



**CHRIST
CHURCH
BEDFORD** *Annual
Report*

for

MEETING OF PARISHIONERS

and

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

Wednesday 30th April 2025

8pm

Christ Church

Bedford

www.ccbedford.org



ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

Wednesday 30th April 2025 at 8 pm

In accordance with the Notices fixed to the Notice Boards, the Meeting of Parishioners for the purpose of appointing Churchwardens, and the Annual Parochial Church Meeting will be held in Christ Church, Bedford, on Wednesday 30th April 2025 at 8 pm.

Meeting of Parishioners

A G E N D A

1. Apologies for absence
2. Appointment of Churchwardens
3. Consideration of the number of successive terms of office that can be served by a Churchwarden
4. Appointment of Assistant Churchwardens

Annual Parochial Church Meeting

A G E N D A

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of:
 - a/ Last Meeting of Parishioners
 - b/ Last Annual Parochial Church Meeting
3. Election of 4 lay representatives to the Parochial Church Council for 3 years
4. To receive a copy of the new Electoral Roll
5. To consider:
 - a/ the Annual Report on the proceedings of the parochial church council and the activities of the parish generally;
 - b/ To consider the financial statements of the council for the year ending on the 31st December preceding the meeting
6. Appointment of an Independent Examiner for the current financial year
7. Notification of appointment of Reader/s to the Parochial Church Council
8. Welcome of Rev Martin Harris to Parish with PTO
9. To consider:
 - a/ the annual report under section 50 of the Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction and Care of Churches Measure 2018
 - b/ a report of the proceedings of the Deanery Synod
 - c/ reports of various Committees and Activities of the Church.
10. Vicar's Report
11. Consideration of any other business of parochial or general church interest
12. Results of elections to the Parochial Church Council
13. Closing Statements

DAVID THOMAS
Vicar

CHRIST CHURCH BEDFORD
Minutes of the MEETING OF PARISHIONERS and of the
ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING
held on Wednesday 17 April 2024 at 8pm
Chairperson: David Thomas

Meeting of Parishioners

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Ben Atkins, Ken and Pauline Barber, Susan Bradley, Julie Bradshaw, Ian and Penny Cooper, Rachel Day, Gwyneth James, Matt and Laura Jewell, Sherilyn Leck, Kirsty Pirrie, Sue Platt, Kathy Priddin, Helen Ryan, Martin and Claire Sweet, Sue Templeman, Vikki Thomas, Debs Tisi and Simon and Jo Wigg.

2. Appointment of Churchwardens

Two nominations have been received: Kay Berrington and Andrew Russell. There being no other nominations they were declared duly elected for the forthcoming year. The wardens were applauded.

3. Appointment of Assistant Churchwardens

On behalf of the wardens Kay Berrington thanked all the assistant wardens for their support and help week by week. Their efficiency, energy, enthusiasm and giving of their time is much appreciated.

The following have served as assistant wardens during the year:

Pauline Barber	Margaret Baron	Rachel Bennett	Simon Berrington
Fiona Betteley	Rachel Day	Daniel Gicharu	Cheryl Grint
Margaret Haywood	Berty Jacob	Sue Marshall	Pat Mathias
June Pedzeni	Keith Priddin	Margaret Ryan	Mary Shaw
Dorothy Summerfield	Geoff Topham	Andrew Turpie	Steve Welsh

Particular thanks to Pauline Barber who has stepped down, Mary Shaw who sadly died in December 2023 and Steve Welsh who is moving away from Bedford.

The service of our assistant wardens, sidespeople, welcomers and stewards is very much an unseen ministry but it is particularly important for the smooth running of our services.

We are delighted that during the year the PCC approved the appointment of Lesley Greenslade to serve on Wednesdays for our midweek service and of Mark Heslett to serve at 9am on Sundays.

Kay Berrington proposed that the 16 from last year, who have agreed to continue, with Lesley and Mark, be appointed; Helen Russell seconded the proposal, and the list was approved unanimously.

Annual Parochial Church Meeting

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Ben Atkins, Ken and Pauline Barber, Susan Bradley, Julie Bradshaw, Ian and Penny Cooper, Rachel Day, Gwyneth James, Matt and Laura Jewell, Sherilyn Leck, Kirsty Pirrie, Sue Platt, Kathy Priddin, Helen Ryan, Martin and Claire Sweet, Sue Templeman, Vikki Thomas, Debs Tisi and Simon and Jo Wigg.

2. Minutes of a/ Last Meeting of Parishioners and b/ Last Annual Parochial Church Meeting

The minutes of the meeting of parishioners and of the APCM held on 3 May 2023 and to be found on pages iii-vi of the APCM booklet were approved and signed by the Chairperson as an accurate record.

3. Election of two lay representatives on Bedford Deanery Synod for 2 years

Two nominations had been received: Phillipa (Pip) Francis and Martin Hamilton. There being no other nominations Pip and Martin were declared duly elected to the PCC to fill the two casual vacancies as our Deanery Synod representatives.

4. Election of four lay representatives to the Parochial Church Council for 3 years

Six nominations had been received necessitating an election. Each candidate was invited to give a one-minute introduction to explain which service they attend, what they do and why they were standing. (Rachel and Gwyneth were unable to be present so sent in a PowerPoint slide instead.) They were: Rachel Day, Gwyneth James, Wendy Pegg, Ben Rowan, Jonathan Templeman and Geoff Topham. A ballot then took place.

5. To receive a report on changes to the Electoral Roll

On behalf of the Electoral Roll Officer Collette Denley-Currie, David Thomas explained that the number on the Electoral Roll now stands at 290, a decrease of three from 2023, of whom 24% live in the parish (up one percent from last year). In 2025 there will be a complete revision of the electoral roll.

6. To consider:

6.1 The Annual Report on the proceedings of the parochial church council and the activities of the parish generally

The annual report, legally required by the Charity Commission, can be found on pages 2-12 of the APCM booklet.

6.2 To consider the financial statements of the council for the year ending on 31 December preceding the meeting

The chair invited Chris Stevens, the Honorary Treasurer, to explain the accounts. The accounts are to be found on pages 14-27 of the APCM booklet. Chris explained that he was going to give a quick overview of the figures for 2023. Our income and expenditure were both in the region of £300k. The income was used to run the church, give to mission, pay staff and our parish share etc. £190k came from regular giving to the church; 20K as one-off donations; £44k from Gift Aid (tax reclaimed from HMRC, please do complete a Gift Aid form if you are eligible); £40k from hall hire (this has gone up year on year) and there is income from our solar panels. The figures show: we are not making a huge surplus; the importance of Gift Aid and that small donations add up and help us to keep things going and enable us to do what we want to.

The amount that was given in response to our recent Gift Day appeal currently stands at £115k and money is still coming in. This money has proved very timely as we have been able to purchase 18 Hartland Avenue for £335k. We took out a loan from the Diocese to help with the purchase. We sold 161 Dudley Street of which 39% of the monies received came to Christ Church. This enabled us to pay off the Diocesan loan when the sale completed. We had not paid the retention fee for the building of the halls as we were waiting for the final defects to be rectified. This was finally signed off and we paid just under £50k to Jeakins Weir in February. The consequence of all this is that for the first time since 1989 we have no external debts. We have had to use up a lot of our reserves in the past few months. We do have 3 months of expenditure in reserve, but we will be looking to build up our reserves to their former level over the coming months.

Sidney Miller noted that we had budgeted for a deficit of £13k and asked why we were in a better position financially at year end than expected. Chris explained that we had budgeted for a part-time Youth Minister for the entire year, but, as the year before, this position was vacant for some months. If all the roles we have advertised were filled we will need to increase our income.

7. Election of an Independent Examiner for the current financial year

Suzanne Goodson of Wright Connections Ltd has been our independent examiner for a number of years. The Resourcing Impact Group proposed that we continue to work with her. The meeting approved the election of Suzy Goodson as our independent examiner for the 2024 accounts via a show of hands.

8. Notification of appointment of Reader to the Parochial Church Council

At present we have one reader, Michael Bishop. We have previously made provision for a reader to serve ex-officio on the PCC and Michael has indicated that he wishes to continue. Michael was thanked for all that he does at Christ Church.

9. To consider:

9.1 the annual report under section 50 of the Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction and Care of Churches Measure 2018

This report is to be found on pages 30-31 of the APCM booklet.

9.2 a report of the proceedings of the Deanery Synod

This report is to be found on pages 6-7 of the APCM booklet.

9.3 reports of various Committees and Activities of the Church.

These reports are to be found on pages 31-46 of the APCM report. David Thomas thanked all those who have written reports for us and he explained that the Children's Minster, Ruth Hulme, had provided some highlights from the year, rather than writing about all the events that were held. It is appreciated just how much Ruth does for us.

10. Vicar's Report

The Vicar's written report is to be found on pages 28-29 of the APCM booklet.

David personally thanked Sue Templeman and Simon Berrington who have both served two consecutive three-year terms on the PCC and must therefore stand down, as per our notes of guidance. He thanked them for being a blessing and said that he would still be seeking their wisdom. He thanked AJ Hutchinson-Wade who was a 'rock' last year we are very, very grateful for all that he did as ordinand in training, social media lead and interim youth minister. We wish him and Amy all the best in the future.

It is with sadness that we note the death of Paul Templeman and Mary Shaw in 2023. They made an impact as members of our congregation who were willing to serve in many different ways and we feel the 'holes' they have left. We honour Paul and Mary for all that they were to us.

At the start of 2023 David preached a long sermon based around Isaiah 54:2. *"Enlarge the place of your tent, stretch your tent curtains wide, do not hold back; lengthen your cords, strengthen your stakes."* As he reflected on that verse he encouraged us all to make space for God, dream big and be more welcoming. Things that we achieved in 2023 came out of that verse. It is a testimony to this church dreaming big that we are debt free. David concluded by thanking everyone for their generosity and care towards him and his family. He encouraged everyone to keep making space, dreaming big and welcoming people – it has been great to have new people joining us.

11. Consideration of any other business of parochial or general church interest

Martin Hamilton asked: *Given that the Church of England at the highest level has devoted an enormous amount of time and energy to the Introduction of Prayers of Love and Faith and the preparation of New Pastoral Guidance to replace Issues in Human Sexuality over the past few years and these relate directly to the Church's Doctrine of Marriage could you outline your view of where we are as a church in our response to this?*

David Thomas responded that discussion of this issue has been a slow process and not much headway has been made. At the end of 2023 the House of Bishops authorised the use of the Prayers of Love and Faith but it is not fully apparent what this means. Questions remaining unanswered include what does it mean for these prayers to be used and what are the implications of using the prayers?

Christ Church PCC members have been wrestling with the prayers and the wider issue of sexuality and marriage and this item has been a standing item on the agenda since the last APCM. There will be a discussion at the May PCC as to where we go next to make progress. We need to look at and learn how we can disagree well with each other.

Jess Walker asked *Why we are waiting to take a decision when we already have scripture?* David Thomas explained that the issue is with regards to the specific prayers of blessing for two people and what this means. What does it mean to pray a prayer of blessing? We already bless people, so what is different here? Until the nuance of the prayers is clear and understood, David is not prepared to give a hard 'no' or a hard 'yes': what are the implications for a congregation, for a priest in the Church of England and for individuals who receive this blessing? David reiterated firstly that we are not talking about changing the doctrine of marriage and secondly that at present he is not willing to use the prayers. And if that were ever to change, the rationale would be explained well in advance, so there would not be any surprises.

12. Results of elections to the Parochial Church Council

David Thomas thanked all those who had stood in the election for PCC members, especially to those who stood but were not elected. He then published the results of the election to the PCC: -

Elected for three years: Rachel Day, Gwyneth James, Ben Rowan and Jonathan Templeman.

13. Closing Statements

Andrew Russell gave the vote of thanks. He thanked David for all that he had done in his first full year. A lot has been achieved including the creation of a new mission statement and the restructuring of our impact groups. We have sold and bought a house and seen things grow. Andrew thanked David for his enthusiasm, inspiration and teaching. David has also inspired us for 2024 to *'love one another'*. We appreciate his talents: music, sense of humour and passion to bring Christ into everything we do. It is great that we have a curate coming later in the year.

