



2024

Thatcham Annual Parish Meeting Annual Report APCM 11 MAY 2025

Parish Office
St Mary's Church
Churchgate
Thatcham
RG19 3PN



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Thatcham Parochial Church Council 2024/5

<p>Ex Officio Revd. Mark Bennet Revd Nicola Hulks (until Easter 2025) Revd Brenda Harland Revd Angela Brennan</p> <p>Churchwardens Sarah Goode (2024) Sue Ball (2023) Mike Watson (2023)</p> <p>Deanery Synod Representatives (to 2026) Chris Watts Cath Forbes (until October 2024) (3 vacancies since October)</p>	<p>Elected Lay Members John Hicks (St Barnabas) Lourdes Cottam (St Barnabas) Cath Forbes (until October 2024) Debbie Waters (until October 2024) Donna Ralph (until October 2024) (3 vacancies since October))</p> <p>Simon Stagg (2021) Kevin Dunwell (2023) Viv Druce (2023) Judith Bennet (2023) Steven Rice (2023) Mary Stagg (2023)</p> <p>Co-options Mark Backhouse (Tower Bells) Mike Stevenson (PCC Secretary) Ann Dibble (Safeguarding) Bernadette Ellison (St Barnabas)</p>

Team Rectors Report

The one who calls us is faithful (1 Thessalonians 5:24). This was the text written (in Greek) on the chapel bell at Westcott House, where I trained for ministry so many years ago. This year I have been glad of the way that it was brought to my attention every day – for it has been the most challenging year of ministry so far.

The biggest challenge in the parish has been financial, but there is also a challenge of a church community (I include myself) getting older. Financially for the first time for many years we were unable to pay our full parish share, and alongside this face the problem of building maintenance – including drains and a major project to refurbish the organ. The tension has not always been comfortable.

Part of the issue has been a post covid reduction in our regular congregation – through death and people moving. Another factor has been the reduction in the numbers of baptisms, weddings and funerals – the fees and donations from such events have, in the past, made a more significant contribution to our finances. In 2024 we had 30 funerals, 3 weddings and 37 baptisms – just half our regular pre-covid numbers. And the funerals included Doreen Dines, Kay Gibbs and Rita Christopher, Brenda Fowler and John and Barbara Saunders.

And a number of faithful servants of the parish are stepping down from their roles – most notably Ann and Chris Watts, who have served in admin and general getting of things done and keeping the show on the road for so long. It would be hard to overstate what they have done.

Sue Ball is stepping down as Churchwarden and Mike Stevenson has retired as PCC secretary. At Easter 2025 we marked the departure of Nicola Hulks to her new role as Team

Rector in Hermitage and Tim Cooke stepped down from his many years of service as our regular organist. Joan Collins has been faithfully taking communion to Thatcham Court, and has stepped down from that role. Huge thanks are due to all of them.

Of course we are seeing a few signs of hope – a welcome scattering of new faces in our services – but not yet enough to replace those who have left – our Electoral Roll is down from 172 to just 135. And new people are stepping up – Mark Backhouse has made a significant contribution to regular maintenance and Rachel Backhouse has taken on the bookkeeping for our accounts. The safeguarding team led by Ann Dibble has been doing some excellent work. The monthly Muddy Church is reaching out to families in a new way. New fundraising initiatives have brought some fun into our common life, and begun to make a modest difference financially.

We cannot mark 2024 without noting the ordinations of Alison Dean and Leanne Fowler – sadly for us, to serve in other parishes – and another contribution to our reducing numbers: but for the very best of reasons.

2025 does bring other signs of hope – several confirmation candidates and a few new faces month by month – but it will take some patience to rebuild under continued financial pressure. Thank you to everyone who has been part of our community during the year – especially to clergy colleagues Brenda and Angela, and to Michael Harley, who have enlivened our worship and helped us to keep focused on the faithful God who continues to call us.

Mark Bennet

Parochial Church Council – Background and Proceedings

Thatcham PCC has the responsibility of co-operating with the Team Rector and the Team Vicar in promoting in the parish the whole mission of the church – spiritual, pastoral, evangelistic and ecumenical.

The PCC met at St Mary's Church six times during 2025.

Arrangements were made during 2024 for 47 baptisms (53 in 2023) and 3 weddings. In addition there were 28 (31) funerals (12 with a service at St Mary's, 16 with services at a crematorium or cemetery)

Membership

Members of the PCC are either ex officio, co-opted or elected by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting. St Barnabas Church is represented on the PCC by up to 5 members elected by their own church meeting.

Committees

The PCC operates through a Standing Committee and working groups on Safeguarding, Appeals (Organ and Major Repairs), Buildings and Finance which met between full meetings of the Council. The Standing Committee is the only Committee required by law; it has power to transact business of the Council between meetings, subject to any decisions made by the PCC.

FINANCE REPORT

Report to the Accounts December 2024

St Mary's General Account (day to day running of church activities) shows an decrease of £5,122 in the cumulative deficit from £18,383 to £13,261.

Regular giving through Standing Orders and The Parish Giving Scheme has been most welcome but the need to attract new regular givers to replace those who have died or moved away is a challenge.

The St Barnabas General Account shows a positive balance of £3,285 at the end of the year.

Unfortunately we have not paid the Parish Share in full (our contribution to the diocese for clergy stipends, housing and pensions) set at £103,531. We actually paid £71,124 (a deficit of £32,407) and have suspended payment by Direct Debit. As a result no rebate was received from the Deanery (£1,795 in 2023).

The Parish Share was set at £106,829.00 for 2025 which is very challenging and very unlikely to be achieved. We are aiming to pay at least £6,500.00 per month.

Income from Services and other activities improved gradually through the year. Further donations were attracted to the Organ Pipedream Repair Project. The total available in organ funds at December 2024 was £62,005 (£4,123 in designated accounts and £57,882 in restricted). This includes £ 678 raised in support of the organ appeal in 2024 following a concert at St Mary's.

Cost of electric and gas reduced in 2024 to £6,252 from £7,410 in 2023 through negotiation of longer contracts but mostly through active management of heating and lighting.

The need to increase regular giving is critical, especially if we are to meet the running costs of both churches and pay the Parish Share again in full in 2024. If anyone is thinking of increasing their Stewardship payments during 2025 or joining the Scheme, please speak to the Stewardship Secretary or any of the Churchwardens.

A particular vote of thanks is due to the small team maintaining the books - Rachel Backhouse at St Mary's and Bernie Ellison at St. Barnabas and Ann Watts in organising the banking of cash.

Thank you to all who so generously support the work of the Church in this parish.

Investments and Fund Structure

There were no changes to the structure of the St Mary's PCC investment funds during 2024. The value of investments held by the PCC have begun to recover following significant impact on markets of Covid19 and the war in Ukraine.

There follows a brief description of the history, management and restrictions of each of these PCC managed funds.

Curates Housing and Expenses (formerly known as the Hatherley) Fund

The capital arose from the sale of a house given to the Church in 1935 for a succession of curates to live in. The PCC has a 29.4% share of the rent after deduction (by the same percentage) of expenses on a property in Station Road which continued to be let by the Diocese while it is not required to house a curate. The

income is applied for general parish purposes and so is unrestricted. However the first call on any surplus income is the payment of curate / clergy expenses.

Thatcham Church of England Charity

The original capital arose from two-thirds of the sale proceeds of the Old Infant School in the Broadway; one-third is administered separately by the Diocesan Board of Education.

This charity is governed by a Charity Commission Scheme sealed on the 21 st May 1980; the clear income from the permanent endowment is for furthering the religious and other charitable work of the Church of England in the ecclesiastical parish of St Mary's Thatcham and is therefore an unrestricted fund. All the income is applied in the parish.

The Church Estate Charity

Charity Commission ref – 00436

This is an ancient charity referred to in the Charity Commissioners Report of 1907; the income is to be applied to the upkeep of the church and the churchyard so this is a restricted fund. Income is derived partly from investments and partly from 6/16ths of the income from Moor Meadow Charity, administered by Thatcham Parochial Charities.

