701.25</u>
CCLA Deposit Account			£ 186.00	£ 1,993.68	£ 206.00		£ 2,385.68
Bell				£ 1,978.28			£ 1,978.28
Clock				£ 15.40			£ 15.40
Churchyard					£ 214.99		£ 214.99
Deposit Fund				£ 195.00			£ 195.00
Share Account						£ 1,384.07	£ 1,384.07
							<u>£ 6,173.42</u>
Total	<u>£ 11,004.69</u>	<u>£ 9.93</u>	<u>£ 186.00</u>	<u>£ 4,182.36</u>	<u>£ 1,107.62</u>	<u>£ 1,384.07</u>	<u>£17,874.67</u>
<u>CCLA Investment Management</u>							
Britten Bequest							£ 984.30
Fountainne Trust							£ 3,390.80
							<u>£ 4,375.10</u>
Total Assets							<u>£ 22,249.77</u>

WHITFIELD

FINANCIAL STATEMENT REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 2023

INCOME

Regular giving remained the same as 2022 but collections were down. We received the giftaid returns from both 2021 and 2022. We managed to keep solvent with the generous support of the Friends of St John who donated £1219 towards our insurance costs. We are also grateful for further donations of £535 from various sources.

We raised £402 from our Mexican Evening.

EXPENDITURE

We £4,260 paid of our Parish Share, the usual monthly contribution plus additional amounts when able to. This matches last year's contribution.

Charitable donations of £295 were paid out to: British Legion, Farming Community Network and Children's Society.

BALANCE

We were ended the year with a balance of £1515.

Accounts prepared by Brenda Faragher

Approved for examination by the Astwell Benefice Finance Committee 15th January 2024

Approved by the Whitfield Church Council *31st January 2024*

Examined by Mrs Alison Allee, Silverstone

Brenda Faragher

Treasurer St John's Whitfield Church Council

St John the Evangelist Whitfield



Financial Statement: Wednesday, 31 January 24

		2023		2022	
Income		Restricted	Non Restricted	Restricted	Non Restricted
	Regular Giving		2,120.00		2120.00
	Collections & wallbox		771.19		1211.50
	Gift Aid		904.20		0
	Donations	1,448.64	534.78	1,000.92	566.35
	Events		402.40		463.10
	Fundraising		0.00		0
	Insurance	0.00		3,856.00	
	Grants			6,755.00	
	Sundry				32.01
Sub Totals		<u>1,448.64</u>	<u>4,732.57</u>	<u>11,611.92</u>	<u>4,392.96</u>
TOTAL INCOME			<u>6,181.21</u>		<u>16,004.88</u>
Expenditure					
	Benefice & Diocese		4,260.00		4260.00
	Insurance	1,218.64	558.91	1,048.00	547.96
	Fabric			1,000.92	
	Utilities		247.27		234
	Charitable Donations		294.54		305.1
	Events		0.00		0
	Printing		0.00		0
	Repayment to Friends			8,808.00	
	Sundry		71.80		12.00
	Subtotals	<u>1,218.64</u>	<u>5,432.52</u>	<u>10,856.92</u>	<u>5,359.06</u>
TOTAL EXPENDITURE			<u>6,651.16</u>		<u>16,215.98</u>
BALANCE			<u>-469.95</u>		<u>-211.10</u>
Start Balance 1/1/23	Bank		1,984.63		2195.73
	Cash		0.00		0
	Balance brought forward		<u>1,984.63</u>		<u>2,195.73</u>
Balances Today	Bank Balance		1,514.68		1,984.63
	Cash		0.00		0.00
	Closing Balance		<u>1,514.68</u>		<u>1,984.63</u>
RECONCILIATION	Actual Bank 30/12/23		2,663.02		2,484.63
Add uncleared lodgements			0.00		0.00
Less unrepresented cheques			1,148.34		500.00
TOTAL			<u>1,514.68</u>		<u>1,984.63</u>
	check	0.00			
Bank Allocation					
Actual balance			<u>£1,514.68</u>		<u>£1,984.63</u>

I have examined the Receipts and Payments account as at 31st December 2022. In my opinion the Account gives a true record of the state of affairs of the church of St John The Evangelist Whitfield as at 31st December 2022.

Date: 18/2/24

Signed: *BALICE*

2. Benefice Committee Reports for year ending December 2023

2.1 Benefice Finance Committee Summary 2023

The Finance Committee met in June, December and January. Agreements on the APCM contents were done by email during March.

During meetings we shared the financial positions, highs and lows of each parish, discussing fundraising, regular giving, collections and extraordinary expenses that face us all. We reported to the BPCC at each of their meetings. We acknowledged that the regular giving in most parishes is in need of increasing, in some parishes it is just very low and in others over reliant on a few givers. We plan to write letters to different groups of our parishioners, as suits each parish.

We ensured that all the benefice and parish accounts were prepared for examination in January. All quarterly returns and parish share contributions were submitted to the diocese in a timely fashion. All finance parish returns for 2023 were completed.

We were able to pay 90% of our parish share this year and are very grateful for the fundraising committee for their contribution to the Benefice payments. Sadly our contribution was down on this year. We aim to pay the full amount of £71,599 in 2024.

PARISH SHARE					
	Target	Paid so far	Owed	%	2022
Helmdon	£23,628.00	£ 22,700.00	£ 928.00	96%	£22,150.00
Wappenham	£ 9,729.00	£ 9,729.00	£ -	100%	£ 9,729.00
Syresham	£17,374.00	£ 13,414.94	£ 3,959.06	77%	£13,100.00
Lois	£ 9,729.00	£ 4,918.00	£ 4,811.00	51%	£ 6,101.60
Whitfield	£ 5,560.00	£ 4,260.00	£ 1,300.00	77%	£ 4,260.00
Benefice	£ 3,476.00	£ 7,475.36	£ -	215%	£ 7,373.40
	£69,496.00	£ 62,497.30	£ 6,998.70	90%	£62,714.00

We shared information on using QR codes for giving. We also looked at getting joint insurance from Trinitas but as each parish is responsible for their own buildings were told this would not work.

We set the Benefice Budget for 2024 and set Parish Share amounts for the coming year. We restricted the parish increases by increasing the Benefice Contribution.