Andrew then went on to thank the staff team: Pauline for continuing to bring her gifts of administration and communication and knowing what needs doing; Dawn thank you for managing the halls with such diligence; Ruth for creating an incredibly full and busy schedule of events with things of Sundays, mid-week groups, one off holiday events and Wild Church for example. It is great to see more young families coming to church; Laura has joined the team as 18-30s pioneer working a small number of hours each week she has grown the ministry and brought the members of this age group together - Sunday lunch Alpha, home Group; AJ Wade stepped in during 2023 to help with the youth; Vikki has a very important role behind the scenes, for example organising David's diary and she also volunteers overseeing the youth work at the moment; Vandon keeps things shipshape in the building; Wendy and Richard Heathfield our cleaners without whom the place wouldn't function.

Finally, he thanked all our volunteers who keep our activities and services running, for example our musicians and home group leaders and those who run and support the men's, ladies', seniors' and pastoral ministry.

The meeting closed with prayer at 9.02pm.



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**REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES AND
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024
FOR**

**PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE
ECCLESIASTICAL PARISH OF
CHRIST CHURCH BEDFORD ("Christ Church")**

REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER 1134785

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Report of Trustees Year Ended 31 December 2024

The trustees present their report and the audited financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 December 2024. The trustees have adopted the provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) "Accounting and Reporting by Charities" (FRS 102) in preparing the annual report and financial statements of the charity.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in notes to the accounts and comply with the charity's governing document, the Charities Act 2011 and Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice, applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland published in October 2019.

Aims and purposes

Christ Church Bedford (CCB) is a Church of England church within the Diocese of St Albans, and a part of the Bedford Deanery. Sitting within the evangelical tradition, and having good relations with churches of other denominations and traditions.

The primary responsibility of Christ Church Parochial Church Council (PCC) is the promotion of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to the doctrines and practices of the Church of England. The PCC has the responsibility of cooperating with the incumbent, Reverend David Thomas, in promoting, in the ecclesiastical parish, the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical.

Week by week CCB meets together for teaching, worship, prayer and encouragement, whether on Sundays or at other times during the week. Valuing the ministry of every member and seeking to use the gifts that God has given each of us in his service. We desire to be outward looking and serve our local community through both our care for others and our sharing of the good news of Jesus Christ. It is our desire as a church to enable people to know God and to love him, and under the power and guidance of the Holy Spirit, to live a life that reflects that love and that shares the good news of Jesus Christ with others.

Our vision statement is:

We are a people being transformed by the unconditional love of God; seeking to bless our community, and longing for all to experience the hope we have in Jesus.

Objectives and activities

When planning our activities for the year, we have considered the Charities Commission's guidance on public benefit and, in particular, the supplementary guidance on charities for the advancement of religion. We enable ordinary people to live out their faith as part of our parish community through:

- Worship and prayer; learning about the Gospel; and developing their knowledge and trust in Jesus.
- Provision of pastoral care for people living within and outside of the parish.
- Mission and outreach work.

To facilitate all this, we maintain the fabric of the Church and complex at 140 Dudley Street. The PCC also had responsibility for the upkeep of the "Curate's House" (18 Hartland Avenue).

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL PARISH OF CHRIST CHURCH, BEDFORD
REPORT OF TRUSTEES YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

Priorities and Objectives

Three key priorities for 2024 were:

1. Creation of a new Mission Action Plan reflecting the life of CCB post covid and with the new vicar firmly established.
2. Imbedding the new restructuring of the Impact Groups who work on behalf of the PCC to ensure the smooth running of the church.
3. Changes to the Staff Team, including preparing for a Curate (July 2024) and advertising and employing a Student and Youth Minister.

And these were underpinned by the 2024 Bible Verse for the Year from John 13:35:
By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another. (NIVUK)

In order to achieve these objectives and respond and meet the realised needs: -

- The Vicar continued to meet regularly with church leaders of different denominations in Bedford, as well as playing a role in the Bedford Deanery (joining the Standing Committee for Deanery Synod in 2023) and joining St Albans Diocesan Synod in July 2024.
- The Standing Committee (subset of PCC, including the Church Wardens), worked to create a new Mission Action Plan, and helped in creation of two new Impact Groups (Pastoral, Engagement) replacing the Fellowship and Outreach groups.
- The Church Wardens worked closely with the Vicar and Staff Team to ensure that the day to day running of the church continued as smoothly as possible.
- The Impact Groups continued to look after different areas of the life of the church and ensure that the church continued to be active in the community.
- The Vicar and various people worked with St Alban's diocese to prepare for a new curate. This involved the sale of the Dudley Street property and the purchase of the Hartland Avenue property.

Achievements and performance

2024 saw Sunday attendance throughout the year remaining steady with a slight increase in children, numbers during Advent were up, and slightly down for Christmas.

This is by no means an exhaustive list, but gives a flavour of some of the significant things which took place in 2024:

- Creation of new Mission Action Plan (uploaded onto Diocesan Website).
- Purchase of the new property on Hartland Avenue, following the sale of the Dudley Street house means that Christ Church has no long-term debts.
- A Midweek Lent Course. This regularly saw 50+ people attend in person and online.
- An Alpha course for 18-30s was run, which then became a new home group, meeting each Wednesday evening.
- As a part of Hope Bedfordshire mission, a youth event was held in May at Christ Church, it was so successful that collaboration with three local churches has seen plans for a termly event. The first of these took place in November.
- Two weddings took place at church, and Rev David took another wedding in Wallington for two members of CCB.
- Introduction of Youth @ 6 on a Sunday for older young people to go deeper in their faith.

REPORT OF TRUSTEES YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

- Continued to have members of the congregation explore different callings to ministry. This included one person completing Foundations for Ministry training and two people starting that course. One person has been licenced as a Reader, and one person has begun their first year of Reader Training.
- We hosted Readers in Training for two short-term placements in 2024.
- Continued to see lots of new volunteers getting involved with all sorts of different areas of the life of the church including, children's and youth work, new musicians and service leaders at both the 10.30am and 7pm services.
- Christ Church Pre-school continues to serve the community and provide a safe space for young children before they move on to school.
- Closer ties with Castle Newnham South Site were forged, they used the church for their lower school Christmas Nativity services.

Staff Team

There have been two significant changes to the staff team over 2024.

- Hannah Applegarth joined the team as our full-time Youth and Student Minister.
- We welcomed Rev Ben Williams as our new curate, and his wonderful family joined the church in July.

Role of Volunteers

Without volunteers most activities which Christ Church puts on would cease to operate. We are extremely grateful to everyone who gives up their time and energy to serve both the church and the community.

We see this especially in areas such as our musical worship, our children's and youth work, and our engagement with older members of the community. Without the many volunteers our Children's Worker (Ruth Hulme) and Youth & Student Minister (Hannah Applegarth) would be unable to do all they do.

There are a few volunteers who work exceedingly hard showing pastoral care to those who are struggling and in various ways. Whether visiting hospital and care homes, to letting the vicar know who is in need, their quiet work which often goes unnoticed is what makes CCB the kind place that so many find it to be.

Christ Church continues to be one of several distribution centres for Bedford Foodbank. Many of the volunteers helping on Tuesday afternoons are from Christ Church. 2023 continued to see large numbers of people attending.

Children, Youth and Student Ministry

2024 was another busy and exciting year. On Sunday mornings we have four groups:

- Imagine (0 to pre-school)
- Wonder (reception to year 3)
- Marvel (years 4 to 6)
- Sunday Morning Youth (years 7-13)

And on Sunday evenings we now have Youth @ 6 (years 11-13) which began in October 2024

REPORT OF TRUSTEES YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

Attendance across all these groups continues to be strong, with 35 children and 17 young people attending at least once a month.

Midweek ministry:

- Little Fishes (0-2s)
- Morning Out (0-4s)
- Forge (years 4-6)
- Friday Night Youth (year 7-13)
- University of Bedfordshire (UoB) drop in on a Friday.

Morning Out and Friday Night Youth continue to be very well attended, Friday Night Youth has doubled in size over the course of 2024. Hannah attending UoB is new from September 2024.

Some of the One Off Events:

- Easter Activity Room for children and families to reflect upon the Easter story.
- Youth Litter picking.
- Youth Trip to Box End.
- Summer Holiday Club ran across 5 mornings - 48 children in total
- October Light Party – 14 families attended.
- It's A Boy Christmas Pantomime saw lots of families from the community come into church.
- Ginger Bread House Fun – saw 8 families spend a morning decorating ginger bread houses and playing fun games.

Our Children's Minister worked closely with IMPACT, going in to local schools, and helping out at their Easter and Christmas Experiences. Our Youth & Student Minister has reconnected the church with the chaplains at the Bedford campus of the University of Bedfordshire. Over the course of 2024 we have engaged with hundreds of families in a myriad of different activities.

Worship and Prayer

Worship and prayer continue to be central to the life of Christ Church. We are extremely grateful to all who have been involved whether playing and singing, projecting words onto screens, operating the sound desk and live streaming our services.

Some highlights in the year include:

- At our Sunday @ Seven we had a number of prayer and praise evenings, which gave opportunities for expressing prayer and worship in different ways.
- The Contemporary Carol Service on the Sunday before Christmas saw double the usual numbers for Sunday @ Seven attendance.
- The Carols on the Lawn service continues to be a hit with the local community, packing out the garden in front of the church.

Average Sunday attendance based, upon the October counts; at 9am has been 15 people, at 10.30am 172 people, and at 7pm 48 people. We continue to livestream our 10.30am service but as the community gets used to being able to worship together in person, we have seen less people joining us online. However, this continues to be a valuable part of the worshipping life of the community for those who are unable to

REPORT OF TRUSTEES YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

attend for a variety of reasons, including ill health, home and work commitments. Our midweek Holy Communion Service on a Wednesday at 10am averages 18 people.

Under the Church Representation Rules, it is a requirement that a new Church Electoral Roll is prepared every 6 years. This process took place this year and was completed on 5 April 2025. At present there are 229 names on the Church Electoral Roll, 68 of whom are resident within the parish.

As well as our regular services, we enable our community to celebrate and thank God at life's milestones: 3 baptisms, 3 weddings, 2 confirmations (which took place at Church of the Transfiguration) and 5 funerals.

Deanery and Diocesan Synods

We had 3 Deanery Synod elected representatives and 2 Diocesan Synod representatives, offering an important link between our parish and the wider Church of England. At each Deanery Synod meeting, there is a primary focus of discussion, and the opportunity to hear of the work of the wider church. Rev David Thomas was elected as a member of clergy to Diocesan Synod for the new triennium which began in 2024, as well as Rachel Bennett as a lay member.

Pastoral care

Pastoral care continues to be an important area for the life of the church. This takes place in many different ways, from Home Groups building strong friendships, to people visiting others in hospital, delivering groceries or driving people to church and other appointments. Our Pastoral Care Impact Group is slowly taking shape, and plans are coming together so that in 2025 there is more structure. We have a new co-ordinator for Home Groups, with plans for the creation of new Home Groups in 2025.

Mission and Evangelism

Helping others is a demonstration of our faith, whether practical, emotional or spiritual.

The Mission Impact Group channels support and news between our Mission Partners, scattered across Africa, the Middle East and Europe, and encourages prayer for them.

Mission Direct, a small UK Based charity, whose Executive Officer attends Christ Church, became one of our Mission Partners.

Volunteers from Christ Church helped the King's Arms Project winter night shelter, making meals for the rough sleepers.

The Engagement Group identified a number of areas for engaging with the local community including:

- Family Funday BBQ at the beginning of the new academic year, a free event which saw over 120 people attend, mostly made up of community people.
- Running the Bereavement Course in the autumn.
- Christmas Lunch Club

Rev David Thomas took communion once a month to Dame Alice Court care home, including a Christmas Carols service with Rev Ben Williams, which saw the number of attendees double (12).