The Rookery Church Fund

The small amount of income arising from the legacy by Mrs Hall who died in 1916, subject to the income being restricted to the fostering of the Sunday school. The Rookery was the name of the house.

Bankers: St Mary's PCC - Lloyds Bank plc & St Barnabas - HSBC

Independent Examiners: Tax Avenue, Turnfields Court,

Thatcham Investment Managers:

BlackRock Investment Managers, 12 Throgmorton Avenue London EC2N 2DL

CCLA, Senator House, One Angel Lane , London EC4R 3AB

A summary of the Accounts is attached at Appendix 2.

Mike Watson

Stewardship Secretary's Report – St Mary's.

A total of £74,909 was given through the Stewardship Scheme in 2024 (£76,379 in 2023). This included £24,419 through the Parish Giving Scheme. Giving through weekly envelopes was £2,279 and standing order payments were £19,057.

Contactless giving amounted to £1,687 (£1,867 in 2023). A bequest of £5,000 was received.

By the end of 2024 there were 19 donors paying by Direct Debits through the Parish Giving Scheme. 27 donors gave to St Mary's through Standing Orders. 8 donors use weekly envelopes. New envelopes have not been ordered for the last three years as the minimum order is now 25 sets. Unused envelopes from previous years will be available for 2025.

Great thanks are due to the faithful members of the Stewardship Scheme who by regular and sacrificial levels of giving keep St Mary's and St Barnabas Churches going.

Please continue to review your giving at least annually – index linking is a principle worth considering. Occasional donations are greatly welcomed, but commitment to regular giving

is essential if we are to budget for paying for our priests through the Parish Share, maintain the fabric and support sustainable growth of the church in Thatcham.

'Donate' facilities have been incorporated into the website for St Mary's and ideas to encourage other ways to enable online payments are in development.

I continue to positively recommend the Parish Giving Scheme to all regular givers. Over half the Dioceses in England have joined and together they cover the costs of the small administrative team based at Gloucester Diocese. All that is donated is paid direct to the nominated parish by the 10th of each month and income tax is reclaimed from HMRC through the GIFT AID scheme and distributed to parishes about five days later. This significantly reduces costs and administration at the local level.

Other bonuses are:

- the donations can be index linked if the donors so choose,
- the donations are paid as a single sum to the parish bank account thus avoiding the checking of multiple pages on Bank Statement entries,
- it reduces the bank charges (currently about £28 per month) for handling cheque or cash donations
- minimising the handling of cash and cheques, and delays in payment to the bank account via the Post Office (necessitated by the closure of the Thatcham branch of Lloyds Bank in August 2022)

I would again encourage everyone to make a will and to consider making a bequest to St Mary's. It is not difficult to arrange and can make a significant difference to the future of a growing church in Thatcham.

Chris Watts
Stewardship Secretary

Safeguarding St Mary and St Barnabas

In recent months the national news of historic safeguarding mistakes has highlighted even more that we need to follow best practice in all that we do. The safeguarding team in Thatcham are here to help with that. We have been using a piece of software called the 'Parish Dashboard' to help us in pursuing priorities. An increasing number of parishes nationally are using this system and the linked safeguarding hub.

There are three levels within the Dashboard. We have remained at level 2, thwarted by some issues that have been impossible to clear. It is all date linked so that things that have been completed in the past, have needed doing again. Quite correctly, of course, but time consuming and leaving us feeling that no progress is being made. We are currently 69% complete in level 2 and, I believe, that this is higher than last year at this time.

There is good news too. Regular meetings have been held between the incumbent and the Parish Safeguarding Officer when we have been able to explore the small number of matters of concern raised by parishioners. None have required us to involve the Diocesan Safeguarding Team. Good contact has been maintained with the professionals at Oxford, and we appreciate their support.

Angela Brennan gave an inspiring sermon on Safeguarding Sunday in November. Most members of the congregation agree that some of the strategies available to help us keep everyone as safe as we can, are tedious, but that the matter is too important to allow that to get in the way.

The Safeguarding committee have met three times since the last APCM. Sadly, we said goodbye to Sue Ball as she steps back from some of her commitments. She has been the Parish Recruiter and a significant member of the team. We thank her for the public and private support that she has given to safeguarding in the parish. Safer recruitment is an area that Sue worked on. It is hard to overturn the informal way in which volunteers have always been recruited and to introduce some tighter controls. We were determined to get it right when recruiting her replacement. The position was advertised in both churches, and we got two applicants!! Both proved suitable and so I am pleased to report that our Safeguarding team is now:

Ann Dibble Parish Safeguarding Officer
Brenda Harland Clergy representative
Steve Rice St Mary representative and id verifier
Colin Waters St Barnabas representative and id verifier
Sarah Bennet Recruiter
Jo Bettington Safeguarding adviser.

We look forward to working with the new PCC to implement the new approaches being honed by the Church of England. Perhaps we can break into level 3 on the Parish Dashboard!

Ann Dibble
Parish Safeguarding Officer

Churchwardens Report

The past

To make a whole body takes many different groups – sometimes it takes a large group or a smaller group and sometimes it takes just one person to make a change. Whichever group you are, we the Church Wardens would like to thank you for your contribution to our church. We thank you for volunteering in order to get things done. We thank you for giving up your precious time and for your intuition. Without you we would not have raised money for the Church organ, or the French drains on the north wall. We are sorry that we have had to make cuts in order to save money. Thank you for suffering alongside us, we hope it hasn't been too hard.

The future

We spent a considerable time in the last year discussing how computers could be helpful in the future, especially in running the administrative side of church. We have considered what this would look like, we have considered where a computer might live, discussing the pros and cons of using the Church building. We need a dedicated team to input data and respond to emails. Can we rely on volunteers? This will be a priority for this coming year.

The other area is to develop the use of our website. This will need to be kept up to date by a team of people. Please can you commit the development of both these areas – the Administration and the Website – to your prayers.

The Building

Our church is old – but beautiful - and with Mark Backhouse's enthusiasm and commitment, things are being properly maintained. We thank Mark and his team for their hard work. Of course it is no good if you don't have any money to support paying the bills. This is where we see people like Pauline and Kate and thank them for thinking of innovative ways to raise money.



The Easter chicks, made by so many of you, have raised (so far) £687 towards improvements to the church building.

Revd Nicola Hulks

Nicola, the Churchwardens would like to express their deep thanks for all you have done for St Barnabas, St Mary's and Thatcham Park School over many years and wish you good luck and many blessings in your new exciting position as Team Rector of Holy Trinity Church, Hermitage.

Thank you, Nicola, for leading and running Muddy Church which is held outside in the church grounds, proving to be successful in bringing young families to the church, finding fun and learning about Jesus and bible stories.

Tim Cooke

On behalf of the clergy, churchwardens and congregation a very special thank you and love for the many years you have been our organist, uplifting our music to such great heights and given so much pleasure listening to you play.

Pilgrimage

We joined St Georges, Newbury in a joint Pilgrimage 2024 from Holy Trinity Church, Stratford upon Avon to Litchfield Cathedral, distance of 42 miles, over 4 days, it was spiritually uplifting, resulting in a very good sense of community and the pleasure of walking through beautiful countryside.

Thank you, to all the volunteers who help out at CAMEO, ABC and all other activities which bring so much enjoyment, friendship, fun, learning and contribute to the smooth running of both churches. Also thanks to all the volunteers who help keep St. Mary's and St Barnabas clean, tidy and grounds looking good.



So much goes on in our church and we have many visitors -some come for the

historical aspect of the church and some come because there are many activities going on. If you can contribute in any way your gifts would be very welcome – giving time or money and joining us in our worship to God.

Sue Marrison

ABC

The fun continues!