Alice Palmer
Chair, Finance Committee

2.2 Benefice Worship Committee Report 2023

I am writing this report this year as, for most of the year, the Benefice was in an interregnum. This came to a joyful end when we welcomed Rev'd Hugh White as our Rector in December. Hugh has already become a familiar figure in the Benefice, not just in the churches. We are most blessed to have him with us and I for one look forward to learning a huge amount from him as he leads the Benefice.

The Benefice managed to maintain the established service pattern throughout 2023. We were grateful to Bishop Donald when he allowed me to conduct Holy Communion by Extension on a regular basis. However, as Hugh will discover, it was not possible for me to cover all services. The responsibility for obtaining cover fell on the very capable shoulders of our secretary, Sarah Rudkin. Sarah did, and indeed continues to do, a sterling job in contacting and persuading retired priests to cover services. As a result, the benefice succeeded in delivering a very full and varied programme of worship and praise over the Easter period. With Hugh's arrival just before Christmas, he seized the opportunity to take a large array of services and therefore met a great many people. I believe he came through it all relatively unscathed!

There are many people across the benefice who play a crucial role in helping to maintain the extensive pattern of worship who deserve our thanks. There are those who step forward to lead worship; Alice Palmer, Michael Streten, Bill Elkington, the team in Wappenham and Wiggy (despite "retiring"). These are, if you like, the obvious ones. But I should also like to thank everyone who contributes to the life of the benefice and parishes. Whether you clean, organise rotas, arrange flowers, make coffee, read lessons, lead prayers, sort out music, play the organ, sing in the choir, ring the bells or whatever...thank you! Without you our services simply could not happen.

The challenges faced by the benefice remain much as I reported last year and are pretty common across the Church of England. There is a need to continuously challenge ourselves on how we engage with the rural communities we serve, whilst continuing to support our existing congregations.

The past year was spent very much holding the fort and looking forward to our new Rector. No doubt Hugh will begin to shape how we move forward together as a united benefice.

With every good wish.

Paul Stothard
Benefice Reader

2.3 Pastoral Care Committee Report 2023

We have met 6 times during 2023 to discuss those within our Parishes who are in need.

Sadly the list gets longer as our community ages and we are in dire need of a representative from Wappenham. Thankfully Sheena has informed us of some who are needing a visit, card or phone call.

During 2023 we held several very successful tea parties which were thoroughly enjoyed by everyone. We have decided to continue with the tea parties and Sue Palmer already has two planned for 2024.

Once again we would like to remind you all that Pastoral Care should be on all the church council Agendas and if anyone is in need please will you let one of the members of the Pastoral Team know.

Karin (Wiggy) Smith
Chair, Pastoral Care Committee

2.4 Benefice Social & Fundraising Committee Report 2023

We started the fundraising year with our Benefice Quiz Challenge. As always it was well received and we all enjoyed five very good evenings in the five different villages. Delicious food was provided by kind volunteers and a good time was had by all. Syresham were the Champions taking home individual engraved wine glasses. The committee would like to thank our quizmasters – John Coatsworth, Malcolm Orr-Ewing and Alan Gundle - whom put so much work into devising these challenging rounds. The five evenings raised £2363.40.

The next event was the Barn Dance which actually turned out to be the biggest one so far with 104 tickets sold. Cut A Caper were a very popular band and kept us on our feet all night. The BBQ was well organised and we must thank Peter Oliver and Alan Gundle for cooking all evening and serving delicious food. The Barn Dance raised £2031.04.

The Astwell Grand Draw raised £1326.50.

Our final event was held in the Autumn at Helmdon Reading Rooms. A Murder/Mystery evening was thoroughly enjoyed by 60 people. We served a two-course supper and ran a bar. We managed to donate over £200 to the actors from Weedon Lois & Weston and raised £600 for the Benefice.

So a busy, fun-filled year came to an end with a healthy sum of just over £6300.00.

We said farewell to Kathryn Oliver and we welcomed Wiggy Smith back on to the committee. Thanks must go to all our committee members, caterers and helpers in every Parish.

Sheena Warren
Chair, Social & Fundraising Committee

2.5 Benefice Safeguarding Report 2023

During the 2023 Safeguarding year, the following number of records have been checked and passed for DBS requirements - 24 persons were checked, as follows:

Helmdon: 9
Wappenham: 3
Lois Weedon: 2
Syresham: 2
Brackley: 2
Whitfield: 5
Benefice: 1

I attended a training course held by Peterborough entitled 'Promoting a Safer Church', based on the National Safeguarding Standards. The training was for three 1/2 day sessions over a 3 week period, covering 'employment' issues regarding DBS checks, and implications.

Judith Elkington
Benefice Safeguarding Officer

2.6 Lay Chair/Deanery Synod Report 2023

Following the 2023 AGM and my re-election as lay chair, the benefice remained in interregnum. My role was made much easier due to the churches working so well together.

Sheena as chair of the social and fundraising did exceptionally well and she and the committee need our thanks for their service to the benefice.

The benefice paid the second highest amount ever towards parish share despite some churches having huge fabric costs and quinquennials.

We lost Malcolm Or-Ewing as church warden at Syresham as he moved into Buckinghamshire. He is sorely missed although he has helped with our church quizzes this year.

In the summer the Rev Hugh White came to my house to discuss our united benefice as it was new to him before he decided to apply for our vacancy. Thankfully he did apply for our vacancy and also the Astwick Vale Benefice. I spoke to Archdeacon Richard about all benefices offers if made to be at the same time, (We lost a previous application due to the applicant accepting an offer from another benefice and cancelling our interview on the day). This is now the churches policy in our Archdeaconry.

I am pleased to say Rev Hugh accepted our offer and is now our much-loved Rector after his installation in December.

In the Autumn I was asked to speak at the Brackley Deanery service about the benefits of a United Benefice.

Bill Elkington

Lay Chair & Deanery Synod Representative

2.7 Benefice Hope Centre Run Report 2023

On the current rota we have 14 drivers which is the same number as last year.

Collections of food are on Tuesdays at around 12 noon from Faith Dimensions in Wolverton, with deliveries to the Hope Centre kitchen in Oasis House, Northampton.

Generally, the food run goes smoothly - though there are sometimes delays in pick-up owing to the late arrival of food from supermarkets or queues at Faith Dimensions. At the Hope Centre the main issue can be attracting the attention of the kitchen to the arrival of a delivery owing to the security arrangements around Oasis House.

