

The Parish of Stoke St Mary (with Thurlbear)

In the Seven Sowers Benefice

**(United Benefice of Beercrocombe, with Curry Mallet,
Hatch Beauchamp, Orchard Portman, Staple Fitzpaine,
Stoke St Mary (with Thurlbear) and West Hatch)**

Annual Report and Financial Statements of the Parochial Church Council

For the year ended 31st December 2021

Incumbent

The Revd. Joanna Porter

Bank

**Lloyds Bank
31 Fore Street
Taunton
TA1 1HN**

Independent Examiner

**Alison Horsey
Fairways
West Hatch
Taunton
TA3 5RS**

The Parish of Stoke St Mary (with Thurlbear) – Annual Report for the Year 2021

Introduction

The ecclesiastical parish of Stoke St Mary (with Thurlbear) contains two parish churches, namely the church of St Mary the Virgin, Stoke St Mary, and the redundant church of St Thomas, Thurlbear. The two churches are located in the centre of their respective villages.

The parish forms part of the Seven Sowers Benefice, comprising the parishes of Beercrocombe with Curry Mallet, Hatch Beauchamp, Orchard Portman, Staple Fitzpaine, Stoke St Mary (with Thurlbear) and West Hatch. The parish is part of the Deanery of South Somerset, which in turn is part of the Diocese of Bath and Wells within the Church of England.

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) is a charity excepted from registration with the Charity Commissioners.

The Benefice, which has been in vacancy since the end of October 2018, appointed a new Rector, the Revd Joanna Porter. She was licenced by the Archdeacon of Taunton as Priest-in-Charge at an online service on 19th April and in November as Rector by the Archdeacon.

During 2021 the PCC continued to support the Ministry Team in promoting the whole mission of the church – pastoral, social, evangelistic and ecumenical – within the ecclesiastical parish. The Revd Christabel Ager, who has served in the Benefice as Associate Minister since 2011, retired; the Revd Stephen Jones served throughout the year as Associate Vicar and Sue McKen as a licenced lay reader. Brian Crudge retired from licenced lay readership during 2021 after more than fifty years in the role, of which more than forty have been spent with St Mary's. He now joins Clive Hayward as a Reader Emeritus. Holly Stevens is the Children's, Schools and Families Worker and Julie Kimber is the Benefice Administration Assistant; both ladies are employed on a part-time basis.

The PCC is responsible for the care and maintenance of the Grade II* listed church building in Stoke St Mary and the surrounding churchyard. It is also responsible for the churchyard of St Thomas's Church, Thurlbear, where the church building itself is maintained by the Churches Conservation Trust.

From the start of 2021, the country went into lockdown and the church remained closed for public worship. The first act of public worship was on Easter Sunday at the beginning of April. For the next six months, public worship at St Mary's was restricted to holding one service at 10.00 am on the second Sunday of each month.

In the last quarter of the year, the service rota that had been in operation before the first of the national lockdowns under the Covid crisis on 23rd March 2020 was re-introduced. This provided for a service in St Mary's on three Sundays each month as follows: first Sunday: 8.30 am BCP Communion; second Sunday: 10.00 am Parish Communion; fourth Sunday: 10.00 am Worship-for-All. On the third Sunday and, where appropriate, on fifth Sundays a United Benefice Service is held; the third Sunday service being held always at West Hatch and the fifth Sunday service alternating between Orchard Portman and Beercrocombe.

The Ministry Team continued throughout the year to host an online service each Sunday on Zoom.

Membership

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation rules. Members are elected at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting. All Church attendees are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and to stand for election to the PCC.

PCC members who served from 1st January 2021 until the date on which this report was approved were:

<i>Incumbent:</i>	The Revd Joanna Porter	<i>Appointed 19th April 2021</i>
<i>Associate Ministers:</i>	The Revd Christabel Ager	<i>Retired 31st October 2021</i>
	The Revd Stephen Jones	
<i>Churchwarden:</i>	John Pugh	<i>(Treasurer)</i>
<i>Deanery Synod Representative:</i>	Tom Mayberry	<i>(ex-officio)</i>
<i>Elected Members:</i>	Brian Crudge	<i>Retired as Lay Reader 1st February 2021</i>
	Elizabeth Fothergill	
	Sarah Hampson	<i>Co-opted 11th October 2021</i>
	Roger Millard	
	Peter Renshaw	<i>(Chairman)</i>
	Graham Salter	

John Pugh served as acting secretary throughout the year.