Our friendly toddler group meets on Wednesday mornings at 10 30. We provide toys, crafts, refreshments (often with cake!) and the space to mingle, chat and make friends. Our range of attendance is from babies to the occasional great grandparent with numbers on average of 25 adults and 25 children.

We aim to be open throughout most of the holidays, a time when we often welcome older siblings, some who were ABC visitors before school! The team are always on hand to help and chat and a faithful band of helpers provide our café service each week.

The morning ends around the altar with some joyful songs with actions, a short talk relevant to the Christian calendar and prayers. There is plenty of audience participation with adults and children joining in with enthusiasm.

Do talk to Brenda if you feel you would like to join us.

The ABC team.

Children's Ministry.

Val Watts and I are extremely privileged to lead the children's' group during the 10am Sunday service at St. Mary's, meeting on the 1st, 3rd, 4th and 5th (where appropriate) during term time.

So, what do we all get up to?

Well... there's Bible reading, various resources which Val produces from a vast catalogue of books, including the 'Mosaic' series specifically targeted for small groups. Colouring in a weekly worksheet that relates to the Bible story is something the children really seem to enjoy. The youngsters also bring their own ideas and games to share and although there are three at most, they come back each week enthusiastic and ready to join in.

It is of course open to all youngsters, and parents are welcome to sit in if they like.

Christine Rice and The Team

The Organ

The Organ Restoration Working Group has been obliged to review its approach to repair and restoration of the organ. We had hopes of a major grant being available but the Heritage Lottery Fund undertook in 2023 a full review of its grant making policies and has recently published revised guidance and application procedure with significant implications for our proposed project.

The Group is nevertheless determined to secure sufficient funds to undertake an ambitious programme of repairs and restoration. (see Curate's report below for more detail)

A temporary protective 'umbrella' was placed above the organ pipework in 2024 to protect the instrument from dust and small pieces of debris falling from walls and roof. Minor repairs and application of sealant to roof areas above the organ have reduced the risk of further weather damage.

O.R.W.G.

Curate's Report

In July I will have been a curate here for five years, the first two of those years were mostly in lockdown, but time genuinely does fly when you are having fun and I cannot believe I am almost into my sixth year here! Six years is the longest that I will be able to eek my curacy out for, and I'm slowly getting my head around the fact that I am reaching the end of my ministry here. There is still lots to do, however! So I have pleasure in reporting the following:

Thatcham Baby Cafe

We continue to demonstrate the love of God in slices of cake, cups of coffee and a warm welcome on Tuesday mornings at the Bluecoat School. From the start we have been fortunate to receive grant funding to run the group. Our funding for this year comes from The Thatcham Parochial Charities and the Kristina Martin Trust — and we are very grateful to both. Sainsbury's and Waitrose faithfully donate goodies to help our end of term events go with a swing, and I am so grateful for our dedicated Baby Cafe team, who are not only a dab hand with a cafetière, but also unfailingly friendly, welcoming and empathetic to our patrons.

Numbers have been lower this year, but it has picked up to between 5-12 small people plus their carers each week, and we have branched out this term and started a Book Club in the home of one of the Cafe regulars. We are reading Paula Gooder's 'The Women of Holy Week' and intend to continue the group beyond Easter.

The Nest — for foster and adoptive families

We are all God's adopted children and the Nest was borne out of a hope to support and uphold local adoptive and foster families in their holy and (sometimes) hard work of giving a child in the care system a secure and loving home. Many times over the last two years, the leaders have wondered whether we would be able to run for more than the start-up period of 2 years for which we had funding; numbers were low and we were struggling to advertise. But 2 years and 2 months on, and I'm very pleased to report that The Nest is growing, albeit slowly, and we have come to realise that a small group has definite advantages! We have adapted the format to meet the need and we now run more like the Baby Cafe, in a cosier space with comfy chairs, and we welcome between 2 and 5 families each month.

Our start-up funding ran out in January 2025, but in February, St Mary's Greenham PCC voted to waive the hall hire fee to enable us to continue. We have some fantastic support: Adopt Thames Valley advertises the group, Greenham church hosts it, and its run by volunteers from St Mary's & St Barnabas Thatcham, St Mary's Greenham and St Nic's Newbury. I am beyond delighted that we have booked a further three sessions for next term.

Churches Together in Thatcham

We have a great Churches Together group here in Thatcham, I continue to give thanks for how well we work together for our town. I'm into my second year as Chair and value our shared working enormously. Between us we host headteachers breakfast, organise a Christian presence at community events, hold Prayer For Thatcham, support our local schools and host the annual Leavers' Day for about 420 year 6 children. We gave out over 200 hot cross buns in the Broadway on Good Friday, and the act of witness and Christian hospitality seemed very well received. The CTiT schedule is quite a busy one, but it is a truly an ecumenical, and fruitful, one.

St Mary's Pipedream, Organ Project

Work has continued behind the scenes to get together the funding to restore our

celebrated Gray and Davison church organ. Since I last reported at APCM, we have revised quotes for the work required to put the organ in good repair from 3 contractors, we've secured the consultancy services of organ specialist, Nicholas Thistlethwaite, and made (now 3) approaches to the Heritage Lottery Fund. Our third expression of interest resulted in an invitation to apply for funding, but unfortunately we have concluded that what is now required by way of application would involve a professional bid-writer, and, with no indication from HLF as to whether our project is likely to secure funding, it is better to invest our energy in local fundraising events, and approaching smaller grant-making bodies to see if we can raise the further c£90,000 ourselves. This is no small target, but we are cautiously optimistic. We have just had our request approved for another event during the Thatcham Festival, so we look forward to good fundraiser this autumn.

As ever, huge thanks to all those who support our churches, both in their worship but also in the community work and mission around the parish. There is also the not insubstantial task of keeping a large and expensive building wind and watertight! Many people pop into church during the day — folk who might never come to services, but who appreciate the space to pray, sit and light candles. This provision of peace and space is a large part of our mission in Thatcham and it takes effort and energy to keep the place open and available to our community. We very much appreciate the efforts of those who faithfully give of their time and resource to clean, mend, garden, fundraise, empty bins, re-stock the loo rolls, lock and un-lock the doors — your contribution is invaluable.

There is a great deal that goes on under the umbrella of St Mary & St Barnabas here in Thatcham; the volume of reports for APCM is testament to that. And although we know there is much still to do, and there will inevitably challenges ahead, we have much to give thanks for.

God is good.

Rev Angela Brennan

Music at St. Mary's

Another year of great singing and some fabulous services.

Highlights included the Stanford Nunc Dimittis in D sung at the Candlemas Evensong by the gentlemen of the choir. Holy Week and Easter saw the choir at the Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter Eve and Easter Day services singing a variety of anthems from the sublime Agony by Stainer to the Hallelujah Chorus on Easter day.

In July the choir hosted a concert with Watership Cantabile, a local choir. The choir sang a variety of well known anthems which were well received. Pimms was served at the interval after which Watership entertained the audience and were joined by the Church choir for the last two items. It was a good concert and raised a good amount for the organ fund.

The following day Evensong celebrated the music of Charles Stanford in the centenary of his death. This service was very well attended after being publicised well.

Christmas saw the choir busy as usual. We were invited back to sing at Thatcham Lights Switch on by popular demand after having had a year off. The Civic Carol service was well attended and the choir led the singing and sung three anthems. Once again St Mary's led a carol service later in Advent that was well attended. Some members of the choir sang at Thatcham Court care home for the residents during their Christmas service.

We sang at one wedding and supported the singing at one funeral. We are always keen to support these special occasions.

Choir numbers remain steady. We are fortunate in having a very committed and faithful choir. We have sung several new anthems this year as well as revisiting old well loved ones.

I cannot end this without thanking Alice our rehearsal accompanist who diligently, skilfully and, most importantly, patiently helps us learn everything and Tim our incumbent organist who, again, skilfully and sympathetically accompanies the choir most Sundays. I speak for the whole choir when I say that it is a pleasure and a privilege to lead the singing part of worship every week and we hope it enhances your experience at the service.