As mentioned last year, a convenient and easily accessible location to store the polystyrene 'cool' boxes would be very helpful as I do not have a secure place for boxes to be left if I am not at home.

We are grateful to all drivers for giving up their time and being prepared to do the run up to four times a year entirely at their own cost.

Andrew North

Astwell Benefice Hope Centre Run Co-Ordinator

2.8 Benefice Choir Report 2023

Highlights of the Choir's year were their contributions to Christmas and Easter services in the Benefice. For Christmas, we were delighted to have some new members on board who were keen to sing some different carols and worked very hard over a few weeks of rehearsal: Elvie Watson, Kate Stephens and John Plunkett, not to mention the returning Lee Alfandary.

It has also been a pleasure to welcome our new rector, Hugh, into the choir and his talents as a tenor and musician have proved a real asset, especially after losing the sterling services of Malcolm Orr-Ewing to the West Buckingham benefice.

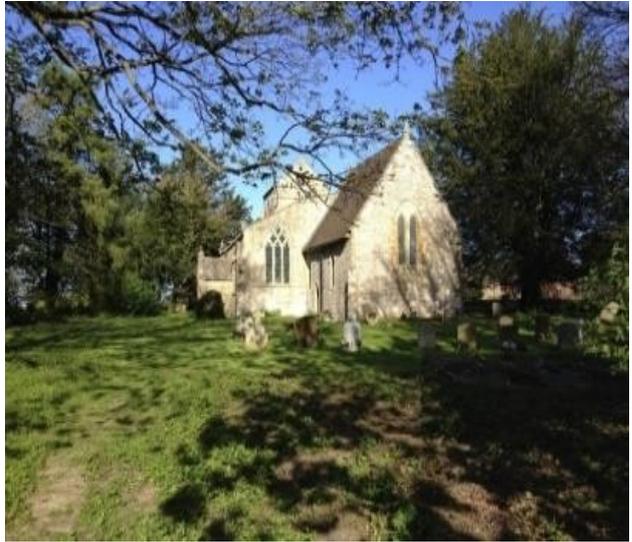
Our Advent and Holy Week services at Lois Weedon gave us a platform to 'showpiece' our repertoire, and we also enjoyed participating in Helmdon's revived Words and Music event in the build up to Christmas.

We were also proud to be able to contribute an anthem to the Induction service for Hugh White.

David Wright
Organist and Choir Master

**The 2023 Annual Report of the
Church Council for the parish of**

***St. Mary Magdalene, Helmdon
with St. Lawrence Chapel at Ease, Radstone***



Helmdon Church Council Report

Fundraising during the year

Our first event of the year was a Pancake Breakfast on 18 February. This proved popular, but the steep rise in ingredients' costs from previous years had a marked impact on money raised. A very enjoyable Church Fete at Fountain House on 1 July raised some £2,400. We were very grateful to the Crabbe family for allowing use of their lovely garden and for joining in so enthusiastically before, during and after the event. A wide range of stalls, teas, cakes, and other refreshments were on offer, with Morris Men, a local rock band and children's games (with a Fancy Dress Competition on the theme of "Coronation") providing entertainment.

On 2 September we had an excellent evening of trad jazz in the church with drinks and nibbles: £560 was raised.

The Christmas Fair on 2 December proved very successful and it was good to see some new faces helping with Santa's Grotto as well as the stalls and refreshments. This was followed by Carol Singing outside the pub shortly before Christmas, raising money for the Children's Society.

Fundraising for the year exceeded 2022 amounts by over £1,000, which helped offset falls in regular giving and collection levels. Helmdon and Radstone met 96% of their contribution to the Benefice parish share.

Friends also organised a very enjoyable Safari Supper for 46 people on 17 June, involving hosts at various locations throughout the village, and raising over £630 for the Friends' funds. Which paid for our replacement amplifier and microphone coverage for the whole church. Many thanks to our friends association.

Church council meetings were held on 25 January, 27 March, 22 May, 21 August, 18 September and 13 November and are summarised below.

a) Finance

Ann Netten issued our full year accounts in the new format used by all churches. There were no comments and unanimously voted to send to our auditor.

- b) Interregnum
After Rev Diane's resignation in 2022 due to ill health and following a meeting with Archdeacon Richard we agreed to get the benefice profile ready for that December. Due to changes and waiting agreement with all churches, this was not achieved until the spring. Rev Hugh was interviewed in August and to our joy accepted our offer of Rector to this benefice. His installation was in December 2023 another long interregnum.
- c) Worship
Paul Stothard chaired this committee during the interregnum and noted that our committee was outside the worship benefice structure and we were the only church to have this. It was decided to include worship within the church council meetings. We tried a new expression service on the Saturday night before our harvest festival. This was attended by young families with Prosecco afterwards and a great success, will be repeated in 2024.
We thank all our retired clergy and Paul with lay leaders who kept us going through the year.
- d) Pastoral Care
A benefice committee chaired by Wiggy in Helmdon. Tea parties were held in Whitfield , Syresham and Helmdon together with some home communions. Wappenham are still not covered in this committee and is still a problem.
- e) Safeguarding
All up to date with DBS checks and training where required.
- f) Fabric
We had a very good Quinquennial Inspection with very few No1 actions which have all been dealt with. Bill has completed the online course on the new faculty system which is much easier than the old system. The biggest item that we need to sort before the Autumn is the footpath to the church as it is classed as dangerous.

Friends of Helmdon Church

Helmdon 200 Club generously supports The Friends by providing us with £1300 annually. The highlight of the Friends' year was the brilliant Safari Supper held on 17 June. Angela Goodall's superb organisation, supported by the Friends' Committee Members on the practical side made this a hugely enjoyable event. 46 people undertook a culinary tour of the village for the three-course meal, and we made a net profit of £637. It also gave participants the chance to meet some incomers to the village as well as catch up with people who have lived in Helmdon for some time.

The Friends were very grateful to all the hosts for generously inviting groups of guests into their homes, and for some wonderful cooking on the day.

The Friends of Helmdon Church have continued to support the Helmdon Church Council when maintenance and repair costs have arisen. We have funded some repairs to the Lady Chapel roof area and repairs to the main church roof (which were spotted as necessary during the Quinquennial Inspection carried out in August and revealed by a rainwater leak some weeks later).