Church Attendance

At the time of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting in 2021 there were 40 parishioners on the Electoral Roll. The weekly attendance at services (when they were permitted) varied from a minimum of about 10 at an 8.30 a.m. service up to 30 or more at other regular services. As noted in the introduction on the previous page, the country started the year in lockdown in response to the Covid crisis and the church remained closed for public worship until Easter. To maintain safe social distancing, the capacity of the church was set at 35 people sitting on their own; this number could be increased when couples or families are included.

Sidesmen and Sideswomen

Sidesmen and Sideswomen are appointed for the year and are organised by Peter Renshaw. In 2021 they were Rosemary Burgess, Tom Mayberry, Neill Porter, John Pugh, Peter Renshaw and Rachel Woolvin.

Other Roles

Other members of the congregation provide essential support to the work and worship of St Mary's Church by serving as bell ringers (Tower Captain: Rachel Drew), flower arrangers and cleaners, and by serving on the coffee-making rota. The Sacristan is Rachel Woolvin and the church architect is Annie Evans. The principal organist to St Mary's is David Bidgood.

Review of the Year

We entered 2021 in lockdown. We were, by that time, accustomed to this regime, already nine months into the Covid pandemic. Our church door remained locked, not just for regular services but to casual visitors also; arrangements were put in place for those wishing to enter the building for private prayer and some took up this offer. There were funerals too but with the very reduced congregations mandated by Government. By Easter Sunday the restrictions were lifted to some extent and we were able to welcome a congregation back into church for the first communion of the year. Earlier in the morning we had greeted the day at a sunrise service at the Slough Green Scout Hut – the first time in many years when the sun had actually been visible. From April onwards we reverted to our Covid service pattern of one service a month in each of the Benefice churches, which for St Mary's was the second Sunday. We ultimately returned to our pre-pandemic timetable of three services each month at the start of the fourth quarter.

The online services each Sunday over Zoom continued to be very popular and reached some people who are not habitual church attendees.

In February our Lay Reader, Brian Crudge, retired from readership. He had been a reader for over fifty years and a reader in our Benefice since he took up the post of Headmaster at Thurlbear School in September 1980. St Mary's is hugely indebted to Brian for his dedicated service over these years.

A significant moment for the Benefice in 2021 was the licensing of the Revd Joanna Porter, on 19th April, as our Priest-in-Charge; she was licenced to be Rector by the Archdeacon of Taunton, Simon Hill, on 7th November. Together with her husband Neill, she moved into the Rectory in October.

At the end of October our Non-Stipendiary Associate Minister, Revd Christabel Ager, retired after eleven years in the Benefice. A very fitting service was held at St Peter's, Staple Fitzpaine, with a lunch afterwards in Neroche Hall. Many people from across the Benefice paid their thanks to her.

The return to the full-time worship pattern in the last quarter of the year also meant a return to managing and monitoring the numbers attending in order to remain Covid compliant. The Armistice service was held in church again and was well attended. At the end of November, we were also able to hold our traditional Advent carol service in St Thomas's and, for the first time in many decades, to sing to the accompaniment of the harmonium.

At Christmas, were able to hold a traditional carol service again, albeit with a restricted number in the congregation. On Christmas Eve we repeated the formula adopted in the previous year of holding two crib services in the afternoon; this kept the numbers at a Covid safe level and did not in any way spoil the enjoyment of those attending. The year concluded with a worship-for-all service on Christmas morning, taken by the Children's Worker.

We were pleased to welcome Sarah Hampson onto our PCC. The Committee held four meetings during 2021 (including the annual meeting), of which only the meeting in October could be held in person. All other meetings were held over Zoom. However, the format of the meetings changed fundamentally in June, with our first joint PCC meeting incorporating all seven PCC bodies; these meetings were chaired by the Rector. Immediately after the conclusion of the joint meeting, our own PCC met in a separate session; these meetings were chaired by Peter Renshaw and Roger Millard. Our first physical meeting was held in West Hatch church and we had our separate PCC meeting in an area at the back of the church. This new format worked well in permitting items of common interest across the Benefice to be discussed in the company of all parties. However, with some people self-isolating and others unable to log onto Zoom, there is no format that suits everyone. We will have to wait until the pandemic abates to get back to meetings at which all can participate.