REPORT OF TRUSTEES YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

Ecumenical Relationships

We continue to be blessed by our ecumenical links to other local churches across Bedford and benefit from HOPE Bedfordshire. We actively supported the town-centre open-air Good Friday Witness, attended by over 1000 people and a number of our congregation attended various Hope Bedford activities throughout the year.

Rev David attended Churches Together meetings, with plans in place for 2025 including CCB participating in Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

Financial review

Total income from donations and legacies on unrestricted funds were £251,999, with £198,410 from standing orders and £42,930 was from Gift Aid. Restricted donations totalled £100,274 of which £84,905 was in relation to the purchase of 18 Hartland Avenue together with £14,875 of gift aid. Further details are shown in the annual financial statements.

£207,391 was spent from unrestricted funds to provide the Christian ministry from Christ Church, including the contribution to the diocesan parish share of £154,063 which largely provides the stipends and housing for the clergy.

The sale of 161 Dudley Street resulted in a gain of £266,582. After deducting financing costs of £165,440 the remaining proceeds together with the amounts raised above and certain reserves of the church were used to fund the purchase of 18 Hartland Avenue

Net movement in funds was an increase of £178,950 during the year, and the total reserves increased to £415,095.

The principal source of donations are the church members. The PCC takes its environmental, social and ethical duties seriously and consideration of these undergird the ministry decisions of the church.

Reserves policy

It is PCC policy to try to maintain sufficient funds, being between 3 and 6 months of expenditure to ensure the smooth financial running of the church, and ensure that unexpected expenditure can be met as and when required. Total funds held at the year end amounted to £415,095.

The balance of unrestricted funds at the year end was £404,956, of which £333,642 can only be accessed on the sale of the property owned at 18 Hartland Avenue which is used to house the curate. Accordingly £71,313 represents accessible unrestricted funds. This represents approximately 10.5 weeks of expenditure which is slightly below the level considered adequate since it is below the PCC policy.

The purpose of any restricted fund is noted in the financial statements. Restricted funds are in respect of specific projects and or schemes.

Financial risks

Total restricted funds amounted to £10,139. The cash reserves of the church, excluding restricted funds, totalled £54,512 as at 31 December 2024. The budget for 2025 was approved by the PCC showing a deficit

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REPORT OF TRUSTEES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

of £32,127. Most of the income generated by the church is from regular standing orders. The level of standing orders has remained consistent during the year and this, together with careful management of resources, has not had a significant impact on the financial risks of the church. The PCC therefore considers it has sufficient resources to sustain its purposes and activities during 2025. In the event of materially reduced income the PCC has recognised that it would be able to reduce its expenditure to match.

Plans for future periods

At the end of 2024, the Resources Impact Group, on behalf of the PCC, began looking into the possibility of introducing more Solar Panels. This included meeting with the St Albans Diocese Net Carbon Zero Officer. This will be looked at more closely in 2025.

Updating of the 2024 Mission Action Plan to extend beyond 2025.

Creation of the Vision for Youth & Student Ministry, including exploration for a dedicated youth space

Risk management

The PCC is aware of its risk management duties. All PCC trustees, youth and children paid and voluntary leaders, and volunteers in contact with vulnerable adults are DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checked.

The PCC has complied with the duty under section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline measure 2016. We continue to take seriously the need to look after children and vulnerable adults. The PCC have adopted all the House of Bishops' Safeguarding Policies and Practice Guidance, as well as "Promoting a Safer Church" (child protection and vulnerable adults policy) and the Domestic Abuse statement.

Safeguarding information is displayed in the Church Porch, on the halls noticeboard and on the church website. In addition there is a child friendly version on the halls noticeboard. Contact details for those wishing to obtain advice, raise any concerns or make referrals to the statutory authorities are included on the posters and in our Safeguarding Policy, which is issued to everyone who applies for a DBS check and Worker's Pocket Guides produced by 31:8 are included in the staff and volunteer ID lanyard pockets.

We have a Parish Safeguarding Officer who is also Lead Recruiter, a Deputy Parish Safeguarding Officer and an Assistant Recruiter. Those who work with vulnerable groups in the Parish are recruited in accordance with the Practice Guidance Safer Recruitment July 2021. We work to ensure that DBS checks are renewed every three years and that all those who have been safely recruited and all members of the PCC, have undertaken the appropriate safeguarding training within the last 3 years. The team meets regularly and we use the Parish Dashboard system for record keeping and to monitor our compliance with the various policies and the practice guidance of the Church of England.

We continue to ensure that there is adequate insurance cover for all activities involving children or adults undertaken in the name of the Parish. There have been 2 issues of safeguarding concern reported during 2024. These matters were dealt with according to the relevant safeguarding policies and guidance, by the Parish Safeguarding Officer, the Vicar and the Diocesan Safeguarding Team.

Safeguarding is a standing item on the PCC agenda and safeguarding matters have been raised with the congregation. The latter included ongoing communication re Mike Pilavachi and Soul Survivor investigation, the Makin Enquiry, and the resignation of the Archbishop of Canterbury. The congregation was also given regular updates throughout the year about these difficult things.

REPORT OF TRUSTEES YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

From a financial perspective, the PCC has delegated a level of responsibility to the Resource Impact Group along with the Treasurer to look after the accounting and budgets. The Treasurer regularly reports back to the PCC how things look compared to budget.

Structure, governance and management

Christ Church is a corporate body established by the Church of England, and it is part of the deanery of Bedford and the Diocese of St Albans.

The PCC operates under the Parochial Church Council Powers Measure. The PCC is a Registered Charity.

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules (CRR). At Christ Church the membership of the PCC consists of the licensed clergy, churchwardens, one of the Readers, members of Diocesan and Deanery Synods and members elected by those members of the congregation who are on the electoral roll of the church. All those who attend our services / members of the congregation are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll, and so if they fulfil the criteria (as per CRR) they can stand for election to the PCC.

New PCC members/trustees were offered a copy of *The PCC Member's Essential Guide*, and a copy of the PCC Notes of Guidance.

The PCC members are responsible for making decisions on all matters of general concern and importance to the parish including deciding on how the funds of the PCC are to be spent.

The PCC met 7 times during 2024 with an average attendance of 73%.

Given its wide responsibilities the PCC has a number of impact groups, each one dealing with a particular aspect of parish life. These groups, which include communications, mission, buildings, outreach, resourcing, fellowship, and young people, are all responsible to the PCC and report back to it regularly with reports of their meetings, decisions and recommendations being received by the PCC and discussed as necessary.

Standing Committee: This committee is required by law. It has power to transact the business of the PCC between its meetings, subject to any directions given by the Council.

Buildings Impact Group: This group is responsible for the management and development of Christ Church PCC's buildings and infrastructure.

Communications Impact Group: This group is responsible for oversight of both external and internal communications, including our physical and online presence.

Engagement Group: This group is responsible for the planning, resourcing and delivery of events focused on engaging with the local community. A key part is listening and identifying local needs.

Mission Impact Group: This group is responsible for caring, praying and practically supporting our Mission Partners and Organisations and encouraging vocations and support to mission at home and overseas.

Pastoral Care Group: This group is in its infancy, its primary focus in 2024 is creating the structure in which Christ Church can think about how it cares for one another.

Resourcing Impact Group: This group is responsible for the financing of Christ Church and the prudent management of its financial resources.

Worship Impact Group: This group is responsible for the planning, resourcing, coordination and delivery of all corporate worship at Christ Church.

REPORT OF TRUSTEES YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

Young People’s Impact Group: The Young People’s Impact Group is responsible for supporting the Youth Minister and the Children’s Minister in developing and implementing a strategy for young people’s and family work at Christ Church, which directly contributes to the achievement of Christ Church’s mission.

Administrative information

Christ Church is situated at 140 Dudley Street, Bedford. It is part of the Diocese of St Albans within the Church of England. The correspondence address is 140 Dudley Street Bedford MK40 3SX. Registered charity number 1134785 under the name the Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Christ Church Bedford. It is also known as Christ Church Bedford, PCC or Christ Church.

PCC members who have served at any time from 1 January 2024 until the date of this report was approved are:

Ex-Officio Members:

Incumbent	The Revd David Thomas	Chairman
Curate	The Revd Benjamin Williams	(from 30 June 2024)
Wardens	Mrs Kay Berrington Dr Andrew Russell	
Reader	Mr Michael Bishop	
Diocesan Synod	Mr Daniel Gicharu Mr Christopher Stevens	(until 31 st July 2024) (until 31 st July 2024) Treasurer
Deanery Synod	Ms Rachel Bennett Mrs Margaret Cottenden Mr Martin Hamilton Ms Phillipa Francis	(from 17 th April 2024) (from 17 th April 2024)

Elected Members:

Mr Simon Berrington	(until 17 th April 2024)
Mr Christopher Brown	Lay Chair of the PCC
Mr Tony Daniels	
Dr Jonathan Day	
Ms Rachel Day	
Mr Stephen Gardner	
Mr Martin Hamilton	(until 17 th April 2024)
Dr Gwyneth James	(from 17 th April 2024)
Ms Susan Marshall	
Mrs Jennie McAdam	
Mr Thomas Rees	
Mr Benjamin Rowan	(from 17 th April 2024)
Ms Christine Somervell	
Mrs Cynthia (Sue) Templeman	(until 17 th April 2024)
Mr Jonathan Templeman	(from 17 th April 2024)

REPORT OF TRUSTEES YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

Co-opted members:

Mr Christopher Stevens

(from 1st August 2024) Treasurer

(PCC Secretary)

Mrs Pauline Grimley

(not a PCC member)

Bank:

CAF Bank Ltd

25 Kings Hill Avenue,

Kings Hill

West Malling

Kent

ME19 4JQ

Independent Examiner:

Suzanne Goodson BSc FCA

Wright Connections Limited

Registered Auditors

Bedford I-Lab

Priory Business Park

Stannard Way

Bedford

MK44 3RZ

Day-to-day management of the charity is delegated to the incumbent:

Incumbent:

The Revd David Thomas

Christ Church Vicarage

115 Denmark Street

Bedford

MK40 3TJ

Approved by the PCC, and signed on their behalf on 15 April 2025:



Revd David Thomas (PCC Chair)

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of Parochial Church Council of The Ecclesiastical Parish of Christ Church Bedford

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the charity for the year ended 31 December 2024 which are set out on pages 13 to 26.

Responsibilities and basis of report

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

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

Independent examiner's statement

Since the charity's gross income exceeded £250,000 your examiner must be a member of a body listed in section 145 of the Act. I confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales, which is one of the listed bodies.