In total, we have paid almost £4800 to the Church Council in the calendar year 2023. Consideration is being given to converting a loan of £3,200 towards an upgrade of the church sound system, making it more reliable, into a grant. This is dependent on estimates of costs for works arising from the Quinquennial Inspection. One of these is for a major improvement to the main path into church. Clarification is being sought by the Churchwardens from Diocesan authorities for any necessary formal permission.

Cliff Netten, Chair

Report for St Lawrence, Radstone 2023

Another relatively quiet year at St Lawrence. We held 4 Holy Communion services, one wedding and two funerals.

The work done by the Bats in Churches project has now finished and the monitoring of the bat population is being taken on by Natural England as the project has now finished nationwide. We have a Quinquennial inspection booked for August, and it will be a case of crossed fingers for not too much on the list. The churchyard is still mown and cared for by Michael & Ian Wilmott.

Penny Bonner Church Representative

Electoral Roll for Helmdon & Radstone, 2023

Alfandary, Lee	Quiney, Kathryn
Balch, Zena	Sandilands, Charlotte
Beattie, Audrey	Sandilands, Paul
Berck-May, Alan	Saunders, Jennifer
Bonner, Penelope	Simmonds, Jean
Bowen-Jones, Joan	Shears, Mary
Brisby, Claire	Smith, Ann
Brisby, John	Smith, Karin
Brookhouse, Carol	Snow, Janet, Ann
Brookhouse, Jean	Spendlove, Jean
Butterworth, Josephine	Stothard, Louise
Elkington, Judith	Stothard, Paul
Elkington, William	Stubbs, Sarah
Hadfield, Joan	Threlfall, John
Harris, Jennifer	Tope, Diane
Harris, Simon	Vicars, Ross
Hodson, Robert	Vicars, Vanessa
Holt, Gerald	Walmsley Hugh
Lidgley, Susan	Walmsley, Lynn
Marley, Pamela	Wassink, Christine Klein
Mason, Fiona	Watson, Gillian
Moody, Danny	Watson, Phillip John
Moody, Kathryn	Wheeler, Rachel
Mount, Rebecca	Wiggins, Joyce
Netten, Ann	Woodhams, John
Netten, Clifford	Woodhams, Pat
Overson, Jennifer	Yates, Tara
Phillips, Eunice	Yates, Tim
Priday, Alma	

Total: 58

The 2023 Annual Report
of the Church Council for the parish of
St. Mary & St. Peter
Lois Weedon & Weston with Plumpton



Churchwarden Report to the Astwell Benefice

1. Parish Status

2023 saw us once again without a Parish Priest. Unlike previously we have consolidated our Benefice Structure and were in good shape to weather the choppy seas.

The constant pressure on fundraising remains and we continue to rely upon our loyal supporters who as I observed last year, are not getting any younger or greater in number.

With these challenges this last year has if anything seen a slight decline in our position in Lois Weedon. Despite our best efforts our contribution to the Benefice share did not improve and we fell a little in the league table.

Perusal of our accounts show a significant reduction year on year in regular revenue in our Operating (unrestricted) account from £12,800 to £11,240. Our Restoration & Fabric (Restricted) shows a minor increase in revenue from £2,713 to £2,876, due to exceptional items including a grant received and a VAT reclaim, together totalling £2,372, in respect of the east window repairs. Overall, our total assets (cash balances) reduced from £10,762 to £8,836, £6,490 of which is held in our restricted account. Our target Parish Share was again beyond our financial capability in 2023, but we always strive to make the fullest contribution from our limited financial resources.

Our beloved local Primary School has been through a testing time in the last few years. Pupil numbers have declined for a variety of reasons, not least because of the reduction of children being born in our catchment area. As a member of the Evolve Academy Trust there is a measure of support but despite all challenges it is still the wonderful school it always was. Their Nativity Play took place in the School Hall (a warmer and more comfortable venue than the Church) which enabled all the children to take part in a most memorable afternoon.

We in Lois Weedon have the benefit of the Rector's accommodation although your Churchwarden doesn't need another house to look after. Its improved condition was a significant

asset in attracting our new incumbent although the size of the garden may prove somewhat daunting. As a Benefice we may have to help and urgently

During the Interregnum we managed to hold 27 standard services. We restricted ourselves to Holy Communion and Matins/Morning Prayer. Surprisingly our average attendance improved from 12 to 16 which goes against the trend. We had 3 funerals and one delightful and heartwarming Baptism.

The forecast for 2024 is looking more promising. Both Wappenham and ourselves are now benefitting from a donation from Tove Valley Broadband. We also have a well-established Coffee and cake morning which is proving to be a popular community event. Just a few more regular givers and I hope we will stand our corner in the future.

And finally we welcomed our new Rector to our community. Early on it was clear we had in our midst someone who relished interaction with all of his Parishioners. Christmas certainly brightened our spirits and we thank the Benefice Choir for providing such a fine musical backdrop. (Including a very adequate new Tenor)

2. Fabric

Having secured the Church from water ingress in 2022 we were then thwarted by drought. God moves in mysterious ways as does our Church building. Late in 2022 a different set of cracks appeared caused by the prolonged period of high temperatures and lack of moisture in our subsoil. The infamous clay resumed its shrinking and caused cracks to appear around the east window. As a result the keystone at the top of the window no longer needed to perform its' function and dislodged itself threatening to descend upon any passing parishioner. We have now put plans in place and with some judicious applications to Grant givers, thanks to our Treasurer Clive Johnson and the Friends of Lois Weedon Church we have raised enough money and work is due to start anytime now. We even managed to avoid the dreaded Faculty application after permission was given by the Archdeacon.

Our current focus is on the Chancel window and we are due our next Quinquennial Review this coming August. This will inevitably identify urgent repairs and there are signs of damp and deterioration which will require remedy. We will be looking at the feasibility of providing a more permanent and effective Servery within our means but the Toilet is likely to be some way off.