The work of our Children's Worker was hampered to some extent by an inability to get into the schools, as head teachers took measures to protect children and staff. Nevertheless, the Open-the-Book team continued to record some stories in their own homes, with Holly skilfully knitting them together

afterwards. The short videos were well received by the schools. Efforts were made to present Messy Church online, helping families to keep in touch, but everyone looked forward to meeting again in person, which we managed again towards the end of the year. Schools, however, remained closed to outsiders. Despite members of the PCC not being able to go into Thurlbear School, we were pleased to learn that the Head, Steve Gillan, and his team had handled the enormous challenges of the pandemic with great skill.

During the year we received a substantial legacy from the estate of Colin Clarke, our former Church Warden, and two further very generous donations from members of our church community.

PCC funds again received a welcome contribution from the Benefice Magazine, which succeeds in raising money primarily through the sale of advertising space. Its contribution to informing the wider community about events related to the church is a vital medium of communication.

After a year in which all fundraising had come to a halt in March, we endeavoured to turn this around in 2021. A very concerted effort to involve as many households in the village and beyond in the 100 Club was immensely successful, with only two tickets unsold. We were also able to hold the Christmas Bazaar in 2021, which again was a notable success. We were particularly grateful to Liz Fothergill and Ginny Rhodes for organising both of these fundraising events.

We concluded the work outlined in the 2019 quinquennial survey with the repainting of the rainwater goods during the summer. The Rectory has not been redecorated internally since it was built in 2004; in the absence of Diocese funding, the Benefice decided that an effort should be made to rectify this. The bill was paid by the PCC but was funded by contributions from the Benefice, the Rector and some members of the congregation.

Financial Review

Total receipts on the General Fund were £28,632 (including the legacy and a donation referred to above) and total payments £18,284, including a transfer to the Community, Mission and Charitable Fund of £1,863. The income in the year from services and regular giving increased and was helped by the contribution from the Benefice Magazine, the 100 Club and the Christmas Bazaar. The largest item of expenditure (£13,405) was the Parish Share paid to the Diocese, which enables it to provide the parish with clergy and support services. Community, Mission and Charitable outgoings amounted to £1,962, which included our contributions to funding the Children's Worker and the Benefice Administration Assistant.

The unrestricted funds (comprising the General Fund and the Community, Mission and Charitable Fund) had an excess of receipts over payments in the year of £10,249.

The Fabric Fund had receipts in the year of £5,387 (including a VAT recovery of £1,664 and a donation of £1,020) and outgoings of £4,313. The balance on this fund at the year-end stood at £26,590.

Reserves Policy

The PCC has had a policy of maintaining a balance on unrestricted funds, if possible, equating to approximately six months' unrestricted payments. This policy was aimed at covering any unforeseen emergency situations that may arise. At 31st December 2021, the balance on the General and CMC Funds of £17,506 equated to 348 days of payments, a very marked improvement on the 152 days for last year. The PCC are conscious that this metric is boosted this year by the legacy received and of the need to continue monitoring it closely.

It is the strategy of the PCC to invest the monetary assets of long-term funds, including the Fabric Fund, in deposits with the Church of England Deposit Fund. Surplus monetary assets, which may be required at shorter notice, are held with Lloyds Bank on current and deposit accounts, as appropriate.

John Pugh
(Church Warden and Acting Secretary)

20 January, 2022

Independent Examiner's Report to the PCC of Stoke St Mary Parish Church For the Year Ended 31 December 2021

I report to the PCC on my examination of the accounts of the PCC (the Charity) for the year ended 31 December 2021 which are set out on pages 1 to 10.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the Charity's trustees (i.e. the members of the PCC) you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

I report in respect of my examination of the Charity's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

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

1. accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with the accounting records.