Mary Stagg

Prayer Ministry

The prayer ministry provides regular meetings for quiet, personal and reflective prayer. The group is a local hub of the Guild of St. John and St. Mary Magdalene and respond to prayers requested from overseas and the local community in Thatcham & surrounding areas. The group is run by Michael Watson, meets every alternate Tuesday and is always encouraging others to join these times of worship.

We have set up a WhatsApp group for prayer requests that anyone can join and introduced a intercessional prayer Initiative for the local community to specifically pray for all those who are suffering and affected by the cost of living crisis. A prayer point has been established at the entrance to the church.

We continue to work with other local church groups which bring together as many as possible from all the churches in Thatcham in order to pray for our tow

Michael Watson

Prayer Ministry Circle

We continue to pray in our homes, on our walks, on the phone and video calls, in fact wherever we have safely been whilst we haven't been able to pray with people in person.

Sue Stevenson.

St Barnabas Church

This year has been another great year at St Barnabas, many of us have noticed that there has been a good buzz in the community and we have happily welcomed some new members. We continue to seek new ways to worship together as a community that includes everyone who has found a home with us, of all ages and stages of faith. Our Zoom community group led by Ben has gone from strength to strength and offers a weekly opportunity for people to explore the Bible in more depth and discuss what this means for their lives.

Our link with Thatcham Park School remains important to us and since Nicola returned from leave weekly assemblies have resumed. As a community we volunteered at the Christmas and Summer fair, providing food and a craft stand. Nicola has also begun a research project in school to explore how storytelling can support children spiritually and several children have already been part of this project which will be ongoing for the next year. Angela has also been visiting school weekly to support the work with children with additional needs in

the school. We continue to support the school in celebrating the festivals of the Christian year, whether in school or at St Mary's.

Our Baby Cafe, meeting at the Old Bluecoat School, continues to be a vibrant community where support is offered to parents of young babies. As you will see in the report on ABC, this also continues to thrive under Brenda's leadership. Our work with children is important to us and we are excited to have recently relaunched Muddy Church, now in St Mary's Churchyard. Our opening event attracted around 50 people and we hope that many will come back for our next event in April.

There is much to be thankful for this year at St B's and we look forward to a new year and all that God has in store for us!

Revd Nicola Hulks

Deanery Synod Report

Thatcham Parish is part of the Newbury Deanery – a group of parishes in West Berkshire running as far as Hungerford and Lambourn and up to Compton and The Ridgeway. In some recent documents the Deanery has described itself briefly as follows:

Newbury Deanery covers some 105 square miles of the western part of West Berkshire. It includes the urban centres of Newbury and Thatcham, the market town of Hungerford and an extensive rural hinterland. The eleven benefices (roughly speaking groups of churches overseen by a single priest) encompass 36 parishes ranging in population from over 25,000 to under 100, together with 42 church buildings, and one church which has no building of its own.

The Deanery is an administrative unit of the Church of England which is part of its structure of “synodical government” – the way the Church makes decisions about its internal workings where they affect more than a single parish. Traditionally the Deanery has had two functions – (the money function) allocating the parish share which pays for the clergy and support costs and then collecting it; and (the people function) negotiating the deployment of clergy at a time when clergy numbers nationally have been declining. More recently the people function has been developed into a more positive mode of mission planning (The Mission Action Plan) – actively supporting parishes and their people to meet the common challenges we face.

It was stressed that this is the Deanery's plan to support and encourage benefices and parishes rather than to direct or impose requirements from the Diocese. Synod had identified four action groups and work was continuing on putting these into being. These are:

- Finance
 - Schools and Education
 - Lay Training
 - Environment
- (Consideration on new housing developments and also communities will be incorporated in due course.)

Progress on the Ministry Plan in 2024 was significantly affected by a complete change in officers – Revd John Toogood as Area Dean and Chair of the Synod, Evelyn Bracey as Lay Chair, Debbie Evans as Secretary, Paul Thame as Treasurer (replacing the death of Philip Read).

Deanery Synod elects representatives to Diocesan Synod – notably our own Team Rector.

The Deanery is run by the Deanery Synod. Like the PCC this is a mixture of clergy and elected lay members, but in the Deanery case the members represent the different parishes. The Deanery Synod elects a standing committee and appoints officers to act as an executive, and to progress the various aspects of its work. It may also receive requests from the Diocese of Oxford or from the National Church to respond to matters of interest. The Deanery Synod can also raise matters of concern and ask for these to be addressed at a Diocesan or national level.

In 2024/5 the Synod considered issues arising from progress on the Living in Love and Faith Report, the development of projects supporting children, Eco Church initiatives, young people and families, updates on the link with the South African parish of Batlharos in the Diocese of Kimberley and Kuruman and, of course, finance.

Thatcham was only able to pay 68.7% of the Parish Share as allocated by the Deanery. The shortfall was £32,407 from the allocation of £103,531. The Deanery was kept informed of the difficulties in 2024 and that the situation would continue into 2025 when the Deanery allocation for Thatcham rises to £106,829. Thatcham is not the only parish in the Archdeaconry or in the Diocese to be experiencing this challenge. Prayers and support are requested as work continues on developing a recovery plan.

Chris Watts

St. Mary's Church Bellringers

We have rung every Sunday over the last year including half muffled on Remembrance Sunday. There was late night ringing for New Year and prior to the Christmas midnight service. We have had the occasional wedding to ring for.

We have had two new recruits join us this year who are now ringing for Sunday service as well as on practice night. Two of our band celebrated significant birthdays this year (80 and 90) and continue to be regular members.

We rang in memory of Kay Gibbs and scored a couple of quarter peals.

We have managed to ring eight bells (or more) on most Sundays and numbers on practice night have varied between six and sixteen. We usually welcome one or more visitors to practice. The Tuesday peal band have made occasional visits and we have had several visiting bands.

We are grateful to the members of the clergy who brave the stairs on a Sunday morning to say belfry prayers with us.

Rachel Backhouse
Tower Captain

Fabric

In summary the log of work by contractors and volunteers to the fabric of St Mary's includes:

- Spring and autumn clean and clear
- Test lightning conductor
- Test and service Fire Extinguishers
- Service heating boilers
- Tune and minor repairs to organ (noting the Choir manual is not operational)

- Clearing flat roofs, gutters, blocked drains and soakaways
- Completion of repairs identified 5 yearly EICR (Electrical Installation Condition Report)
- A biennial PAT (portable appliance testing) report is due in 2025.
- Repair to the pump to the WC
- Repairs to door closers and hinges, gallery rails, aumbry door and lock

A temporary protective 'umbrella' was placed above the organ pipework in 2024 to protect the instrument from dust and small pieces of debris falling from walls and roof. Minor repairs and application of sealant to roof edge above the organ have reduced the risk of further weather damage.

The PCC's architect, Christian Randall of Wantage reported on the fabric in his second five yearly report on the state of the fabric. He repeated the need for regular clearing gutters and repairs to rainwater downpipes, stonework and flint facing and removal of ivy from the tower. He noted:

- significant dampness and deterioration to the plaster on the external walls to north and south aisles,
- rotting of timber thresholds to both north doors.
- Various items of minor weather damage to stonework

Further improvements are required to the Meeting Room and kitchen. In particular a replacement heating and hot water boiler is required that satisfies the Diocesan guidance which strongly favours a carbon free solution. The continuing lack of hot water to kitchen and toilet sinks is a particular issue.

The PCC has taken the first steps in adopting a maintenance checklist and reporting process.

Thanks are due to Mark Backhouse and the Buildings team, including Lourdes Cottam and Archie Gifford for organising and helping with general repairs and to Marion and a team of dedicated gardeners for work on the flower borders, to Rita for polishing the brass and to all who regularly clean, arrange the flowers and maintain the equipment. The churchyard is formally under the care of Thatcham Town Council, but the care shown this last year has been particularly notable.