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

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the charity as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair view' which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination

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

Suzanne Goodson

Suzanne Goodson BSc FCA
Institute of Chartered Accountants England & Wales
Wright Connections Limited
Bedford I-Lab
Stannard Way
Bedford
MK44 3RZ

15/04/2025

Date:

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL PARISH OF CHRIST CHURCH, BEDFORD

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES (Including Income and Expenditure account)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 December 2024

	Note	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 31-Dec-24 £	Total Funds 31-Dec-23 £
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM					
Donations and Legacies	4	251,999	100,274	352,273	287,970
Charitable activities	5	70,699	10,000	80,699	93,506
Other trading activities		6,780	0	6,780	5,723
Investments	6	939		939	444
Other income	10	266,582		266,582	0
TOTAL INCOME		596,999	110,274	707,273	387,643
EXPENDITURE ON					
Charitable activities	7	345,336	17,547	362,883	362,873
Other expenditure	10	165,440		165,440	0
TOTAL EXPENDITURE		510,776	17,547	528,323	362,873
NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)		86,223	92,727	178,950	24,770
Transfers between funds		118,245	(118,245)	0	0
NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS		204,468	(25,518)	178,950	24,770
Reconciliation of funds					
Total funds brought forward	19	200,488	35,657	236,145	211,374
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD at 31 December 2024	19	404,956	10,139	415,095	236,144

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL PARISH OF CHRIST CHURCH, BEDFORD

BALANCE SHEET AT 31 December 2024

	<u>Note</u>	31-Dec-24		31-Dec-23	
		£	£	£	£
FIXED ASSETS					
Tangible fixed assets	13		340,220		101,416
CURRENT ASSETS					
Debtors	14		35,106		17,758
Cash at bank and in hand			64,889		236,508
			99,995		254,266
CURRENT LIABILITIES					
Creditors due within one year	16		-15,120		-119,537
NET CURRENT ASSETS			84,875		134,729
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES			425,095		236,145
CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE AFTER MORE THAN ONE YEAR	17		-10,000		0
NET ASSETS			415,095		236,145
FUNDS	19				
Unrestricted funds			404,956		200,488
Restricted funds			10,139		35,657
TOTAL CHARITY FUNDS			415,095		236,145

Approved by the Parochial Church Council
and signed on its behalf by:

15 April 2025

D. J. Thomas

Revd David Thomas Chairman

Christopher Stevens

Mr Christopher Stevens Hon. Treasurer

The notes on pages 16 to 26 form part of these accounts

Charity registration number 1134785

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL PARISH OF CHRIST CHURCH, BEDFORD

CASH FLOW STATEMENT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 December 2024

	Note	31-Dec-24	31-Dec-23
Cash flow from operating activities			
Cash generated from activities	3	27,603	26,045
Cash flow from investing activities			
Payments to acquire tangible fixed assets		0	(1,768)
Purchase of 18 Hartland Avenue		(333,642)	0
Sale of 161 Dudley Street		356,582	0
Interest received		939	443
Net cash flow from investing activities		23,879	(1,325)
Cash flow from financing activities			
Interest paid		(1,981)	(5,083)
Repayment of original loan to purchase 161 Dudley Street		(55,679)	0
Finance charge re sale of 161 Dudley Street		(165,440)	0
Loan to purchase 18 Hartland Avenue		160,000	0
Loan repaid for the purchase of 18 Hartland Avenue		(160,000)	0
Net cash flow from financing activities		(223,100)	(5,083)
Net increase/decrease in cash and cash equivalents		(171,618)	19,637
Cash and cash equivalents at 1.1.24		236,507	216,871
Cash and cash equivalents at 31.12.24		64,889	236,507
Cash and cash equivalents consists of			
Cash at bank and in hand		64,889	236,507
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the reporting period not available for charitable purposes as held as agent		373	984

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS for the year ended 31st December 2024

1. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

a) General information

Christ Church, a registered charity in the United Kingdom is a corporate body established by the Church of England, and it is part of the deanery of Bedford and the Diocese of St Albans. Its trustees are all members of the Parochial Church Council and they operate under the Parochial Church Council Powers Measure. The PCC is a Registered Charity. In the event of the charity being wound up, the liability in respect of the guarantee is limited to £1 per member of the charity. The address of the registered office is given in the charity administrative information on page 10 of these financial statements. The nature of the charity's operations and principal activities are shown on pages 2 to 10 of these financial statements.

b) Basis of preparing the financial statements

The charity constitutes a public benefit entity as defined by FRS 102. The accounts (financial statements) have been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) issued in October 2019 and the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Charities Act 2011 and UK Generally Accepted Accounting Practice.

The financial statements have been prepared to give a 'true and fair' view and have departed from the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 only to the extent required to provide a 'true and fair view'. This departure has involved following the Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland issued in October 2019 rather than the Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice effective from 1 April 2005 which has since been withdrawn.

The financial statements are prepared on a going concern basis under the historical cost convention. The financial statements are prepared in sterling which is the functional currency of the charity and rounded to the nearest £.

The significant accounting policies applied in the preparation of these financial statements are set out below. These policies have been consistently applied to all years prescribed.

c) Income recognition

Voluntary income and capital sources

All incoming resources, including government grants are included in the Statement of Financial Activities (SoFA) when the charity is legally entitled to the income after any performance conditions have been met, the amount can be measured reliably and it is probable that the income will be received.

Collections are recognised when made. For donations to be recognised the charity will have been notified of the amounts and the settlement date in writing. Pledged amounts are only recognised on receipt of the funds.

Income tax recoverable on gift aid scheme donations is recognised in the period the income is received. Grants and legacies to the PCC are accounted for as soon as the PCC is notified of the entitlement and the likely amount due.

Donated facilities and donated professional services are recognised in income at their fair value when their economic benefit is probable, it can be measured reliably and the charity has control over the item. Fair value is determined on the basis of the value of the gift to the charity. For example, the amount the charity would be willing to pay in the open market for such facilities and services. A corresponding amount is recognised in expenditure.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS for the year ended 31st December 2024

No amount is included in the financial statements for volunteer time in line with the SORP (FRS 102). Further detail is given in the Trustees' Annual Report.

Where practicable, gifts in kind donated for distribution to the beneficiaries of the charity are included in stock and donations in the financial statements upon receipt. If it is impracticable to assess the fair value at receipt or if the costs to undertake such a valuation outweigh any benefits, then the fair value is recognised as a component of donations when it is distributed, and an equivalent amount recognised as charitable expenditure.

Legacies

For legacies, entitlement is the earlier of the charity being notified of an impending distribution or the legacy being received. At this point income is recognised. On occasion legacies will be notified to the charity however it is not possible to measure the amount expected to be distributed. On these occasions, the legacy is treated as a contingent asset and disclosed.

Other trading activities

Other trading activities represent feed in tariffs from solar panels and are recognised on entitlement.

Other ordinary income

Rental income from the letting of church premises is accounted for when earned. Fees due to the PCC for weddings, funerals, etc. are accounted for on an event by event basis.

Grants

Where grants are payable in more than one year income is only recognised in the year to which it relates. If entitlement is not met then these amounts are deferred.

d) Expenditure recognition

All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all costs related to the category. Expenditure is recognised where there is a legal or constructive obligation to make payments to third parties, it is probable that the settlement will be required, and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably.

Costs directly related to the work of the church

The Diocesan parish share is accounted for when payable and any amount unpaid at 31st December is included as a creditor in the Balance Sheet. Grants and donations are accounted for at the earlier of payment or formal approval by the PCC. Grants offered subject to conditions which have not been met at the year-end date are noted as a commitment but not accrued as expenditure.

e) Tangible fixed assets

Consecrated land and buildings and moveable church property

Consecrated and beneficial property is excluded from the financial statements by s. 10(2) of the Charities Act 2011.

No value is placed on moveable church furnishings held by the churchwardens on special trust for the PCC and which require a faculty for disposal since the PCC considers these to be inalienable property.

All expenditure on consecrated and beneficial property and moveable church furnishings, whether maintenance or improvement, is written off in the year incurred. This includes all expenditure incurred to date in respect of the Hall Redevelopment Project, including the build costs, since the build is occurring on consecrated ground, and as such cannot be capitalised.

Other land and buildings

Other land and buildings held on behalf of the PCC for its own purposes are valued at cost. No depreciation is charged on such properties since it is considered that the estimated residual value of the properties is in

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS for the year ended 31st December 2024

excess of the purchase price. Any expenditure on maintenance or improvement is written off in the year incurred.

Other fixtures, fittings and office equipment

Equipment purchased within the accounting period is capitalised on the balance sheet. Individual items of equipment with a purchase price of £1,000 or less are written off in the year in which the asset is acquired.

Depreciation

Depreciation is provided on all tangible fixed assets, at rates calculated to write off the cost, less estimated residual value, of each asset in a systematic basis over its expected useful life. Depreciation rates used are as follows: -

Furniture and solar panels – 10% per annum (estimated useful life 10 years), Equipment – 33.33% (estimated useful life 3 years)

f) Taxation

The charity is exempt from tax on its charitable activities.

g) Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the charity and which have not been designated for other purposes.

Designated funds comprise unrestricted funds that have been set aside by the trustees for particular purposes. The aim and use of each designated fund is set out in the notes to the financial statements.

The purpose of any restricted fund is noted in the financial statements. Restricted funds include amounts raised for the Hall Redevelopment Project (HRP).

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

h) Pension costs and other post-retirement benefits

The charity operates a defined contribution pension scheme. Contributions are charged to the Statement of Financial Activities in the period to which they relate.

i) Bank and Cash

Bank and Cash include short-term deposits which include cash held on deposit at CAF Bank.

j) Loans

Loans and borrowings are initially recognised at the transaction price including transaction costs. Subsequently, they are measured at amortised cost using the effective interest rate method, less impairment. If an arrangement constitutes a finance transaction it is measured at present value.

k) Debtors and creditors receivable/payable within 1 year

Amounts owing to the PCC at 31st December in respect of fees, rents or other income are included as debtors at transactional values less any provision for amounts that may prove to be uncollectible. Debtors and creditors with no stated interest rate and receivable or payable within one year are recorded at transaction price. Any losses arising from impairment are recognised in expenditure.

l) Judgements

No judgements (apart from those involving estimates) have been made in the process of applying the above accounting policies.

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL PARISH OF CHRIST CHURCH, BEDFORD
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS for the year ended 31 December 2024

2 YEAR ENDED 31 December 2023 Comparatives

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 31-Dec-23 £
INCOME FROM			
Donations and Legacies	256,499	31,471	287,970
Charitable activities	93,506	0	93,506
Other trading activities	5,723	0	5,723
Investments	444	0	444
TOTAL INCOMING RESOURCES	356,172	31,471	387,643
EXPENDITURE ON			
Charitable activities	361,109	1,763	362,872
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	361,109	1,763	362,872
NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)	(4,937)	29,708	24,771
Transfers between funds	0	0	0
NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS	(4,937)	29,708	24,771
Reconciliation of funds			
Total funds brought forward	205,425	5,949	211,374
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD at 31 December 2023	200,488	35,657	236,145

All income and expenditure is derived from continuing activities

3 Reconciliation of net expenditure for year to net cash flow from operating activities

	31-Dec-24 £	31-Dec-23 £
Net income for year	178,950	24,770
Interest receivable	(939)	(444)
Interest payable	1,981	5,083
Gain on sale of 161 Dudley Street	(266,582)	0
Finance charge on sale of 161 Dudley Street	165,440	0
Depreciation of tangible fixed assets	4,838	5,068
Decrease (increase) in debtors	(17,348)	(396)
Increase (decrease) in creditors	(38,737)	(8,036)
Net cash flow from operating activities	27,603	26,045

4 Income from Donations and Legacies

	31-Dec-24 £	31-Dec-23 £
Gifts	283,315	204,244
Income tax claimed	57,805	48,437
Legacies	0	1,000
Other Donations	11,153	34,289
	352,273	287,970

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL PARISH OF CHRIST CHURCH, BEDFORD
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS for the year ended 31 December 2024

5 Income from charitable activities

	31-Dec-24	31-Dec-23
	£	£
Rental income	36,754	44,326
Grants	10,250	0
Events and activities	32,429	48,260
Fees	1,266	920
	<u>80,699</u>	<u>93,506</u>

6 Income from investments

	31-Dec-24	31-Dec-23
	£	£
Deposit interest	<u>939</u>	<u>444</u>

7 Charitable Activities Costs

	Direct costs	Donations	Total
	£	£	£
Church Activities	<u>337,575</u>	<u>25,308</u>	<u>362,883</u>

See note 21 for further details

8 Support/ Governance costs

	31-Dec-24	31-Dec-23
	£	£
Independent examiner's remuneration	<u>1,680</u>	<u>1,620</u>
Cost of raising loan finance	<u>1,260</u>	<u>0</u>

9 Net income for the period is stated after charging

	31-Dec-24	31-Dec-23
	£	£
Depreciation of tangible fixed assets	<u>4,838</u>	<u>5,068</u>
Gain on sale of 161 Dudley Street	<u>266,582</u>	<u>0</u>

10 Exceptional Income and Expenditure

	31-Dec-24	31-Dec-23
Sales proceeds - 161 Dudley Street	365,000	0
Cost of disposal	(8,419)	0
Net proceeds	<u>356,582</u>	<u>-</u>
Cost of investments	(90,000)	-
Other income	<u>266,582</u>	<u>-</u>
Other expenditure	<u>(165,440)</u>	<u>-</u>

During the year the PCC sold 161 Dudley Street - which had been used to house curates. The PCC had a loan of £55,679 from the Church Commissioners which was taken out to assist with the purchase of 161 Dudley Street. This was an interest only value linked loan representing 62% of the original value of the property. It was repaid on sale of the property together with a 62% share in the increase in value since acquisition.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS for the year ended 31 December 2024

11 Trustees and key management personnel remuneration and expenses

No trustees received amounts for church work during the year
(2023 - Two E Ryan-Johnson £835, AJ Wade £8,812)
None of their remuneration related to their role as a trustee

In 2024 and 2023 the incumbent and the curate were remunerated by way of a stipend by a related party, being the Diocese of St Albans who are responsible for setting the level of remuneration. As is standard practice in the Church of England the clergy were provided with housing by the Diocese (incumbent) and PCC (curate).