3. Mission

We are lucky to live in a rural community which by its very essence promotes a sense of belonging and tradition. Nothing gives a better sense than when we hold our Rogation Service. This last year was the turn of our Parish which was held at Lovell's farm Weston. The farming community provide a bedrock for our villages and are custodians of our landscape. The Church exists to serve its people by guiding and helping us all to lead a loving and fulfilled life. Unfortunately, there is no handy concise manual. So we do the best we can. Clearly, for the Church to survive it must appeal to those who could potentially help to support and continue its mission. I am convinced that my own somewhat reluctant willingness eventually to get involved started when I was a child. Regardless of whether you approve or disapprove of the role of Religious Organisations I see the story of Jesus Christ as the best children's story of all time. You couldn't make it up. And don't think it's just me, think of all the stories out there, whether in books, film or folklore. Can you think of any that doesn't have at its core the preference for good over evil.

Our Benefice and our own parish community have that in mind in all we try to do. We welcome the opportunity to help those who are in trouble. Our Pastoral care group under the guidance of Wiggy are here to help but we need to know who is in need.

4. Fundraising

Our fundraising activities continue to provide a vital source of income whether it is at a Benefice or Parish level. The highlights were the Barn Dance, with our own Caroline R's Tea party and Jill and Donna's Plant and Produce sale. Easyfundraising has given us a modest but welcome income but we recognise that people need a better understanding and 'coaching' on how to use it. The Benefice Quiz continues to provide entertainment and revenue not forgetting the 'Murder Mystery'.

We will be continuing holding regular coffee mornings again but with greater ambition. We hope to spread our net wider and see if we can attract people from outside our more parochial group. There are several of our supporters who may not be regular churchgoers but who have sympathy for our endeavours.

The popular Quiz is reaching its latest conclusive round having proved very popular and financially successful last year. Also the Benefice Barn Dance will once again take place at Manor Farm in June. Last year proved popular but we hope to encourage even more to join in especially in the lighter warmer nights.

The Benefice fundraisers have been a major contributor to the running costs of the Benefice, including Parish Share, relieving the pressure in the parishes.

5. Church Council

Our Church Council is now able to meet in more convivial and warmer surroundings. Roughly once a month we meet to discuss our Church matters. I am delighted that Sue Greenaway joined us together with Iris Gregory. Mike Streten has taken over the secretarial duties, a thankless task trying to sift the wheat from the chaff. Finally we also now have the guidance of our Rector Hugh White who brings a wider understanding of the challenges facing rural parishes and guidance on the mechanics of Church protocol.

**Frank Hunter,
Churchwarden**

Lois Weedon Electoral Roll 2023

No	First Name	Last Name			
1	Clyde	Burbidge	19	Jillian	Jones
2	David	Clarke	20	Anna	Mackness
3	Margaret	Clarke	21	Jill	Pinder
4	Christopher	Cockrell	22	Caroline	Raven
5	Kay	George	23	Christine	Seckington
6	Brigit	Getley	24	Margaret	Seckington
7	Christopher	Getley	25	Susannah	Sitwell
8	Susan	Greenaway	26	Andrew	Storer
9	John	Gregory	27	Michael	Streten
10	Iris	Gregory	28	Victoria	Streten
11	Caroline	Hunt	29	Teresa	Tyler
12	Diane	Hunt	30	Sarah	Webb
13	Francis	Hunter			
14	Maralynn	Hunter			
15	Clive	Johnson			
16	Laura	Johnson			
17	David	Jones			
18	Penelope	Jones			

**The 2023 Annual Report
of the Church Council
for the parish of**

St. James the Great, Syresham



1. Worship: Our average Sunday attendance has increased to 11 this year. We have enjoyed special services with many more in attendance. We particularly enjoyed our joint services with the chapel these were a Coronation Celebration, Remembrance, Carols by Candlelight and Mothering Sunday.

We don't have any children at normal Sunday services but enjoy welcoming five families to our quarterly Messy Church sessions. A joint church and chapel group also run a school lunch time club where we entertain up to 24 children – especially if food is involved!

We now have a regular Time To Pray on a Thursday morning. Otherwise our service pattern has remained the same with two communions a month, one morning prayer and Praise and Prayer where we have looked at topics such as St David, St Paul and the work of Charlie Mackesy as well as celebrating Pentecost, our Patronal festival and Palm Sunday.



2. SCC Syresham Church Council met in June, October, November, January & April.

We continue to support our school, plan fundraising and special services such as Harvest, discuss building works & finances and receive reports from our Friends and Trusts groups. Current members of the SCC are:

Alice Palmer (Chair & BPCC rep)
Brenda Faragher (Treasurer)
Kathleen Brunning (Minutes Secretary & Pastoral rep)
Sallie Connery (Trust rep. Hammond Fund manager)
Margaret Miller (Friends rep & Giftaid)
David Wright (Hammond fund rep)

David Billingham is our Electoral Roll Officer.

3. Building works: We have been busy raising money for our church Steeple. Repairs will cost over £80,000. We now have enough to cover the cost, but some of this comes in the form of a loan. Unfortunately the builders are finding it difficult to source suitable shingles so it looks as though the work will not be done until the autumn. Other Quinquennial works have been completed but we will leave the final group until the steeple work is finished.

4. Church Helpers: We are forever grateful to the church members who help us to run the church by cleaning, decorating with flowers, reading in services, leading intercessions, serving coffee, leading services, playing the organ, ringing bells, lighting candles, setting up for services and welcoming folk coming to worship – it wouldn't work without you. It is wonderful to have welcomed two new members to the rotas this year. Also Nicola and David have done sterling work upgrading our children's area, coffee corner and church noticeboard.

5. Churchyard Working Party: Our CWP of around 15 good folk have worked hard on the first Saturday of each month to improve and maintain the churchyard. We now have some wild areas and a bug hotel. The Parish Council handed responsibility for the new churchyard back to us so there is plenty to do. We are awaiting the removal of a large self-seeded sycamore tree – once the tree surgeons finger has mended. We also thank our mowers who keep the grass around the church under control.

6. Friends of St James The committee have arranged a Quiz, Walks, Pancake Lunch and the 200club this year alongside Christmas and summer parties. We are looking forward to a Safari supper in June. Membership has grown slightly and we have a new member on the Committee. They have pledged £4000 towards our Steeple Fund. We give grateful thanks to Antoinette and all the team.