This year some significant work has been done in the churchyard - thanks to Colin and Debbie Waters for renewing the notice board and working on the ground next to the church - which has made a huge difference to how passers-by see and feel our presence in the community.

Particular thanks are due to Henry Moffatt and Simon Stagg for operating and maintaining the sound system used during Services. Successful and consistent operation of the Zoom contact with housebound members of the congregation has been a particular challenge

Chris Watts

Inventory

The Memorial Book is about to be updated to include the names of all for whom our Ministry team have undertaken a funeral service from January 2020 to 30 April 2025.

Children's books, toys and drawing materials have been rehoused in a purpose designed unit in the children's area.

The Goodbox contactless card unit has been replaced by a CollecTin unit with a SumUp facility.

The computer in the Vestry has been returned to Mike Stevenson.
The microwave oven in the kitchen has been replaced.

Various items of redundant choral music have been recycled.

Sewing group and Flowers.

The sewing group started in 1998 to make something to commemorate the Millenium.

We decided to make a new altar frontal for the chapel. We worked together on the design, a grape vine, to represent the church rooted and alive and fruitful in the community. About 8 of us worked on the frontal. The base fabric was bought and the additional materials were collected from our own stocks.

The finished frontal was dedicated in 2000. If you look on the back of the frontal you will see the list of names of the makers, many of whom have since died. That was just the start of course and the cry was what do we make next. There followed banners, alterations and remaking the white / gold frontal, the purple frontal plus vestments and a new purple frontal for the Chapel.

Alongside this we have made and mended surplices for the choir, taken up and down blue cassocks and made white cloths for use at Communion, white corners for the altars and a new red frontal for the High Altar.

There have also been the fun things, soft toys, patchwork covers, cushions, blankets etc. etc. sold in aid of church funds at an annual bazaar.

We meet on Mondays at one of our group's houses where we relax, drink tea, eat biscuits – oh, and sew, knit or crochet.

Come and See

Marion and the Sewing team.

'Little Churches'

I am very much in debt to those who are part of this vital ministry.

Over the last year we have seen attendance fall and rise across two locations that host a monthly service of Holy Communion.

Faithful members of St. Mary's congregation volunteer to bring God's message of love and hope to those who, for one reason or another, are not able to attend church on a Sunday, or simply prefer an alternative shorter service.

Nevile Court

Due to people moving away and dying, the service at Nevile Court has ceased.

Ferndale Court

Sees three or four folk who attend regularly

Thatcham Court

This has proved to be the most successful venue in terms of attendees. Most months we welcome between 15 and 20 residents. This home also hosted a carol service which was also well attended.

Joan takes the lead here and I provide assistance.

Westgate House, Wallingford

Once a month or so, I make a visit to this home where 4 or 5 residents partake. This is a perfect example of outreach and is appreciated by all who share the bread and wine.

Steve Rice

West Berkshire Community Hospital

This service of about 45 minutes sees a number of in-patients and sometimes members of their families attend each week and is led by the Rev. Dr. Simon Thorne who is Chaplain to the Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust which includes West Berkshire Hospital and Wokingham Hospital.

Due to other commitments, I am not always able to attend the service but St. Mary's is very well represented by Joan Collins, Barbara Carwardine and Margaret Goodhead, all of whom support Simon by escorting patients, reading the Gospel and leading the prayers,

On the occasions that I can attend, I prepare and read the intercessions.

Volunteers from other churches also provide assistance and this makes for a lively ecumenical time of fellowship. More help is always needed, so if you are interested, please get in touch

Steve Rice

Prayer ministry

Every Tuesday fortnight, Michael Watson leads a prayer group.

We are privileged to pray for our brothers and sisters overseas whose prayers are emailed to Michael. Prayers can be silent or vocal and include offerings for our church, community and ourselves.

We meet in St. Ann's chapel at 6pm for about 30 minutes – ALL are welcome!

Additionally, two members of the group are on hand in St. Ann's chapel after the 10am Sunday service each week to listen and pray for anyone.

Steve Rice

C.A.M.E.O. Come and Meet Each Other

CAMEO meets as a group every Monday afternoon in the Meeting Room from 2.00pm, offering a friendly and relaxed club for lonely and bereaved elderly people. In this cosy atmosphere we currently have 25 to 30 members many of whom have been with us for

several years – but we can always accommodate more if you know of anybody that is lonely or isolated.

An ageing membership means that more are needing transport to get here. Generally, we manage well but could do with some help from drivers to cover holidays, etc. If you would like to be added to our list of volunteer drivers please let us know.

A trusty band of helpers supply tea, cake and some sort of entertainment or experience at most session. These can be quizzes, board games (dominos are often favourite), craft activities, etc. In addition to our usual fish and chip lunch this year we had a harvest lunch and a garden party cream tea at Druce Way.



Another outing was to Mary Hare School for a Christmas Party arranged for us and Fairclose Day Centre by the sixth form pupils. As in the past, the food and entertainment was excellent with an enormous raffle. I think everyone went home with a prize.

Musical entertainment was provided by a session on handbells, a ukulele band with singers and a U3A choir concert at Christmas.

We always like to celebrate festivals and special occasions when we can and this year we were delighted to share in the wedding preparation for 2 of our members Karen and Malcolm. We watched their relationship blossom during the year previously and had a special cake and fizz afternoon to toast them on their new life together.

Every week we hold a small raffle for added interest and cake is provided by a rota of volunteers. Thanks to all who make each session such a joy – we laugh a lot - (and eat a lot of cake.)



Bomb Cake for Guy Fawkes celebration.

Viv Druce – 820718 and Theresa Lucas 635923

The Thatcham Parochial Charities

This ancient charity continues to play a significant role, both in the life of our churches and in support of local people in need. The rector and our three churchwardens are ex officio members of the Board of Trustees and I (Chris Druce) am currently a representative of Thatcham Town Council and Chairman of Trustees. Other members of the Trustees Board are drawn from representatives of other local councils in Cold Ash, Greenham and Midgham. A further member of our church in Thatcham, Colin Waters is Vice Chairman and the representative for Midgham. Together, we cover the area of the 'Ancient Borough of Thatcham', encompassing modern Thatcham, together with Cold Ash, Midgham and Greenham.

The trustees have a wide remit of responsibility, covering various needs of our local community.

There are 2 principal charities –

the 'Thatcham Parochial Almshouse Charity' and the 'Thatcham Relief in Need Charity'.

Our work was affected somewhat this year, when it was necessary to vacate our office in the Thatcham Town Council building due to their need to increase staff. Following investigation of a number of local options, we are now located within the Hub, adjacent to Thatcham Park School. This has proved to be very beneficial since many of the contacts with whom we work are also located there.

A further success has been our adoption of on-line banking. There were problems with our need for the required safeguarding and multiple signatures but this is now resolved and working well.

The Almshouses – This year has seen the necessity for major redecoration to be carried out to 4 of our 14 flats, prior to the appointment of new residents. All flats are now occupied once more, with everyone settling in. It was necessary to increase the weekly maintenance contributions (rent equivalent) by a small amount this year but, so far, the contribution for heating, lighting etc has been maintained at the same level as last year.

Relief in Need Charity –

The object of this charity is to relieve, either generally or individually, persons resident in the Ancient Borough, who are in conditions of need, hardship or distress, by making grants of money or providing items or services to reduce that need. The Trustees have a very wide discretion what support they can offer. We continue to raise awareness locally with agencies and supporting professionals and we are currently planning our 5th annual information event to take place early this year.

Last year, the Charity made grants of just under £15,000, similar to last year, including grants to the local Foodbank and support to school educational trips and including a personal grant enabling the purchase of a mobility scooter.