Two trustees, including incumbent, were reimbursed £902 during the year
(2023, Two trustees - £373). This was for travel, hospitality, books and expenditure on behalf of the church.

12 Staff Costs

	31-Dec-24	31-Dec-23
	£	£
Wages and salaries	86,334	76,485
Social security costs	0	0
Defined contribution pension costs	2,998	3,372
	<u>89,332</u>	<u>79,857</u>

The average monthly number of employees during the year was as follows:

	2024	2023
Youth minister and Families and Children's worker	2	2
Other	<u>7</u>	<u>7</u>
	<u>9</u>	<u>9</u>

No employees received remuneration in excess of £60,000

13 Fixed Assets

	Freehold Property	Equipment	Total
	£	£	£
COST			
At 1 January 2024	90,000	86,149	176,149
Additions	333,642	0	333,642
Disposals	(90,000)	0	(90,000)
At 31 December 2024	<u>333,642</u>	<u>86,149</u>	<u>419,791</u>
DEPRECIATION			
At 1 January 2024	0	74,733	74,733
Charge for the year	0	4,838	4,838
Disposals	0	0	0
At 31 December 2024	<u>0</u>	<u>79,571</u>	<u>79,571</u>
NET BOOK VALUE			
At 31 December 2024	<u>333,642</u>	<u>6,578</u>	<u>340,220</u>
At 31 December 2023	<u>90,000</u>	<u>11,416</u>	<u>101,416</u>

Note:

The property held at 31 December 2023, being 161 Dudley Street was sold in 2024 (see note 10)
A property at 18 Hartland Avenue was purchased during 2024.

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL PARISH OF CHRIST CHURCH, BEDFORD

A total of £30,000 has been awarded by The Diocese of St Albans to be paid in equal annual instalments to cover the term of the employment contract which commenced in June 2024. The remaining amounts of £20,000 are expected to be received in equal instalments in June 2025 and June 2026. Included in above is £10,000 of debtors to be received after more than one year.

15 Monies raised for others

During the year the following monies were collected for external organisations

	31-Dec-24	31-Dec-23
	£	£
Staff leaving gifts	0	435
Christmas Appeals	70	543
Bedford foodbank	260	90
Bishop's Harvest appeal	0	634
Tearfund	326	239
Bibles for youth	440	0
Beds & Herts Historic Churches Trust	0	0
Other	0	583
	<u>1,096</u>	<u>2,524</u>

A total of £373 was held as at 31 December 2024 (£984 31 December 2023)
These are included in other creditors in note 15.

16 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	31-Dec-24	31-Dec-23
	£	£
Hall Redevelopment	0	57,252
Other creditors	5,120	6,606
Deferred income	10,000	0
Loan to purchase curate's house (see note 10)	0	55,679
	<u>15,120</u>	<u>119,537</u>

Amounts included in other creditors include sums as shown in note 14

17 Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year

	31-Dec-24	31-Dec-23
	£	£
Deferred income	10,000	0
	<u>10,000</u>	<u>0</u>

The income relates to the grant due to be received from the Diocese of St Albans covering a three year time period from 2024 - 2027.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS for the year ended 31 December 2024

18 Related parties

The Diocese of St Albans is a related party by way of the constitution

Details of receipts from related parties are found in note 20

Details of payments to related parties are found in notes 21

The Diocese of St Albans also loaned £160,000 at an interest rate of 3.5% during 2024 during 2024 that was fully repaid during the year. Interest of £660 was charged

19 Fund reconciliation - 2024

Unrestricted funds

	Balance at 01-Jan-24 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers £	Balance at 31-Dec-24 £
General fund	146,167	596,999	(510,776)	152,566	384,956
Designated funds - repairs to church	20,000				20,000
Unrestricted house reserve	34,321			(34,321)	0
	<u>200,488</u>	<u>596,999</u>	<u>(510,776)</u>	<u>118,245</u>	<u>404,956</u>

Of the general fund £333,642 relates to the ownership of 18 Hartland Avenue and can only be accessed in the event of its sale.

Restricted funds

	Balance at 01-Jan-24 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers £	Balance at 31-Dec-24 £
Vicar's discretionary fund	4,419	494	(412)		4,501
Youth and Student Minister	12,500	10,000	(16,862)		5,638
New Curate's house	17,215	99,780		(116,995)	0
Halls Redevelopment funds	273	0	(273)		0
Holiday at Home	1,250	0	0	(1,250)	0
Total restricted	<u>35,657</u>	<u>110,274</u>	<u>(17,547)</u>	<u>(118,245)</u>	<u>10,139</u>

The New Curate's House at 18 Hartland Avenue was purchased in 2024, and the income raised to fund the purchase has been transferred to general funds. The PCC do not consider Holiday at Home to be a restricted fund and this has been transferred to general funds.

	Unrestricted funds 31-Dec-24 £	Restricted funds 31-Dec-24 £	Total 31-Dec-24 £
Fixed assets	340,220		340,220
Cash and current investments	54,512	10,377	64,889
Other current assets	15,106	20,000	35,106
Creditors: amounts due in less than one year	-4,882	-10,238	-15,120
Creditors: amounts due in more than one year	0	-10,000	-10,000
	<u>404,956</u>	<u>10,139</u>	<u>415,095</u>

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL PARISH OF CHRIST CHURCH, BEDFORD

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS for the year ended 31 December 2024

20 INCOME

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 31-Dec-24 £	Total Funds 31-Dec-23 £
Income from Donations and Legacies				
Standing orders & Envelope Scheme	198,410		198,410	189,033
Legacies	0		0	1,000
Income tax reclaimed	42,930	14,875	57,805	48,437
New curate's house		84,905	84,905	15,211
Other donations	10,659	494	11,153	34,289
	<u>251,999</u>	<u>100,274</u>	<u>352,273</u>	<u>287,970</u>
Note - included above are the following amounts given by trustees				
Unrestricted			41,220	30,380
Restricted			4,000	
Total			<u>45,220</u>	<u>30,380</u>
Income from charitable activities				
Rental income	36,754		36,754	44,326
Social & Youth Events	26,977		26,977	43,540
Grants from related party	250	10,000	10,250	0
Morning Out receipts	2,463		2,463	2,406
Lunch Club Receipts	1,034		1,034	1,423
Fees	1,266		1,266	920
Sundry receipts	1,955		1,955	891
	<u>70,699</u>	<u>10,000</u>	<u>80,699</u>	<u>93,506</u>
Income from other trading activities				
Income from solar panels	6,780		6,780	5,723
	<u>6,780</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>6,780</u>	<u>5,723</u>
Income from investment				
Deposit interest	939	0	939	444
Other income - gain on sale of 161 Dudley Street	<u>266,582</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>266,582</u>	<u>0</u>
TOTAL INCOME	<u>596,999</u>	<u>110,274</u>	<u>707,273</u>	<u>387,643</u>

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL PARISH OF CHRIST CHURCH, BEDFORD

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS for the year ended 31 December 2024

21 Resources spent		Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds 31-Dec-24	Total Funds 31-Dec-23
	<i>Notes</i>	£	£	£	£
Grants					
Mission and charitable giving		24,896	0	24,896	25,218
Other donations		0	412	412	818
		24,896	412	25,308	26,036
Directly relating to Church Ministry					
Parish share - payment Diocese		154,063		154,063	147,512
Clergy & staff expenses		2,594		2,594	1,291
Housing costs		5,297		5,297	2,296
Services including music		5,660		5,660	4,723
Telephones		1,607		1,607	1,468
Books		222		222	243
Explorers, Holiday Club & Youth Work		5,026		5,026	4,553
Training		0		0	0
Morning Out		744		744	1,583
Lunch Club		926		926	503
Holiday at Home			0	0	60
Outreach (including social events)		26,853		26,853	41,570
Sundries		2,418		2,418	3,861
Interest payable		1,981		1,981	5,083
		207,391	0	207,391	214,746
Church management and administration					
Heat and light		12,389		12,389	15,195
Insurance		3,407		3,407	2,596
Cleaning Materials		3,610		3,610	4,380
Church and property maintenance		8,550	0	8,550	9,470
Equipment - not capitalised		1,905		1,905	0
Hall Redevelopment		0	272	272	0
Salaries and wages		72,470	16,862	89,332	79,857
Printing, postage and stationery		1,513		1,513	1,948
Other		1,427		1,427	1,956
Depreciation		4,838		4,838	5,068
		110,109	17,134	127,243	120,470
Support/Governance Costs		2,940		2,940	1,620
Finance charge from loan repayment		165,440	0	165,440	0
TOTAL RESOURCES SPENT		510,776	17,547	528,323	362,873

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL PARISH OF CHRIST CHURCH, BEDFORD

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS for the year ended 31 December 2024

22 DETAILS OF MISSION AND CHARITABLE GIVING

	General £	Restricted £	Total 31-Dec-24 £	Total 31-Dec-23 £
OVERSEAS				
SIM (supporting the Deneufchâtel's)	3,208	0	3,208	2,730
Gayet (work in Belgium)	6,948	0	6,948	6,300
Operation Mobilisation	500	0	500	0
Mission Direct	2,098	0	2,098	0
Open Doors	0	0	0	500
Egypt EDA	0	0	0	500
Frontiers (supporting Bradleys)	0	0	0	4,925
Samuti - interfaith helpers	0	0	0	175
Friends of Johannesburg Bible College	1,508	0	1,508	1,100
Neno Macadamia fund	500	0	500	500
Malawi Orphan fund	1,448	0	1,448	1,050
Tearfund	0	0	0	500
	16,210	0	16,210	18,280
HOME				
Bedford Area Schools Christian Support Trust	6,768	0	6,768	5,403
King's Arms Project - Bedford	500	0	500	0
Bedford Street Angels	50	0	50	50
Bedford Foodbank	710	0	710	500
SMART	500	0	500	0
Hope Bedfordshire	0	0	0	100
Christians Against Poverty	0	0	0	0
Other specific giving	158	0	158	885
	8,686	0	8,686	6,938
Total Mission	24,896	0	24,896	25,218
OTHER				
Other donations	0	412	412	818
	0	412	412	818
TOTAL MISSION GIVING	24,896	412	25,308	26,036

Note: Mission giving was set at 10% of General Gifts in 2024 (2023: 10%)

VICAR'S REPORT

At the beginning of 2024 we looked at Jesus' words from John 13:35:

'By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.' (NIVUK)

As I reflect upon 2024 I have seen countless examples of this love being demonstrated, whether feeding the hungry, giving water to the thirsty, sitting with those who are mourning or rejoicing with those who are rejoicing. There was plenty to celebrate at Christ Church in 2024.



'By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.'