7. Fundraising: We enjoyed the Note-Ability concert in July. Our Fete in September turned out to be the hottest day of the year, and the Christmas Fair on the coldest day. This meant our total fundraising raised less than £2000, which was very disappointing. We are joining with other village organizations in June for a Village Celebration, which will include the church fete. We hope this will result in better advertising and more footfall. We are falling short of paying our full parish share and need to find ways of increasing our regular giving and fund raising.

8. Trusts: The Madge and Maud Payne trusts have continued to support us with our maintenance work. With the help of Brian Miller, our lead trustee, we have re-organized the investments to make clearer the difference between income, which we can use for church maintenance, and capital growth, which we cannot touch. The Hammond Trust enables us to deliver plants or hampers to folk at Christmas time and buy bibles and books for the school children.

9. The Bell Tower: We enjoy having our Bells rung to welcome folk to special services. Many thanks to Andrew North for leading the tower - also for doing a lot of cleaning with his trusty helpers. We look forward to celebrating the 400th birthday of some of our bells in June.

10. Our thanks: To Paul Stothard, Rev John Roberts, Rev David Bell and Rev Will Adams for leading our services through the interregnum and to Rev Hugh as he leads us into the future.

Alice Palmer
Church Representative on the BPCC

ELECTORAL ROLL 2023

Mrs I Atkinson
Mrs H Bartlett-Syree
Mr W Bartlett-Syree
Mr D Billingham
Mrs M Braybrook
Mrs C Brisby
Mr J Brisby QC
Mrs J Brooks
Mrs K Brunning
Mrs S Connery
Mrs S Crowley
Mrs L Dimbleby
Mr N Dimbleby
Mrs B Faragher
Mrs J Haycock
Mr A Hornby
Mrs A Hornby
Mrs N Howard
Mrs S McLean
Mrs M Miller
Miss A Palmer
Mrs S Palmer
Canon Revd J Roberts
Mr A Scott
Mrs C Scott
Mrs D Sims
Mrs I Wright
Mr D Wright
Mr M Yallop

Total 29



**The 2023 Annual Report
of the Church Council for the Parish of**

St. Mary the Virgin, Wappenham



**Wappenham Church Council
Including additional activities related to the Church**

1. Churchwardens' Report

Our thanks are expressed to all members of the Wappenham Church Council during its second year of operation. Chaired by Edwin King, these included Sheena Warren, Peter Oliver, Philip Thompson, Jane Mordue, Anthony Tucker, Angus Wade, Michael Bath, Di Watts and Barbara Gundle. We were very sad to lose Di Watts in January 2024 after so many years of cheerful and dedicated service to the Church.

The parish's Church Councils continued to hold bank accounts and were responsible for fund-raising and expenditure on fabric.

1.1 Building and repairs

Grass mowing had been reviewed, following the move to handover the closed churchyard and the need to find someone to mow the new graveyard. Thanks are expressed to Robert Tomkinson for kindly looking after the latter in recent years. A sit on mower was obtained. The mowing of the closed churchyard was put to contract whilst negotiations were ongoing with the Parish Council. Our gratitude also to all those who give their time to do the flower arrangements, clean the church, and fulfil numerous other jobs which ensure the church continues to have an attractive aspect. Our interest as owners in the repairs to the Village Hall roof by their committee was maintained by checking their insurance policy.

Quotations were sought to repair the boiler roof damaged the previous year by falling stone from the tower crenellation and final agreement from the insurers was needed. A way had been agreed to ensure that the weathercock, which was causing the flag pole to turn, would be stabilised.

1.2 Fabric

There have been no additions or removals from the Church other than the kind provision by a parishioner of pew seat cushions.

The Church continues to house equipment providing high speed broadband for the village and surrounding area.

1.3 Worship and attendance

The Church is open daily for services or private prayer and reflection. A regular pattern of services has been maintained including Holy Communion, Morning Prayer, Village Prayer and Praise and Breakfast Church. Attendance has remains steady by the usual congregation with broader community support at Christmas and Easter time.

We were delighted to welcome Revd Hugh White.

We thank the other members of the team for their ministry and pastoral support.

Edwin King

Sheena Warren

2. Electoral Roll for Wappenham

The Electoral Roll for Wappenham was completely renewed in spring 2019.

ELECTORAL ROLL – current 8 April 2024

Robert Tomkinson	Catharine Cross
Joanna Tomkinson	Charlotte Supple
Brian Watts	Jim Passmore
Jennifer Anderson	Ursula Passmore
Michael Bath	Kate Judge
Renee Watt	Alistair Judge
Clive Watt	Dorothy Owen
Howard Mordue	Richard Owen
Jane Mordue	Hannah Fowles
Sheena Warren	Florence Gundle
Ashley Warren	Philip Thompson
Edwin King	Jennifer Walker
Phyllis King	Richard Cullen
Philip King	Ian Bush
Anthony Tucker	Total: 40
Jennifer Spillett	
Hilary Wickham	
Sara Wales	
Angus Wade	
Laura Wade	
Amanda Ayres	
Dene Ayres	
Alan Gundle	
Barbara Gundle	
Peter Oliver	
Kathryn Oliver	

3. Eucharistic Assistant(s)

There is currently one Eucharistic Assistant, Rick Cullen, to whom warm thanks are expressed.

Anybody else who would be interested in becoming a Eucharistic Assistant please speak to our Church Wardens Edwin King and Sheena Warren.

4. Funding

4.1 Expenditure

Donations: A total of £1,250 (2022 £726) as donated to charitable organisations from the general fund.

Benefice: £9,729 (2022 £9729) was paid to the Benefice in lieu of Parish share and Benefice expenses, and a Diocese certificate of thanks received, confirming this was 100% of that requested.

4.2 Income:

Collections from services totalled £3,329 (2022 £5,151). Regular covenanted giving was £9,822 (2022 £10,077).

5. Fund-raising

5.1 Church

Events raised a creditable £2,544 (2022 £2853) with events such as the ever popular Summer Fete and the Wappenham Dog Walk and Show which we organised, and the Wappenham Beer Festival, in which we participated, much enjoyed by everybody. Thanks are expressed to lead Angus Wade and everyone who helped.

5.2 The Friends of St Mary the Virgin Wappenham The Friends is a registered charity (number 1116889) established as a trust to enable fund raising and fund management for the maintenance, repair and restoration of the fabric, grounds, graves, graveyard boundary walls and gates of the Grade II* Church of St Mary the Virgin, Wappenham.