So, as you can see, it has been another eventful year. If you know of anyone who may need a helping hand, or a piece of equipment otherwise unaffordable, do, please, have a word with me, Mark, or one of the churchwardens

Thankyou – Chris Druce

MISSIONS



Thatcham Christian Aid Committee Annual Report for St Mary's Church AGM May 2025

Firstly, a very big thank you for the money you have helped raise this year, so that people in the developing world might have life, and have it in abundance. Particularly for your generosity in giving to the DEC appeal for Gaza and the Middle East. This raised £3.6m countrywide, and Central Christian Aid were amazed at the amount given. Also for the Christmas appeal for refugees in South Sudan. Donating in lieu of Christmas cards helped raise twice the normal amount for this appeal.

Otherwise, in this financial year (October '23 to September '24) we were somewhat down – raising £2,300 (against £3,600 the year before). This is still generous given the demands on people's wallets, but there is some evidence of compassion fatigue in the UK for giving to ongoing projects (rather than emergencies).

We have since held a well-received Carol singing night at the Berkshire Arms, who have asked us back next year (though we will need contactless-giving to get more donations) and a very successful Quiz night and Lent Soup Supper at the Baptists, raising over £400, and by the time you read this we will also have held a Lent lunch on Good Friday at St Mary's.

We were also delighted to welcome Phil Evans (Christian Aid's Home Counties Region Officer for Church Engagement and Fundraising) last May, to preach and talk about the Burundi after the service. Unfortunately he came a week early, so numbers were small, but he was very inspiring to all who heard him.

We are now gearing up for Christian Aid Week – which runs from 11th to 17th May this year, and is where we raise most of the money.

This year's appeal is Guatemala, one of the world's poorest countries, and will aim to help poor farmers with practices to make the most of their declining water, and to protect their land and water sources from large farming conglomerates.

You can help by:

- Taking Gift Aid envelopes in Church, filling them yourself, and passing on spares to friends and family (asking others to give, and raising a lot of money for us).
- Volunteering for an hour from 10am-4pm on Saturday 17th May at our Collection Point in St Mary's Church porch.
- Giving donations for coffee and cake after the Service on Sunday 18th May - or even baking a cake yourself.

We are also planning a supermarket collection at some point next year, another carol singing night, and another Quiz / Soup night, plus a return of the popular Beetle Drive / Fish & Chip supper. Please do come and join us then and raise money for a deserving cause.

We were delighted to welcome 3 new Committee members this year – 2 from St Mary's. But

we are still a small Committee, and there is always room for more.

However, we are particularly reliant on Church members volunteering at our events.

We would like to particularly thank everyone at St Mary's who has helped over the past year - cooking soup, baking cakes, washing up, collecting, or even just going to events, donating, and praying.

As ever, the needs remain huge, so please give if you can, and if not, do please continue to pray.

Sarah Bennet
Hon Chair, Thatcham Christian Aid Committee

Children's Society and USPG

The use of collecting boxes and globes has significantly declined in recent years, probably as a result in the reduction in the use of coins. Support for Missions has increasingly transferred to event such as the ever popular Cream Teas and to direct donations including those made online. *Collecting boxes continue to be available however for anyone wanting to support Missions in this way.*

£316 was donated to the Children's Society in 2024. The money goes to help the Society and its network of centres and projects to deliver specialist services for children who face disaster and danger in their daily lives; children who are unable to find the support they need elsewhere.

USPG

£317 was donated to USPG in 2024. USPG is working with the Anglican Church in Zambia to develop healthcare and leadership programmes that will have an impact on the life and outreach of the church and community. Support was given for training of specialists at the Hospital of St Francis at Katete and other health projects in Zambia.

If you would like to help with either of these Missions please speak to Ann Watts (864567).

Ann Watts

West Berks Foodbank



The continuing pandemic and then cost of living increases have meant that a significant number of people used West Berks Foodbank (WBFB) during 2023. Single adults, couples and families contacted the Crisis FoodLine for help and support.

The Foodbank no longer collects donations from St Mary's. Donations continue to be made, however and thanks is due to Matt Evans for regular transfer of these to the depot at Greenham particularly at Harvest and Christmas.

WBFB's Foodbank Centres in Thatcham, Hungerford and Burghfield and Mortimer continue to experience increasing need for support. The hybrid operational model is also well used in responding to requests for food deliveries to clients unable to get to a Foodbank Centre.

Thank you for supporting the Foodbank – please continue to donate when you can.

Rainbows (Girlguiding at St. Mary's)



Two separate groups of Rainbows (5-7 year olds) meet at St Mary's on Tuesday and Friday evenings to do all sorts of things from game and crafts to pamper evenings and escape rooms.

If there is anyone who would like to volunteer to help with the Rainbows of Girlguiding please contact Julie, julie@dunwell.org or www.girlguiding.org.uk/

Connect

Connect, our parish magazine, is published ten times a year, double issues being December/January and July/August. Particular emphasis was made of circulating the magazine by email, on the website and by hand delivery on request. The magazine includes news, information and illustrations about services and events in St. Mary's and St. Barnabas. All of our clergy team provide a regular article but more contributors are always welcome. Any articles or adverts to be published can be sent to Steve Rice, steverice1@virginmedia.com, or Julie Dunwell, julie@dunwell.org.

Julie Dunwell

Service Support Teams

A faithful band of helpers supplemented by some new faces and voices have supported our clergy team at Sunday, mid-week and evening services, baptisms, weddings and funerals by reading, leading prayers, handing out books, making people welcome, operating IT equipment to enable those at home to participate in worship and administering the chalice. A big thank you to you all!

Additional help would be very welcome in any of the teams, particularly sides people which is the smallest team of 6 dedicated people. We all recognise the value of a welcoming smile and greeting, it can make an enormous difference.

Just get in touch if you'd like to find out more.

Sue Stevenson

St Mary's Church Website

There has been little change in the structure and management of the web site. The content remains fairly static with most of the updates being the Bulletin, Connect, What's On and the Choir schedule. However, the backup structure has been reorganised with emphasis on collating photos relating to events, buildings and artifacts. The hidden pages, which are accessed from icons, hot-spots and pictures have been reorganised to improve operation and maintenance which has also been reflected in the backup structure.

The following chart shows the number of unique visits and the number of page views over the period 1-April-2024 to 9-March-2025. The peak activities occur in the Easter and Christmas periods. The information that is shown indicates that many users know what they need and don't browse the web site.

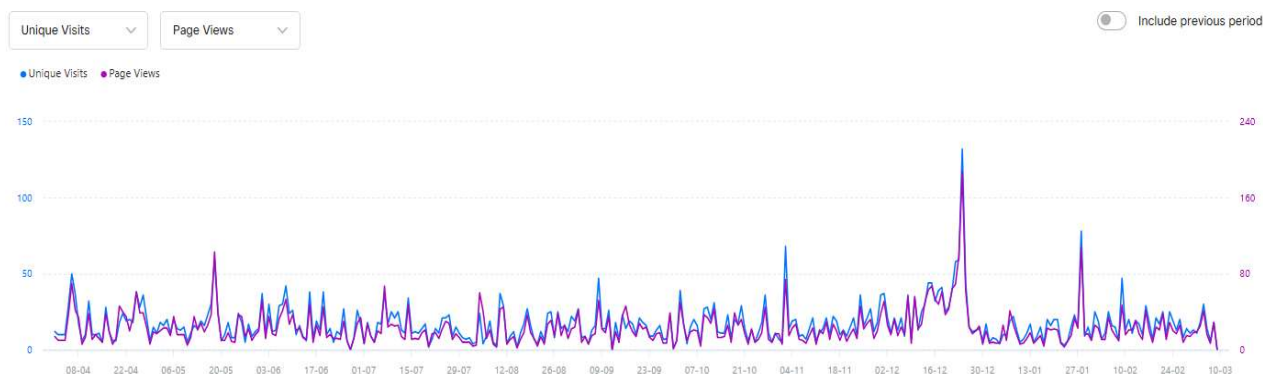


Figure 1 - Web Site Summary April 2024 to March 2025

The traffic breakdown is shown in the charts below. Compared to 2024, there has been a reduction of 1877 unique visitors, resulting in a reduction of 3124 page views.