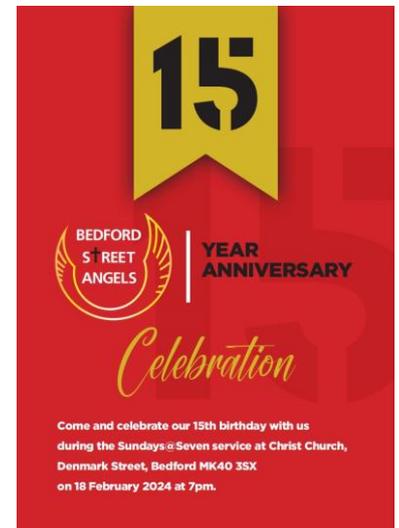
Two of the more significant things for us were Rev Ben Williams joining us as Curate and Hannah Applegarth joining us as Youth & Student Minister. A lot of hard work and preparation went into that. The way in which they have integrated into Christ Church and elevated our missional presence in the community is something I am not sure I imagined even in my wildest dreams. It is a blessing to serve alongside them and you in sharing the good news of Jesus in our community in word and deed. We are in a privileged position with our Staff Team, all of them play such an integral part in keeping the good ship CCB sailing.

Two moments jump out at me when thinking about 2024. The first was the Children & Family BBQ which took place in September. We saw so many people from the community come and be blessed with free food, games, bouncy castles and conversations. We saw miraculous answers to prayer with a thunderstorm stopping exactly when our event began. And the cherry on the cake was the quote from Clara age 3 - "best BBQ ever!"

The other was having Bedford Street Angels attend our Sunday @ Seven service back in February to celebrate 15 years of faithful service within Bedford. Our evening congregation doubled in size and we worshipped Jesus with gusto, we were encouraged with stories of ordinary people being Christ to our wider community.

Our vision statement talks about us being Transformed by Love, Seeking to Serve, and Experiencing Hope. In small ways and big ways I have seen this taking place. As with all of life, at times it has been tough. There has been much sadness and tough times. But we have seen the body of Christ care for one another, love one another, be with one another. I look forward to seeing what God has in store for us in 2025 as we continue to grow in our love for God and love for our neighbour.

Rev David Thomas, Vicar



THE ANNUAL REPORT UNDER SECTION 50 OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL JURISDICTION AND CARE OF CHURCHES MEASURE 2018 AND BUILDINGS IMPACT GROUP REPORT

Membership: David Thomas (vicar and chair), Vandon Grimley (Site Manager), Martin Hamilton (secretary), Rachel Bennett, Pat Davies, James Roe, Andrew Russell (Church Warden), Helen Ryan (until December 2024).

Maintenance programme:

- A key responsibility of the Building Impact Group (BIG) is to carry out routine maintenance, and statutory building and ground-related tasks. There are a diverse set of jobs undertaken, from organ

tuning, electrical and boiler inspections, plumbing and lightning conductor checks through to ensuring we are adhering to Health and Safety Legislation.

- Helen Ryan has done an excellent job in formalising our routine maintenance programme, allowing planning and budgeting to be done each year. With Helen stepping down from BIG we are now considering how to manage the maintenance programme in the most efficient manner. We would like to express our thanks to Helen for the dedication she has shown to this role.
- The biggest maintenance issue this year was the repeated failure of the boiler system, which resulted in periods when the church building was without heat. Replacement of control system components required significant expenditure, but we now have a heating system which seems to be robust.
- We have recently completed the 5-yearly electrical safety inspection of the church buildings.

Quinquennial Inspection:

The Quinquennial Inspection was carried out by MDP Architects in November 2023 and the report received in February 2024. The report covers the main church building, the halls and grounds. Of the recommendations made in the report, all of the actions requiring prompt attention have been carried out. These included the electrical inspection mentioned above, the stabilisation of the wall near the vicarage car park and other, smaller jobs.

The remaining work to be completed on the church is more substantial and will require significant investment. Much of it is concerning the integrity of the roof of the main church building. A task force has been set up to assess the work required to be done and put together a proposal for how it can be carried out in the most cost-effective manner. The task force is aiming to deliver its proposal to the PCC by the Autumn of 2025.

Archdeacon's Inspection:

Our annual Archdeacon's inspection was carried out in August 2024 by Sheila Bissell, Warden at St Andrew's. Once again, the inspection report was very positive, and Sheila was particularly impressed with the depth of our Mission Action Plan and the wide range of activities that happen at CCB. She also commented on the quality of our vision and how this had shaped our new management structure.

All the paperwork and required certificates were in order and readily available, for which our Church Administrator was highly commended.



Curate's House:

In 2024, we took possession of 18 Hartland Avenue in time for the arrival of our new curate, Ben Williams, and family. Thanks to Vandon and several volunteers, the property was decorated and made ready for occupation by the summer of 2024. Some residual issues with plumbing, the boiler and a squirrel infestation took a while to sort out, and we are grateful for the Williams' patience with this. But most things are now working as they should, and 18 Hartland Avenue is part of the on-going maintenance programme which BIG oversees.

Insurance:

Our insurance provider is Trinitas. BIG and the Resource Impact Group work to ensure that all aspects of our insurance policy are in good order.

Policies:

BIG ensures the following policies are kept up to date:

1. Health and Safety (updated and approved by PCC in 2024)

2. Fire/Emergency Evacuation: we continue to refine this. In 2024 we updated the Assistant Wardens handbook to include the current evacuation procedure.
3. Food and Environmental Health (Kitchen)
4. Electrical safety and PAT testing
5. Lettings policy

Additional Buildings Matters:

Site Management – Thank you to Vandon for all the work he does behind the scenes keeping the church centre running.

Cleaning – Richard Heathfield and Wendy Pegg continue to work diligently to ensure the buildings are kept clean. Thank you.

Gardens – various church members and neighbours assist with caring for the gardens. Our thanks goes to all who help with this.

Kitchens – Thank you to Gillian Lindley who oversees the operation of the kitchens and ensures that all food spaces are kept clean and healthy.

Conclusion:

We are grateful for the facilities that we have under our care and praise God for the way in which our buildings are used by so many different groups, both from the local community as well as the church family. We are thankful for the many people who volunteer their time to keep the church site and halls in good working order. We look forward to our buildings being used even more for the building of God's Kingdom.

Kay Berrington and Andrew Russell (Churchwardens), David Thomas (Chair of Buildings Impact Group)

SAFEGUARDING REPORT

The Safeguarding Team comprises of :-

Pauline Carter – Parish Safeguarding Officer(PSO); Helen Ryan – Deputy PSO; Pauline Grimley – Church Administrator; Vikki Thomas – Vicars PA; Ruth Hulme- Children's Minister; Hannah Applegarth – Youth and Student Minister.

In 2024, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, resigned days after a damning Report into the prolific child abuser, John Smyth, associated with the Church of England. In his resignation statement Justin Welby said 'the Makin Report exposed the long conspiracy of silence about the heinous abuses of Smyth.' Welby reports to have felt overwhelmed by the vast number of abuse cases and other duties, to manage at that time.

The Church must learn from this review and implement robust safeguarding procedures, to be vigilant whilst moving forward with love and fellowship in our church families. Please consider this context when you are requested to complete training for your role. Training requirements for persons in recognised roles within the Church changed significantly in January 2025 and the team respond in a timely way to ensure that the church family are safeguarded with all our children's workers now having additional training.

The team meet on alternate months and report to each PCC meeting. CCB have continued to utilise the Parish Safeguarding Dashboard. This is a tool to measure our safeguarding compliance and required actions



**MAKIN
LEARNING
LESSONS
REVIEW**

which is regularly attached to PCC reports. We have worked together to ensure that DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checks are undertaken and have responded to all safeguarding issues within CCB by reporting concerns to the vicar and the diocese safeguarding team where necessary.

Pauline Carter, Parish Safeguarding Lead

DEANERY SYNOD

Bedford Deanery Synod met three times in 2024. At each meeting there was an opportunity to hear of the work of the wider church, for example, General Synod, Diocesan Synod, Diocesan Board of Finance, Deanery Standing Committee and safeguarding. At each Deanery Synod meeting, there is also a focus for discussion, often based on a presentation.

March: Diocesan Dispute Advisory Service. The service believes that making peace is intrinsic to the gospel of Jesus Christ. They provide a safe place for anyone in a church community to bring conflicts and problems that occur in a church setting. They might be in conflict with someone else, maybe over roles, responsibilities, management of change or reorganisation; or over differences of belief and worship. There might be issues of discrimination, harassment, abuse of authority or bullying. It is supported by the Diocese but is independent of it:

June: Diocesan Racial Justice Action Group. Roy Lambert explained that the diocese is looking to embed diversity and racial justice in the life and practice of our churches and local communities. The role of the action group is to ensure that racial justice is practiced, protected, supported, developed, and monitored. The question was asked *What can deaneries & parishes do to embed justice in our churches and communities?* and a wide and varied discussion followed.



October: Impact (Bedfordshire Area Schools Christian Support Trust). Becky Guynn and Jane Spencer highlighted the work of the charity. They spoke of how they are reaching around 60 schools, and speaking to over 500 children through assemblies and over 400 through prayer spaces. They challenged Synod members to consider whether they could volunteer in schools through Impact, or to be a Church Champion, raising the profile of Impact in their churches.

Christ Church Deanery Synod Representatives: Rachel Bennett, Margaret Cottenden, Pip Francis, Martin Hamilton, David Thomas and Ben Williams

PASTORAL CARE IMPACT GROUP

The primary focus of the Pastoral Care Impact Group this year has continued to be on encouraging us to be a community of people who – informally and relationally - “look out for each other”, noticing who is (not) around and actively promoting each other’s wellbeing and flourishing. Our aim is that everyone should feel welcomed, included and valued. Home Groups are a great context for this to happen but this year we have been particularly working on how best to look out for those who don’t belong to one, starting with those who usually come to our services and moving on to those who – for a variety of reasons – are rarely able to join us. The steady stream of stories of how well “one-anothering” is working out for many is heartening and encouraging, while the occasional less happy tale reminds us not to be complacent and provokes us to keep going.

Alan Cottenden Coordinator of the Pastoral Care Impact Group

HOME GROUPS REPORT

Home Groups continue to play a central role in the life of Christ Church, offering a space for discipleship, prayer, and pastoral care throughout the week. We are so grateful to our 14 Home Group leaders, who generously give their time and energy to serve others. Their role is vital, not only in leading study and prayer, but in creating community, encouraging faith, and supporting one another. One member wrote 'Home group is a fantastic way to get to know other people at Christ Church in a deeper way.' Another said 'The fellowship and encouragement I receive along with furthering my knowledge and understanding of God's word are a very important part of my walk with the Lord.'

This year, we launched a new rhythm of Home Group Leader gatherings, beginning with a breakfast in March. These termly meetings are designed to connect and encourage our leaders, and to create stronger two-way communication between Home Groups and church leadership. We want every member to feel they have a voice in church life, sharing ideas and feedback with leadership.

Over the past year, groups have walked together through joys and challenges, prayed faithfully for one another, welcomed newcomers, and explored God's Word in community. Our hope is that these groups will continue to deepen in friendship and faith.



We would love to hear from you if you would like to lead or join a group, please contact Katherine Davies (details on the Home Group noticeboard).

Katherine Davies Home Group Coordinator

ENGAGEMENT GROUP REPORT

Members: - Hannah Applegarth, Rachel Bennett, Kay Berrington [Chair], John Betteley, Michael Bishop, Cheryl Grint, Ruth Hulme, Sue Marshall, Kathy Priddin, Andrew Russell, Sue Templeman, Ben Williams.

The Engagement Group was formed in March 2024 to enable the CCB family...

- to obey Jesus' command to 'go forth and make disciples'
- to be 'salt and light' in the world we inhabit throughout the week.
- to pray that God will show us how to engage and grow our church community

The three main areas of focus are:

1. Engagement – actively engage with the community and share God's love with them.
2. Outreach - facilitate and encourage members of the Bedford community to become part of the CCB family and eventually find faith in God.
3. Fellowship - build stronger relationships within the CCB family so that we might grow in love for one another.

We completed number of surveys to establish views on what is already happening at CCB and what else people might find helpful. This is ongoing.