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

A Horsey

Mrs Alison Horsey
Fairways,
West Hatch,
Taunton.
TA3 5RS

Date: *19th February 2022*

Stoke St Mary PCC

Receipts & Payments

For the Year Ended 31 December 2021

GENERAL FUND (Unrestricted Fund)

	Notes	2021 £	2020 £
RECEIPTS			
Service Collections		2,308	2,644
Regular giving through bank		7,030	6,610
Income tax recovered	3	2,265	2,747
Donations	4	11,733	850
Benefice magazine surplus		1,201	666
Fees (Weddings etc.)		1,304	383
Events	5	2,787	692
Bank Interest		4	22
Total Receipts		28,632	14,614
PAYMENTS			
Parish Share		(13,405)	(13,714)
Clergy Expenses		(1,447)	(1,135)
Organist Fees		(263)	(245)
Organ Maintenance		(130)	(156)
Heat & Light		(352)	(412)
Insurance		(530)	(515)
Transferred to Community, Mission and Charitable Fund		(1,863)	(1,462)
Sundry	8	(294)	(95)
Total Payments		(18,284)	(17,734)
Excess/(Deficit) of Receipts over Payments		10,348	(3,120)
Fund balance at 1 January 2021		5,693	8,813
Fund balance at 31 December 2021	9	16,041	5,693

COMMUNITY, MISSION AND CHARITABLE FUND (Designated Fund)

This Fund was established in 2004 following the decision of the PCC to tithe General Fund income.

		£	£
RECEIPTS			
Transferred from General Fund		1,863	1,462
PAYMENTS			
Charity: Various charitable causes	6	(977)	(1,188)
Community: Children's Worker funding	7	(731)	-
Mission: Admin Assistant funding	7	(254)	-
(Deficit)/Excess of Receipts over Payments		(99)	274
Fund balance at 1 January 2021		1,564	1,290
Fund balance at 31 December 2021	9	1,465	1,564

Stoke St Mary PCC

Receipts & Payments

For the Year Ended 31 December 2021

CHURCHYARD FUND (Part Restricted Fund)

	Notes	2021 £	2020 £
RECEIPTS			
TDBC Grant - Stoke St. Mary		300	300
TDBC Grant - Thurlbear		260	-
Donations, burial fees etc.		918	1,343
		<u>1,478</u>	<u>1,643</u>
PAYMENTS			
Stoke St. Mary: Grass Cutting		(695)	(681)
Thurlbear: Grass Cutting		(350)	(350)
		<u>(1,045)</u>	<u>(1,031)</u>
Excess of Receipts over Payments		433	612
Fund balance at 1 January 2021		978	366
Fund balance at 31 December 2021	9	<u>1,411</u>	<u>978</u>

At 31 December 2021 and 2020, all the funds carried forward were Designated Funds.

FABRIC FUND (Restricted Fund)

		£	£
RECEIPTS			
Contributions to redecoration of Rectory			
(Gift Aid of £360 to be recovered in 2022):		2,440	-
Listed Places of Worship Scheme		1,664	-
Other donations and related Gift Aid recovered		1,270	6,000
Bank Interest		13	130
		<u>5,387</u>	<u>6,130</u>
PAYMENTS			
Redecoration of Rectory		(2,800)	-
Quinquennial work: repaint rainwater goods		(1,350)	-
Fire safety survey		(80)	(102)
Lightening conductor survey and related works		(54)	(54)
Floodlight bulb replacement		(29)	-
Wire grills for Reyntiens windows		-	(5,479)
Quinquennial work: reglaze windows		-	(4,350)
Quinquennial work: repair stonework		-	(650)
		<u>1,074</u>	<u>(4,505)</u>
Excess/(Deficit) of Receipts over Payments		1,074	(4,505)
Fund balance at 1 January 2021		25,516	30,021
Fund balance at 31 December 2021	9	<u>26,590</u>	<u>25,516</u>

At 31 December 2021 £1,020 of the funds carried forward were Designated Funds (2020: £nil).