Figure 2 - Web Site Activity April 2024 to March 2025

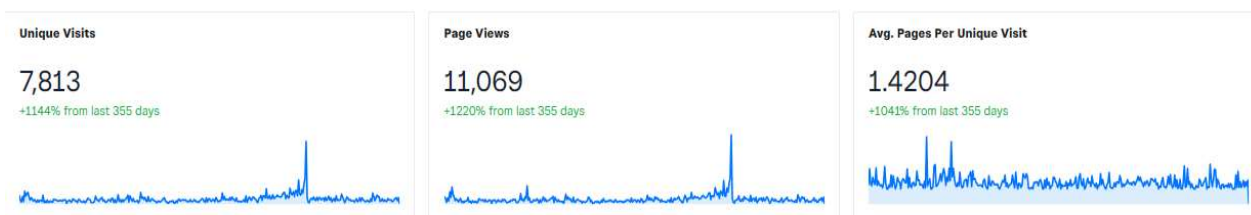


Figure 3 - Web Site Activity April 2023 to March 2024

As always, the web site is wholly reliant on its content from all those who are directly and indirectly involved with St. Mary's and who produce information for general consumption and those who organise events. The web site is the public face of St. Mary's and needs to reflect the life of the church community and be up-to-date.


Grateful thanks are given to all active contributors. Please keep the information flowing.

Mike Stevenson



APPENDIX 1

Minutes of Previous Annual Parochial Church Meetings



Minutes of the APCM of the Thatcham Parochial Church Council held at St Mary's Church on 21st April 2024.

In attendance: Mark Backhouse, Sue Ball, Judith Bennet, Revd Mark Bennet (Chair), Sarah Bennet, Revd Angela Brennan, Joan Collins, Mike Collins, Chris Druce, Viv Druce, Julie Dunwell, Kevin Dunwell, John Evans, Maggie Fidler, Marion Fontaine, Cath Forbes, Sarah Goode, John Hicks, Steve Rice, John Robinson, Margaret Robinson, Mary Stagg, Mike Stevenson, Susan Stevenson, Colin Waters, Debbie Waters, Mike Watson, Ann Watts, Chris Watts

Apologies: Mary Baker, Alison Dean, Ann Dibble, Doreen Dines, Leanne Fowler, Revd Brenda Harland, Pam Hicks, Ben Hulks, Revd Nicola Hulks, Simon Stagg, Emma Watts

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Mark Bennet opened the meeting with a prayer.

Minute No. **APCM** /

No.	Minutes / Notes	Action
1	<i>Apologies & Minutes Previous APCM</i> Apologies were duly noted. The minutes of the APCM of the 21 st March 2023 were agreed as a correct record and signed by Mark Bennet.	
2	<i>Annual Report for 2023-2024</i> The annual report was reviewed. The following points were noted.	
2.1	<i>Proceedings of the PCC</i> Judith Bennet, Steve Rice and Mary Stagg had been omitted from the list of lay members of the PCC.	
2.2	<i>Fabric of St Mary's and Log book</i> A printed copy of the log book was shown to the attendees and was accepted and signed by Mark Bennet.	
2.3	<i>St Barnabas Church</i> Colin Waters highlighted a couple of items from the report outlining the successes of St. Barnabas.	
2.4	<i>Safeguarding</i> Mark Bennet explained that under Ann Dibble's leadership, safeguarding has taken a significant step forward. The PCC wish to record their appreciation and thanks to Ann for all her effort, enthusiasm and progress.	

No.	Minutes / Notes	Action				
2.5	<p>Parish organisations</p> <p>Mark Bennet said that with the departure for Jenny Sykes and Paul Bullock new volunteers were needed in Children’s and Young People’s work.</p> <p>Mark pointed out that the Annual Report illustrated the full scope of the parish activities and how much is being done that is not always visible. More volunteers were required for most of the activities.</p>					
2.6	<p>Electoral Roll</p> <p>Chris Watts explained that the Electoral Roll had 172 entries, a reduction of six from the previous year. The next full renewal of the Electoral Roll is due in 2025.</p> <p>Mark Bennet added that the parish has a challenge to increase the engagement with the local community and so increase the size of the Electoral Roll.</p>					
2.7	<p>Inventory</p> <p>Chris Wats explained that the inventory had been updated and photos have been taken for many items including valuable and unusual ones.</p> <p>Mark Bennet explained that inventory and the items listed are the responsibility of the Church Wardens as the legal owners.</p> <p>A printed copy of the inventory was signed by Mark.</p>					
	<p>In summary, Mark Bennet said that the Annual Report reflects a lot of activity within the parish.</p>					
3	<p>Presentation of Accounts</p> <p>Chris Watts presented a summary of the accounts noting the following</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Regular income is less than operational expenditure.• The accumulated debt is “hidden” by the fabric fund which is ring-fenced. Therefore, the deficit is not apparent.• The fabric fund is approximately £37,000.• There has been a significant increase in the cost of energy (gas and electricity). The energy supply contracts need to be reviewed.• The direct debit payment of the Parish Share has been suspended for two months to avoid being over-drawn. <p>A request to approve the account subject to the verification by the independent examiner was proposed</p> <table><tr><td>Proposed</td><td>Chris Watts</td></tr><tr><td>Seconded</td><td>Colin Waters</td></tr></table> <p>The motion was unanimously accepted.</p>	Proposed	Chris Watts	Seconded	Colin Waters	
Proposed	Chris Watts					
Seconded	Colin Waters					

No.	Minutes / Notes	Action				
4	<p><i>Appointment of Independent Examiner</i></p> <p>Monica Tabbak of Tax Avenue is the current examiner of the accounts. Chris Watts raised concerns regarding the service being slow and expensive. Mark Bennet proposed that the parish continue with services of Tax Avenue.</p> <table><tr><td>Proposed</td><td>Mark Bennet</td></tr><tr><td>Seconded</td><td>Viv Druce</td></tr></table> <p>The motion was unanimously accepted.</p>	Proposed	Mark Bennet	Seconded	Viv Druce	
Proposed	Mark Bennet					
Seconded	Viv Druce					
5	<p><i>Election to the PCC</i></p> <p>Chris Druce is standing down Cath Forbes was accepted and represents for St. Barnabas. Leanne Fowler and Alison Dean will be standing down as they will be ordained and will take up a curacy later in the year. The proposal to accept these changes was unanimously agreed.</p>					
6	<p><i>CTiT</i></p> <p>Rev Angela Brenan and Viv Druce are happy to continue as representatives on CTiT. Other people can join in due course.</p>					

AOB

No.	Minutes / Notes	Action
1	<p><i>Hot Water in the Meeting Room</i></p> <p>The lack of hot water in the kitchen and toilets was raised. Chris Watts explained that the boiler is beyond repair and new one is required. Individual electric water heaters could be installed in the toilets. A replacement boiler is a significant expense and a gas appliance is not acceptable to the CofE. Options need to be examined and explored.</p>	

The meeting was closed at 16:55 with a prayer by Mark Bennet "thinking of the church". This was followed by the Grace.