In order to get to know and build relationships with those in our community we held a community BBQ in September. We were particularly keen to invite the families who attend Morning Out [over 40 adults + children each week] and other groups held in our building. Despite heavy rain over 120 attended and extremely positive feedback was received verbally and via social media.



Mary Davies and her team led a very successful Bereavement Course from November to January which was greatly appreciated by those who attended. We facilitated a Parenting Course run by Triple P, in response to needs expressed by our Pre-school. Attendance was limited but those attending found it helpful.

Although we are no longer able to offer the fortnightly Lunch Club, the team were delighted to be able to invite seniors to a Special Christmas Lunch. Over 80 attended the delicious 3 course meal and enjoyed singing Christmas Carols accompanied by our Curate Ben.



Over the past year quite a number of new people have joined Christ Church which is wonderful. Instead of the usual Newcomers' Tea, to boost attendance, we decided to hold both a Newcomers' Lunch on 9th March and a Supper on 13th April. It appears that the change in timings and offering a meal has worked as over 43 new people attended and have been able to find out more about Christ Church and about how to get more involved.

The Engagement Group have supported numerous Children's, Youth, and other outreach church events e.g. Carols on the Lawn but details of these things are elsewhere in the report.

Kay Berrington, *Chair of Engagement Group*

MISSION IMPACT GROUP REPORT

Current membership: Steve Gardner (Chair), Sidney Miller, Gillian Lindley, Rosemary Phillips, Jon Day, Margaret Nurse and Wil Horwood.

Christ Church generously aims to allocate at least 10% of its congregation's general financial giving towards supporting mission and Christian charities.

At least 6/7ths of the MIG allocation goes towards supporting our Mission Partners, with whom we tend to have had longstanding relationships either directly or through members of Christ Church. We commit to supporting our Mission Partners through prayer and practical support and they keep us informed of their ongoing mission work and prayer needs. On the third Sunday of most months we have a mission slot at our 10.30am service at which we hear from a Mission Partner or a Christian Charity we have donated to. MIG also aims to encourage and support those in the congregation who want to explore a mission vocation.

Most of our Mission Partners operate overseas, but the exception is Impact, a small Bedford based Christian charity, which visits many primary schools in Bedfordshire taking assemblies, organizing RE workshops and lunch clubs, generally offering educational, pastoral and relational support. With only two members of staff, but with the support of up to 60 volunteers over a year, they achieve so much with limited resources.



Volunteer cast supported Impact's 2025 Easter Experience. Over 300 children and staff attended over 4 days.

During the year we welcomed Mission Direct as a new Mission Partner. Again, they are small in terms of staffing, but from the UK they provide short term mission opportunities for Christians in the UK whilst supporting longer term mission objectives of churches and Christian organisations in some of the poorest parts of the world.

YP and Jude continue to serve the youth of Nivelles, Belgium and the surrounding area, bringing young people to faith.

Hilary, based in France, is now a fully-fledged bible translation consultant for SIM and has spent the last year supporting a translation project in Benin, Africa; a country she knows well.

John & Jenny live in South Africa and John works for the Johannesburg Bible College training African Christians on how to use and understand the Bible. Christ Church gives financially to provide a bursary to support poorer students.

We continue to support the Home of Hope via the UK based Malawi Orphan Fund to which a large number of Christ Church members are affiliated and offer practical support. The Home is in Mchinji, Malawi and provides shelter, food, medical care, education, vocational training and love to over 750 orphaned children.

Further details and Mission Partner news can be found on the Christ Church website.

https://www.ccbedford.org/Groups/326695/World_Mission.aspx

Steve Gardner, Chair of Mission Impact Group

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE AND THEIR FAMILIES IMPACT GROUP (CYFIG)

Group members: Hannah Applegarth, Kay Berrington, Martin Hamilton, Ruth Hulme, Megan Oliver, Tom Rees and Martin Sweet (chair)

The group met 4 times between April 2024 and March 2025

An important task this year has been to amend and establish the group's Terms of Reference. Since Hannah and Ruth have both line manager and mentors this inevitably requires CYFIG to have a clear comprehension of its role and influence. The draft Terms of Reference were submitted and were unanimously approved by the PCC in their January 2025 meeting.

The most important aspect of the group's function is to support and encourage the youth and children's ministers on the staff without being directive or managerial. It is our hope that both Ruth and Hannah have benefited from the opportunity the group affords them to discuss and reflect on aspects of their work with sufficient input and ideas.

I will not comment specifically on the work of Hannah and Ruth since they have submitted detailed reports on their work to this APCM report.

The group would want to stress to the wider congregation, and not just parents, that CCB should appreciate and support these two skilled and professional workers, whose input goes well beyond what the church might expect. Many churches up and down the country struggle to get any salaried support for this essential front-line ministry within the church and especially to the wider community. Most of our church's traction with families beyond the church is down to the hard work of Ruth and Hannah.

Martin Sweet, Chair of Young People's Impact Group

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY REPORT

I am delighted to report on the growth and recent journey of the children's ministry at Christ Church. Children's church has grown significantly, data from the last 12 months shows that we now have on average 22 children across 3 groups on Sunday mornings which is an increase of 57% since 2021. Looking at an example of a Sunday in 2021 we had 8 children in Daring Disciples and 6 in Passports which would have been a total of 14 children in church. The impact of the 'faith at home' work that we delivered was not able to be measured numerically but the spiritual formation of the children in our church is founded on what they have done with their families at home since 2020 as well as the time they have spent in church as of late. The busiest weeks in Wonder have had 16 children and in Imagine 22 children. Our list of children who are on the children's register are 26 in Imagine, 28 in Wonder and 9 in Marvel and the three-group system is working to allow for further numerical growth.



The introduction of the three group children's church has had positive feedback from parents and carers who feel that their children are happier and safer in their groups as the space is now more suitable for their child's level of spatial awareness and reading or writing abilities. Some children have been keen to tell their friends about church and children have spread the message about how much they enjoy coming to church. Recently a child bounced into the group excitedly saying, "Are we learning a story about Jesus today?" and "Are we doing arts and crafts?" to both questions I could answer emphatically "yes!" to which he shouted "yay!" in return! The new playful approach to children's ministry has brought about a fresh enthusiasm for faith from children across the groups.

To sustain a 3-group system with increasing children's numbers, we now have a team of 21 leaders and helpers. We are encouraging the children to be in church with the adults for the first and last part of every service, whether that be Holy Communion or response and send or to be involved in all age services, because we are creating a ministry where the children are integrated into the wider church community and not a tag on to the main adult church.



Our children's church no longer follows to one curriculum provider. Instead, a guide sheet is created for leaders to plan from. This guide sheet links to the series in the main church service so families can discuss a similar theme at home. We have invested 6 months of the last year focusing on Dwell, a curriculum that actively engages kids in God's story using interactive games, reflective wondering, dramatic storytelling, and a whole lot of fun. The material in this curriculum aligns with experiential learning and to use a term from parenting for faith, it allows space for children to be "God-connected", perhaps sharing pictures, thoughts and prayers.

The 2024 summer holiday club was called Wonder World, and the content was planned from scratch as the planning team collated the themes, passages and activities specifically to meet the fringe families in our community. It was successful in fulfilling last year's aim which was to be a children's ministry of generosity, as we gave out fantastic prizes and amazing snacks! We are now into the swing of a new event called Jam Packed! We have hosted 3 jam packed mornings this year. Jam packed was created to offer the families at Morning Out, Little Fishes and Forge somewhere to go if they were not travelling on holiday but it also involves a clear Christian message and story from the Bible. It is like messy church, but we do not follow the messy church structure or vision, and the Jam-Packed Morning is an event rather than a fresh expression and includes games, crafts, songs and stories.



Events like the Pancake Party, Light Party and Jam-Packed Morning have been places that families from Morning Out, Little Fishes and Forge have met with families who regularly attend church. The numbers in these outreach groups are high and the numbers at the events mirrored this with equally great turnout. Morning Out has had 160 adults at MO since September '24. At Morning Out, we have been *reading The Play Along Bible* by Bob Hartman which is a book of action stories, and these give a nugget of Christian content to community families. Forge has been a committed group of 8-12 children who are now following a programme called BOLT which is mixes life skills with Bible discussion. Recently they have built a bug hotel outside of church, learnt how to make cookies and discussed the science behind Jesus' walking on water. Last week as they were doing bubble painting one child said, "my mum never lets me do stuff like this at home". All year Forge has offered children opportunities to play that they wouldn't get at home and skills that they wouldn't learn at school.



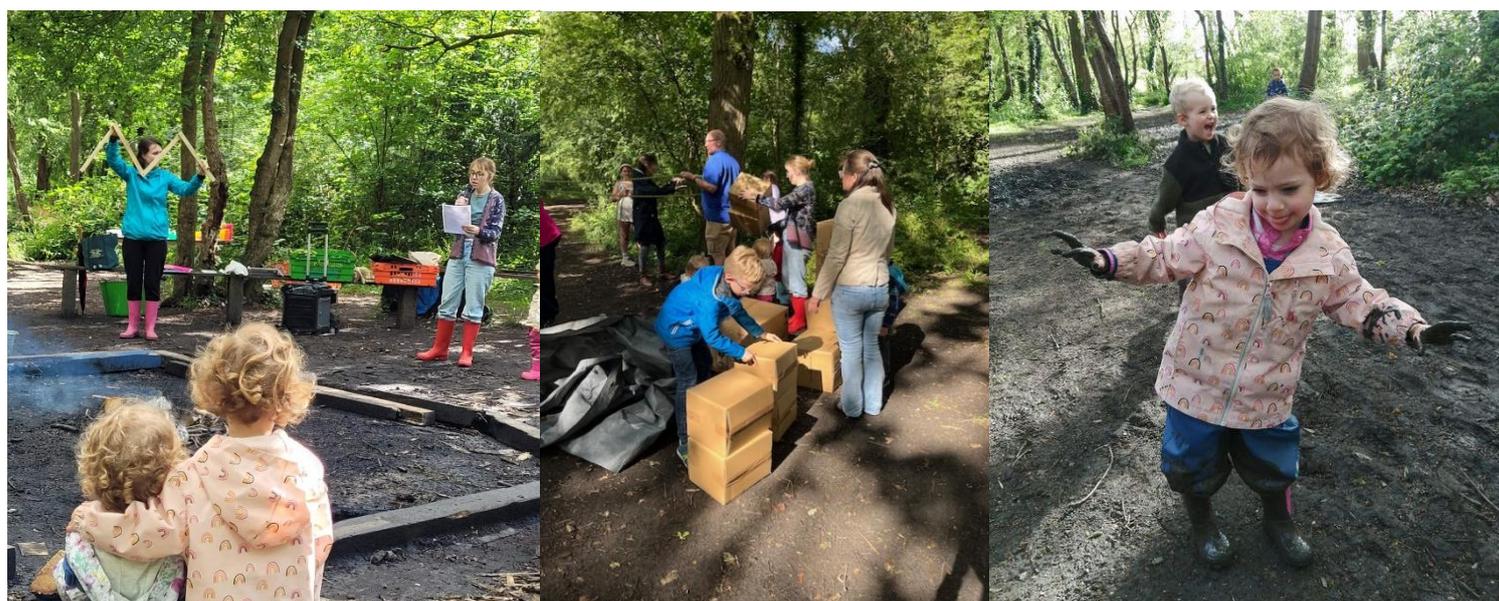
Little Fishes has developed into a space that is a sanctuary for parents and carers of new babies and little movers to refresh themselves. The group now meets in the main church, which shows parents that the support we offer is Christian, prayerful, and spiritual. We now have singing time with a guitar, a puppet called Sam who does a thought for the day, a prayer post box and delicious café drinks. The aim of this group is not to grow in number, but to encourage deeper conversations and meet spiritual and practical needs of parents and carers who come for the refreshing space.