The Friends trustees are: Jane Mordue (Chair), Anthony Tucker (Secretary), Alastair Judge (Treasurer), Sheena Warren (Churchwarden), Edwin King (Churchwarden) and until January, Di Watts. The Friends were sad to note the passing of Di Watts in January 2024, a true servant of the Church, kind, supportive and still attending meetings on Zoom until very recently.

5.3 Friends' Treasurer's Report

The Friends' funds stand at £6,756 (2022 £5361) of which £750 is earmarked for the WC.

Income in 2023 was £1,260 (2022 £1,405) and outgoings were £60 – bank fees - (2022 £30). There is also outstanding Gift Aid awaited.

In recent years, as the Church had undertaken its own fund-raising events, the Friends has focussed on supporting these and receiving regular donations. It was likely that funds for fabric works would in the future be deposited in the Church designated restricted fabric account. This would be a saving on administration including bank charges.

5.4 Works and Faculties

No major works in 2023. Thanks are expressed to all the kind members of the Friends and our supporters.

**Jane Mordue,
Chair, Friends of St Mary's**

Additional Activities linked to the Church

6. Link Charity reports

The Wappenham Thomastide Charity

(formerly known as the Wappenham Pooors and Church Charities)

Statement of Accounts for Year 2023/24

Date	Details	Withdrawn	Received	Balance (£)
Jan 2023	Balance brought forward			3,881.49
Feb 2023	Received from Trustees		1,000	4,881.49
Dec 2023	Received from Trustees		1,000	5,881.49
Dec 2023	Withdrawn to cover Thomastide grants and other awards	299.68		5,581.81
Jan 2024	Withdrawn to cover request for funding help	738.60		4,815.16

Details of the recipients are confidential but are available to any person – in confidence – nominated by the Parish Council. The Chairman confirms that all awards and gifts were safely received.

The Distribution Committee is led by Jenny Spillett. Other committee members are Barbara Gundle, Hilary Wickham and Philip King . The Committee was also joined *ex officio* by the Rev Hugh White.

We made 8 small gifts to a number of residents who it was felt had suffered a period of distress for whatever cause, (perhaps illness, losing a job or family issues) at Christmas. In January we received a request for financial support and have duly paid out £738.60 in two amounts in January and March.

The total amount distributed was £1,038.28.

The charity currently has £4,815.16 in reserve. The Distribution Committee received two contributions from the Trustees totalling £2,000.

The purpose of the charity is to help people in Wappenham who find themselves distressed for whatever reason, and the Trustees would therefore be happy to consider requests, perhaps of a practical nature, during the course of the year, as well as at Christmas time. They would welcome the help of the Wappenham Church Council and the Parish Council in this respect.

Chair of Distribution Committee

March 2024

7. St Mary's Coffee mornings report 2023

Set up to provide a regular community 'get together' following the closure of the village shop in 2011, the coffee morning is normally held on the first Wednesday of each month. Although set up by Rev Will Adams and facilitated by St Mary's Church Council, the Coffee Morning is a secular event for the village. During 2023, the coffee morning was held on ten occasions and raised just over £630 (2022 £450) which was distributed to the following charities:-

- £260 for Macmillan Cancer Support from October.
- £70 for SNAPP from April, a charity supporting 'Sick newborn, their parents and those that care for them' based at the JR in Oxford.
- £150 for 'our hosts', Wappenham Village Hall.
- £150 for the Northampton Hope centre.

Anthony Tucker

8. Bell ringers

The bells are available to be rung and bell ringing practice is every third Wednesday from 7.30 till 9. The set of bells at Wappenham, where the bell ropes are of a good length, is rated as more challenging.

Philip Thompson

**The 2023 Annual Report
of the Church Council for the parish of**

St John the Evangelist, Whitfield



1. Whitfield Church Council Representative(s) Report

Church Council Members - Claire Bonner -Chair; Sue Timmis, Gloria Gardner; Nick Goodwin; Carol Rhodes; Jane Rymell; Bo Wallace. Treasurer – Brenda Faragher.

The Church Council met 3 times during the year. On the 1st June we were very pleased to welcome Hilary Walton as the new Chair of The Friends, Hilary has formed a new committee which will meet independently, and raise funds for the repair and maintenance of the Church building.

We struggle financially but are very grateful to our regular givers to help us to cover our overheads and we have paid 77% of our Parish Share.

Fundraising is challenging, lack of manpower still hampers plans for a village fete, smaller events work better for us.

Claire Bonner
Chair

1.1 Fabric - Repairs and Maintenance

We are very grateful to Ian and Sara Chapple who continue to keep an eye on general maintenance and carry out repairs as necessary. Repairs to damaged stonework on the East window has been carried out. Grateful thanks also to Nick Goodwin who has given the vestry a thorough clean and tidy up!

1.2 Services

The year began in interregnum, with a small but loyal regular congregation, holding one Holy Communion service and one Morning Prayer each month, unfortunately we had to cancel a couple of times in the autumn due to holidays and HS2 roadworks making the journey for visiting priests difficult.

Special and festival services are well supported, donations to charities include, Autism East Midlands, Farming Community Network, The Royal British Legion, and The Childrens Society.

1.3 Summary & Thanks

In December we were delighted to welcome Reverend Hugh White as the new Rector to the Benefice, we look forward to working with him in our mission in the future. We would like to thank Paul Stothard, Rev. John Roberts, and Rev. Will Adams who have worked so hard during the interregnum to maintain our service pattern. Huge thanks to Sarah Rudkin for her work in the Benefice, especially for producing the Pew News; Alice Palmer for managing the Benefice finances and to Bill Elkington and members of the BPCC for the group support.

Thank you for the support of The Friends of St John and Whitfield Church Council members. Huge thanks to Brenda Faragher, our Treasurer, for looking after our accounts.

Thank you to Sara and Ian Chapple for all they do in the Churchyard, the Bell Tower and all the general maintenance jobs quietly undertaken and completed, as if by magic!

Thank you to the teams of cleaners, readers, flower arrangers, Sacristans, Sidesmen, Ringers, mowers and all the other people who are just there to help when needed.