Stoke St Mary PCC

Statement of Assets and Liabilities As at 31 December 2021

	Notes	2021 £	2020 £
ASSETS			
Cash funds			
Lloyds Bank current account		3,418	3,006
Lloyds Bank deposit account		1,520	193
CCLA deposit account - General Account		15,230	5,226
CCLA deposit account - Fabric Account		25,339	25,326
Cash in Hand		-	-
Monetary assets	9	<u>45,507</u>	<u>33,751</u>
Debtors and prepayments (General Fund, unless stated otherwise)			
Clergy expenses paid in advance		250	250
Burial ground grants for 2021 (Churchyard Fund)		560	560
Income tax recoverable (estimated)		2,350	1,742
Listed Places of Worship Grant (Fabric Fund)		-	1,647
Other monetary assets		<u>3,160</u>	<u>4,199</u>
LIABILITIES			
Creditors and Accruals (General Fund, unless stated otherwise)			
Clergy expenses (Q4 estimate)		250	233
Contribution to Benefice Admin Assistant (Q4)		128	-
		<u>378</u>	<u>233</u>

The above Statement of Assets and Liabilities and the associated Receipts and Payments Accounts, including the notes on the following two pages, were approved by the Parochial Church Council on 20 January 2022 and are signed on its behalf by the Rector and the Treasurer.



Revd. Joanna Porter



John Pugh

Stoke St Mary PCC

Notes to the Financial Statements For the Year Ended 31 December 2021

1. Presentation of financial information

The financial statements of the PCC have been prepared in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations 2006 using the Receipts and Payments basis.

2. Accounting policies

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

Receipts are included as received and expenditure when irrevocably paid.

Restricted funds must be used for the purpose for which the money was given or donated.

General funds represent unrestricted money that can be used for the general charitable purposes of the PCC.

Designated funds represent unrestricted money that has been earmarked for a specific purpose by the PCC. This money may be undesignated at any time.

The origin and purpose of each fund within the fund classification are given beneath the title of each fund.

3. Income tax recovered

A claim for recovery of income tax under the Gift Aid scheme may be made at any time during the year and the receipts from two claims were received in 2021 covering the periods from 6 April to 31 December 2020 and from 1 January to 5 April 2021. A claim for the period to 31 December 2021 will be submitted in 2022 and this is shown in these accounts as a receivable amount in the "Statement of assets and liabilities".

	2021	2020
	£	£
4. Donations received		
Legacy	10,000	-
Gift Aided donations	974	20
Non-Gift Aided donations	759	830
Income from donations	11,733	850
5. Events	£	£
100 Club (2021 includes the outcome for two years)	1,760	640
Christmas Bazaar	804	-
Community teas	223	20
Sale of Cook Books	-	32
Income from events	2,787	692
6. Donations to charitable causes	£	£
Thurlbear School Leavers' Bibles	313	330
Grass Roots Rwanda	250	500
Churches Conservation Trust	171	-
Royal British Legion	138	248
Children's Society	105	110
Donations to charitable causes	977	1,188

Stoke St Mary PCC

Notes to the Financial Statements (continued) For the Year Ended 31 December 2021

7. Funding for Employees within the Benefice

Funding is being provided by the churches in the Benefice towards the cost of a part-time Children's, Schools and Families Worker. During 2020, the CSF Worker was furloughed and, as a consequence, no contribution was made.

Funding is also being provided on a co-share basis among the Benefice churches to meet the cost of an Administration Assistant employed in the Benefice office. During 2020 a grant was received to cover the costs of the first twelve months.

These contributions are paid over to The Seven Sowers Charitable Trust, who are responsible for meeting the cost of the salaries and the costs therefore appear in the annual accounts of The Seven Sowers Charitable Trust, rather than in these annual accounts of Stoke St Mary PCC.

Both the CSF Worker and the Administration Assistant are legally employed by the PCC.

	2021	2020
	£	£
8. Sundry payments		
Keys, hinges, paper towels	86	-
Church Copyright Licence	71	80
Hand sanitizer	62	-
Retirement gift for Bishop Peter	50	-
Bath & Wells Change Ringers	15	15
Stationery	10	-
Total sundry payments	294	95

9. Funds

Fund balances at 31 December 2021 were as follows:

	£	£
General Fund (Unrestricted)	16,041	5,693
Designated funds:		
Community Mission & Charitable Fund	1,465	1,564
Restricted funds:		
Churchyard Fund	1,411	978
Fabric Fund	26,590	25,516
Monetary assets carried forward	45,507	33,751

Reconciliation of movements in funds

	Monetary assets brought forward	Receipts/ (payments) in the year	Monetary assets carried forward
	£	£	£
General Fund	5,693	10,348	16,041
Community Mission & Charitable Fund	1,564	(99)	1,465
Churchyard Fund	978	433	1,411
Fabric Fund	25,516	1,074	26,590
	33,751	11,756	45,507