APPENDIX 2

Accounts Annual Parochial Church Meeting



Thatcham Team Ministry

Balance Sheet

As of 31 December 2024

	31 Dec 24	31 Dec 23
ASSETS		
Current Assets		
Cash at bank and in hand		
1001 · PCC Thatcham		
1002 · General Fund		
1002/1 · Running Costs Greenham G ...	10,654	10,654
1002 · General Fund - Other	(24,965)	(29,037)
Total 1002 · General Fund	(14,312)	(18,383)
1003 · Fabric	40,787	45,557
1004 · Organ (Designated)	70	401
1005 · Organ (Restricted)		
1005/1 · Organ Appeal Greenham Goo...	8,578	8,578
1005 · Organ (Restricted) - Other	678	0
Total 1005 · Organ (Restricted)	9,255	8,578
1006 · Choir	224	144
1007 · Childrens Work		
1007/1 · Baby Cafe Greenham G Excha...	1,697	1,563
1007 · Childrens Work - Other	415	5
Total 1007 · Childrens Work	2,112	1,567
1008 · Curate (Hsg/Expenses)	3,856	9,778
1009 · Bell Maintenance	(53)	115
1001 · PCC Thatcham - Other	110	0
Total 1001 · PCC Thatcham	42,051	47,757
1050 · St Barnabas	3,195	3,605
1052 · St Barnabas - Set Up	90	90
2101 · Vicar & Churchwardens Treasurer	2,170	2,524
2102 · Vicar & Churchwardens Instant	1,289	1,230
Total Cash at bank and in hand	48,795	55,205
Other Current Assets		
2001 · Investment		
2005 · 47a Station Road	76,339	76,339
2010 · CBF Bell Maintenance 3	29,889	29,889
2020 · CBF Bell Maintenance 2	241	241
2030 · BLK C of E Charity COIF Perp	31,155	31,155
2050 · BLK Organ Fund (Designated)	3,810	3,810
2060 · BLK Organ Fund (Restricted)	45,713	45,713
2070 · Rookery Church Fund	92	92
2071 · Rookery Fund (Lloyds)	151	149
2090 · Thatcham Church Estate	3,068	3,068
2093 · Thatc02 BR Char UK Bond	14,956	14,956
2094 · Thatc02 BR Char UK Equity	70,114	70,114
Total 2001 · Investment	275,528	275,525
Total Other Current Assets	275,528	275,525
Total Current Assets	324,322	330,731
TOTAL ASSETS	324,322	330,731
LIABILITIES & EQUITY		
Capital and Reserves		
1010 · Share Capital Account	304,730	304,730
3200 · Unrestricted Net Assets	26,001	46,538
Profit for the Year	(6,408)	(20,538)
Shareholder funds	324,322	330,731
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	324,322	330,731

Thatcham Team Ministry

Profit & Loss

January through December 2024

	Jan - Dec 24
Ordinary Income/Expense	
Income	
3000 · General Income	
3100 · Donor income	
3110 · Service Collections	
3112 · Goodbox	1,242.37
3113 · Petty Cash	-20.55
3110 · Service Collections - Other	4,023.64
Total 3110 · Service Collections	5,245.46
3114 · Sumup	144.27
3120 · Stewardship	
3121 · Envelopes	2,729.00
3122 · PGS	24,418.60
3123 · Standing Orders	19,057.00
3124 · Tax reclaimed	13,838.82
3125 · Donations	3,809.95
3126 · Bequests	5,000.00
3120 · Stewardship - Other	155.43
Total 3120 · Stewardship	69,008.80
3100 · Donor income - Other	511.37
Total 3100 · Donor income	74,909.90
3210 · Other voluntary Income	
3220 · Mission	
3221 · Childrens' Society	316.00
3223 · USPG	317.00
3225 · Berks Historic Churches ...	220.00
Total 3220 · Mission	853.00
3230 · St Barnabas - Share	11,000.00
3250 · Grants Youth Work	300.00
3251 · Grants general	134.70
3260 · Curate Hsg - Rent	5,919.13
3210 · Other voluntary Income - Ot...	607.52
Total 3210 · Other voluntary Income	18,814.35
3310 · Investment Income	
3315 · Investment Income	3,098.62
Total 3310 · Investment Income	3,098.62
3410 · Charity and Trading	
3415 · BRF income	140.00
3420 · Fees	
3421 · Memorial	-435.02
3422 · Funerals	8,657.00
3426 · Wedding	3,175.00
Total 3420 · Fees	11,396.98
3428 · Printing / Photocopying	61.38
3430 · Functions / Activities	147.50
3440 · Mast Rental	5,100.00
Total 3410 · Charity and Trading	16,845.86
3510 · Building / Equipment Income	
3520 · Hall Hire	3,301.12
3535 · Kitchen / Meeting Room	20.00
3536 · Organ Appeal	1,651.35
Total 3510 · Building / Equipment Inc...	4,972.47
3610 · Choir Income	
3620 · Choir Fees	160.00
Total 3610 · Choir Income	160.00

Thatcham Team Ministry

Profit & Loss

January through December 2024

	Jan - Dec 24
3000 · General Income - Other	50.00
Total 3000 · General Income	118,851.20
Total Income	118,851.20
Expense	
4001 · General Expense	
4010 · Grants & Special Collection	
4011 · Missions	
4012 · Berkshire Churches Trust	220.00
4013 · Childrens' Society	316.00
4014 · USPG	317.00
Total 4011 · Missions	853.00
Total 4010 · Grants & Special Collect...	853.00
4030 · Work of the Church	
4031 · Ministry	
4032 · Parish Share	71,123.93
4033 · Clergy Expenses	282.68
4034 · Youth work	138.11
4035 · Function & Activities	940.60
4036 · Fees (ODBF)	5,235.00
4036/1 · Fees (Clergy)	1,060.00
4037 · Bank Account Charges	343.88
4038 · BRF expenses	157.86
4041 · Curate Training	
4043 · Curate Housing	9,899.29
Total 4041 · Curate Training	9,899.29
4031 · Ministry - Other	156.00
Total 4031 · Ministry	89,337.35
4051 · Church running costs	
4052 · Utilities	
4053 · Electricity	3,408.51
4054 · Gas	2,843.78
4055 · Water	264.44
4056 · Telephone / Broadband	720.00
Total 4052 · Utilities	7,236.73
4057 · Insurance	5,007.38
4058 · Professional Fees	4,260.00
4051 · Church running costs - O...	894.07
Total 4051 · Church running costs	17,398.18
4061 · Upkeep of Services	
4062 · Altar	312.21
Total 4061 · Upkeep of Services	312.21
6510 · Choir expenses	
6524 · RSCM	270.00
6526 · CCLI Copyright	259.00
Total 6510 · Choir expenses	529.00
4030 · Work of the Church - Other	1,697.50
Total 4030 · Work of the Church	109,274.24
4070 · Administration	
4072 · Copier	1,254.89
4073 · Stationery	269.02
4074 · Subscriptions	10.00
4078 · General Admin	42.50
Total 4070 · Administration	1,576.41

Thatcham Team Ministry

Profit & Loss

January through December 2024

	Jan - Dec 24
4001 · General Expense - Other	820.48
Total 4001 · General Expense	112,524.13
5001 · Building Expense	
5010 · Repairs	2,287.57
5020 · Fixed Equipment	
4025 · Organ tuning & minor repair	330.84
Total 5020 · Fixed Equipment	330.84
5040 · Equipment repair & replaceme...	2,213.87
5060 · Architect	750.00
5070 · Projects	
5074 · South west wall	6,270.00
Total 5070 · Projects	6,270.00
Total 5001 · Building Expense	11,852.28
7010 · Bells	
7020 · Projects	
7021 · Air Conditioning	168.00
Total 7020 · Projects	168.00
Total 7010 · Bells	168.00
Total Expense	124,544.41
Net Ordinary Income	-5,693.21
Other Income/Expense	
Other Income	
9000 · Unrealised revaluation	
9001 · revaluation CBF Bells 3	1,525.81
9002 · revaluation CBF Bells 2	12.80
9003 · revaluation BLK Bell COIF	1,985.88
9004 · revaluation BLK Organ (desig'd)	242.87
9005 · revaluation BLK Organ (res'd)	2,913.88
9006a · revaluation Rookery	-4.08
9007 · revaluation TCE Charishare	45.55
9008 · revaluation Thatch02 CharBond	-672.89
9009 · revaluation Thatch02 Charisha...	1,772.16
Total 9000 · Unrealised revaluation	7,821.98
Total Other Income	7,821.98
Net Other Income	7,821.98
Profit for the Year	2,128.77