Claire Bonner & Susan Timmis Church Representatives

2. Electoral Roll

St John the Evangelist, Whitfield Electoral Roll for the Year 23/24

Sadly three members of the Electoral Roll died during the year reducing the total to 17 members.

William Thomas ADAMS – Whitfield	Carol RHODES – Whitfield
Linda Evelyn ADAMS – Whitfield	Jane RYMELL - Whitfield
Claire Elizabeth BONNER – Whitfield	Jonathan SAYERS - Whitfield
John C S M BRISBY QC – Falcutt	Susan Yvonne TIMMIS – Whitfield
Robin Edward DIGBY – Whitfield	Jane TOWERS - Whitfield
Janet DIGBY – Whitfield	Nicholas TOWERS - Whitfield
William James DODD – Whitfield	Brenda Joan WALLACE - Whitfield
Dorothy DODD – Whitfield	
Gloria Joyce GARDNER – Whitfield	
Nicholas GOODWIN - Rugby	

Total - 17 names

Claire Bonner, Electoral Roll Officer

3. Eucharistic Assistant

Claire Bonner

4. Whitfield Bell Tower Report

Regular Friday night practices take place, with ringers from other towers attending, to help make it a viable practice. We normally manage to ring for services, although rarely with a full band. In addition, we have been teaching two ringers from other towers here on several days mid-week. We rang all the bells (muffled) to mark the death of the Queen and un-muffled to celebrate the accession of King Charles. In addition to the regular band, non-ringers were able to chime a bell in the safe "down" state.

Sara Chapple Tower Captain

4.1 Whitfield Churchyard Report

Thanks, as always are due to Jo Taylor, Ian Timmis, Bill Dodd, Paul Cooper, Erik van Kampen, Roy Spittal, Sara and Ian Chapple, and a new member of the mowing group Rob Harman. Bill continues to keep the hedges neat and tidy, and he and Ian C have undertaken some tree pruning. The crab apple at the back suffered severe damage when several branches broke, probably due to an extra heavy load of fruit and the very dry conditions. At the moment it is not a very good shape, but we hope it will improve as the heavy pruning shocks it into producing more growth.

The tulip planting experiment was successful and more were added in the autumn. The snakeshead fritillaries which have been slow to spread have many more plants this year.

The new water butt has been connected up to a new down pipe outside the vestry.

Sara Chapple

5. Friends of St. John the Evangelist Church, Whitfield

5.1 Funding Position

The balance in the bank account on 31st December 2023 was £6,364.42.

5.2 Events held and Expenses incurred

This year saw the return of an old favourite village event, the Safari Supper. Looking back we were amazed that the last one was in 2016. We gathered for starters at Ian and Sue Timmis' house, went on to main courses with the three hosts: Bill and Dorothy Dodd, Steve and Jo Brooker and Tim and myself, then concluded with desserts in the Village Hall. It was a very enjoyable evening and raised £345 for the Friends.

During the year Tim had his trusty table in action, selling plants of many varieties and raising a further £90 for our coffers.

Expenditure comprised the buildings insurance premium of £1,218 plus window repair costs of £180, organ maintenance of £168 and fire extinguisher servicing of £57.

5.3 Acknowledgements

In my first full year in the role of Chair I have tried hard to make the Friends more active following the time lost during the pandemic and its after-effects. We are now holding events again and have been able to recruit a number of new members. Many thanks to our new Membership Secretary, Jo Brooker, for her sterling work and help with this.

I would also like to thank the other staunch members of the committee, as well as Claire Bonner for organising all the repairs and other work in the church and keeping us involved so we can make good use of the funds raised.

Hilary Walton

Chairman

6. Whitfield Charities

Trustees

Tim Walton (Chairman), Sue Timmis, Claire Bonner, Ian Timmis (Treasurer), Bo Wallace, Linda Adams, Sheila Brownsell

Trustees have to be regularly voted/ approved and because of a lack of village meeting this has not been possible in recent years – we would ask the meeting to approve the trustees and also if anyone to like to join then please do approach any trustee and we can provide more information

The Charities: Background

Income derives from the rental of a number of small parcels of land owned by the charities and some investments

Whitfield Forest Allotment

Origin dates to 1826 and was formed to replace the rights of the villagers to collect firewood from common land after the acts of enclosure. Historically this was interpreted to mean to assist those in need with the cost of fuel. More recently it is used to buy small gifts for those in the village that have had a difficult year.

Whitfield Old Church School

Origin dates to 1764 and was formed to pay for a schoolmaster to instruct the children in reading writing etc and assist with books etc. This was updated following the closure of the school to enable books or clothes to be purchased for the children of the parish. In previous years children over the age of 4 have been identified and either a Bible or other educational book has been presented to them as a one-off gift. As records are not complete and we rely on members knowledge of the village, we may well have missed some children. Please advise us if you know of eligible children that have not received this small token/ acknowledgement.

Whitfield Listers Charity

Origin dates to 1708 and was formed for apprenticing children under the age of 21 or for their advancement. As there are a declining number of apprenticeships these days, this has been interpreted to mean the provision of sums of money to help children with the purchase of books, lessons, coaching sessions or school trips if it is for their “advancement”.

For this award we would ask individuals to approach a member of the committee with specific requests

Tim Walton
Chair

6.1 Treasurers Report

Total balances for 2023 across the 3 charities has slightly declined from £8,720.56 to £8,371.65 with an annual income of £943.33

Total expenditure in 2022 – BYHP of £250, Brackley Food Bank £250 and gifts of £579

General agreement was to continue with donations both within Whitfield and also the surrounding areas during this continuing difficult period.

Ian Timmis
Treasurer

7. Whitfield Coffee Morning 2023

We meet on the first Tuesday of the month for our coffee mornings. We have had good attendance from people and dogs and the usual variety of cakes donated. The first Tuesday of October was our Macmillan coffee morning and this year we raised £218. We also took the opportunity to count the 5p and 20p pieces in their respective bottles and donated £42 each to the Air Ambulance, Brackley Food Bank and Hearing Dogs for Deaf People. In November we paid for two poppy wreaths for Remembrance Day

Thanks to everyone who helps with setting up, clearing up and of course baking.

A craft group meets on most Tuesday evenings 7-9 in the VH, knitting is dominant at the moment but any crafters are welcome.

Sue Timmis
Representative