Our work with Impact continues to be strong, this year I was blessed to help plan and take part in Religious Education workshops in schools across Bedford about the Holy Trinity. The Christmas and Easter

experience gave Christ Church the chance to meet and build up other Christians in Bedford as we brought the stories to life in costume for children who visited St John's church. We also led two terms of Values club in Castle Newnham School, and Year 2 from Castle Newnham visited us in November 2024 for an interactive morning all about Advent and the significance of artefacts in our church. We are in the early stages of exploring coaching programmes for children and this may be something we pursue in the next year to continue our commitment to supporting the local school.



At Wild church this year we experienced fellowship outdoors as we told many of Jesus' parables with activities from trails and stepping stones to gathering around an outdoor banqueting table. The fresh air, the rustling of the trees and the laughter from the children sums up an average wild church gathering, and the outdoor space at Leslie Sell Activity Centre was worthwhile even for the small group that met monthly.



The children's plans for the year ahead include three-point approach to push worship outdoors. Wild Church; Rise and Shine (an outdoor toddler group), and outdoor Children's events (e.g. Pancake Olympics rather than indoors pancake parties) are the three streams in which the outdoor work will happen. The triple pronged outdoor plan is a bid to battle rising rates of isolation and mental health struggles. A fuller explanation of the children's vision is expected to be presented to PCC in summer 2025. The plan will allow space for the children's community to be invigorating, vibrant and Christ-centred. In the coming year, the children's team focus comes from John 10:10 *'I have come that they may have life and have it to the full.'* In the hope that we are enabling children to know that through Christ they can *'laugh without fear of the future'*, finding joy and fulfilment in living together in community.

Ruth Hulme, Children's Minister

YOUTH AND STUDENT MINISTRY REPORT

Internal Youth

Friday Night Youth

Our Friday Night youth ministry is thriving! We consistently welcome 25 young people, supported by nine dedicated youth team volunteers – including three who joined us since June.

During the summer holidays, we hosted three fantastic socials: a rounders game in the park, a film night, and an exciting trip to Box End Water Park. These events not only provided a great time for our youth and team but also offered a welcoming space for parents to connect with each other and our staff.



The autumn term has kicked off with a series of engaging events. Highlights include a Last Supper-themed escape room organized by Scripture Union and a creative Taskmaster event planned and led by our very own Pip. And a Silent Disco held on the 31st October. We are also delighted to welcome young people from Three Rivers Church, who have been warmly embraced by our group.



Looking ahead, we're excited to announce a new initiative. On March 7th, we'll launch a Youth Small Group that will replace Friday Night Youth on the first Friday of every month. This group is designed specifically for our regular Friday Night attendees, grouping them into consistent



pastoral groups led by the same dedicated youth team members each month. These sessions will kick off with the new Youth Alpha Course.



The Youth Alpha Course will also coincide with our upcoming Youth Weekend Away from July 11th to 13th at the Frontier Centre. During this weekend, our Friday Night Youth Team will guide sessions covering the material for the Youth Alpha Away Day, offering an excellent opportunity for spiritual growth, fellowship, and fun.

Our Friday Night Youth group helped to decorate the windows for Christmas. Our Christmas windows are an idea created by Laura Turpie and is a great way to reach our community and share the Christmas story in an accessible and subtle way. Within this our young people also helped pack 200 Christmas cards that went out to our parish.

Sunday Morning Youth

Our group has recently rebranded from JTeam to Sunday Morning Youth—a change made by the young people themselves, who felt that the old name no longer captured their identity. We continue to follow the sermon series at church, which adds a meaningful context to our meetings.

During the summer, our young people dedicated time to blessing both our community and congregation. This included a local park litter pick, helping to care for our environment, and a cupcake decorating



activity, adding a personal touch to our church refreshments. These acts of service were a great way for them to give back and grow in their sense of community.

Since the change, we've seen an encouraging boost in attendance, with an average of eleven young people joining us each week. Additionally, we're integrating valuable tools from Parenting for Faith,

following a training course they led last year, to further enrich our discussions and spiritual growth.



During our Carols on the lawn service our young people attended to help with refreshments and be a point of information for those attending, including holding QR codes and handing out orders of services. The young people also helped out greatly during our All age nativity service, where they played characters in the nativity as well as helping to narrate the service.



In January, we ran a Skills and Worship Workshop, giving our young people the chance to explore different serving roles within the church while being mentored by members of our amazing worship team. As a result, some have now joined our Sunday AV and Sound rota, stepping into new areas of ministry and service.

Youth @ 6

Youth @ 6 is our new discipleship group for students in school years 10-13. Launched in October and co-led by Richard Lindley and myself, the group creates a warm, informal space for spiritual growth and community connection. Each meeting kicks off with a meal prepared by a member of our congregation, followed by an engaging Bible discussion, and culminates in our joint attendance at the Sunday @ 7 service.



We began our journey with the "VOX" course from Christianity Explored, which resonated well with the young people and provided our team with valuable insights into each individual's faith journey. In February, we introduced a series on relationships, directly addressing the needs expressed by both our young people and their parents.



The group has become a safe space for honest, open discussion, and it's been truly encouraging to witness the growth in both faith and confidence among the participants. Many now regularly attend our evening service—even on weeks when Youth @ 6 isn't scheduled—and they're actively sharing feedback, which has been delightful to see

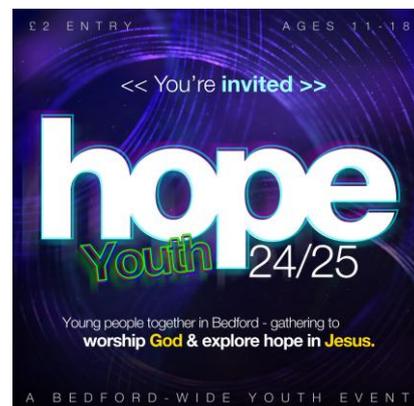
During our Christmas events the young people who attend Youth @ 6 were crucial to the planning, preparation and running of our contemporary Christmas service. The young people ran two stations and received high praise from members who attended about their conduct and presence. They also came in after school to help prepare all the material. And then finally helped serve refreshments after the service. They were a vital component to how amazing this service was. During the carols by Candlelight Service the young people also took part in the 'lessons'.

External Youth

Hope event

Last year, we hosted two Hope events—gatherings designed to bring young people from across Bedfordshire together for an evening of food, games, worship, and discussion. These events provide a fantastic opportunity for young people to build friendships, grow in their faith, and connect with the wider Christian community.

Hope events are a collaborative effort, with responsibilities shared between Christ Church, Three Rivers, All Nations, and Bromham Baptist. They take place once a term, creating a regular space for young people to come together in a fun and faith-filled environment.



The November event was particularly well attended, drawing young people from churches across Bedfordshire. It was encouraging to see such enthusiasm and engagement, and we're excited to continue building on this momentum in the year ahead.

Students

At the start of the academic year, we hosted a Student Welcome Event attended by students from the University of Bedfordshire.



The event was a great success, sparking interest in our 18-30s house group and services. Working closely with our 18-30s Pioneer, Laura Jewell, we ensured a smooth transition for these students into our church community—so much so that one student has even been warmly welcomed into a family within our congregation.



Ben Williams also represented our church at the university's freshers' fairs, where he creatively handed out free cans of baked beans featuring our church's information. This fun approach not only caught the students' attention but also encouraged further engagement with our ministry.

In addition, I've been attending the university every Friday to run a wellbeing hub for the students. This hub provides a relaxed, supportive space where students can take a break from academic pressures, connect with peers, and access practical resources for managing stress and personal challenges. The sessions include casual drop-ins as well as more structured support opportunities.

Hannah Applegarth, Youth and Student Minister

18–30s MINISTRY REPORT

Our 18–30s group has continued to grow and thrive over the past year. We've been encouraged to welcome a few new members into the community, which has brought fresh energy and connection.

We've maintained our rhythm of meeting weekly as a Homegroup, providing a consistent space for fellowship, prayer, and spiritual growth. Recently, we completed the Disciple course together, which sparked some deep and meaningful conversations about faith and what it means to follow Jesus in our everyday lives.

In addition to our weekly gatherings, we've kept up a pattern of monthly socials—these have been a great way to deepen friendships and invite new people in. Highlights have included scenic walks, relaxed brunches, and a competitive round of crazy golf.

Looking ahead, we're excited about the possibility of going away together to Big Church Festival later this year. We hope it will be a time of fun, worship, and strengthening our bonds as a group.

As some of you know I have stepped down from my role as the 18–30s pioneer. I'm so thankful for all that God has done in and through this group so please pray for wisdom and guidance for the next steps as we seek what God has in store moving forward.

Laura Jewell 18-30s pioneer (until 30 April 2025)

WORSHIP IMPACT GROUP

Sung worship will always be a big part of the life of the church, as we offer our thanks and praise to God in song.

So here are our most sung songs at the 10.30am and 7pm services:

10.30am	7pm
IN THE DARKNESS WE WERE WAITING (King of kings - Ligertwood)	WHO AM I THAT THE HIGHEST KING (Who you say I am - Fielding & Morgan)
A THOUSAND GENERATIONS (Holy forever - Johnson et al)	WORTHY OF EVERY SONG (Build My Life - Younker)
O LORD MY GOD WHEN I IN AWESOME WONDER (How Great Thou Art - Hine)	IN THE DARKNESS WE WERE WAITING (King of kings - Ligertwood)
STRENGTH WILL RISE (Everlasting God - Brown & Riley)	THERE'S NOTHING WORTH MORE (Holy Spirit – Torwalt)
MY HOPE IS BUILT ON NOTHING LESS (Cornerstone - Mote, Liljero et al)	I LOVE YOU LORD (Goodness of God - Fielding et al)
WHAT GIFT OF GRACE (Yet not I but through Christ in me - Robinson)	YOU ARE HERE (Way Maker - Egbu)
THE SPLENDOUR OF THE KING (Tomlin, Reeves & Cash)	YOU LEAD ME OUT UPON THE WATERS (Oceans - Houston et al)

GOD WHO MADE THE UNIVERSE (God's Love is Big - Parry)	ALL MY WORDS FALL SHORT (Gratitude - Hastings et al)
I CAST MY MIND TO CALVARY (O Praise The Name - Hastings)	I SPEAK THE NAME OF JESUS (God of possible - Spencer et al)
YOUR GRACE IS ENOUGH (This is Our God - Morgan)	THERE'S A GRACE THAT COMES (Real thing - James)

Every quarter I receive a spreadsheet listing out the songs we are singing, I find this very exciting, partly because I love a good spreadsheet, but also because it speaks of God and the truths we are declaring week by week.

As always a huge thank you to the vast number of volunteers who serve and enable us to worship week by week, from the words on the screens, to the sound in the speakers, to the live stream and to the musicians and singers. Without them, our sung worship would be greatly diminished.

David Thomas, Chair of Worship Impact Group

COMMUNICATIONS IMPACT GROUP REPORT

Current members: - Rachel Day and Simon Berrington (chair).

A big thank you to Pauline for her work on the website, magazine and other areas related to communications during the year.

Simon Berrington, Chair of Communications Impact Group

RESOURCING IMPACT GROUP REPORT

Current Members: Ian Brown, Ewan McAdam Keith Priddin, Chris Stevens, David Thomas and Richard Lindley

RIG's remit is to consider how to resource the work of the church. The work covers the finances of the church, but RIG also seeks to ensure best value for contracts with suppliers, and other areas where resources can be better used. RIG also seeks to encourage the members of the Church to think about giving (time, talents and treasure), and to be responsible stewards of all that God has given us, both as individuals and corporately.

RIG has a substantial number of routine monthly and annual tasks - examples being reviewing accounts and setting budgets but also ensuring that we also undertake regular reviews of costs to ensure that they are minimised.

Above all we want to support the Church in using our resources for God's glory.

Richard Lindley, Chair Resourcing Impact Group

CHRIST CHURCH PRESCHOOL REPORT

We are receiving enquiries on a daily basis, often from recommendations which further confirms how well our team are doing under the guidance of Paula, our Preschool Manager. She continues to have an amazing relationship with the families and has been a huge support to our new parents. Staff continue to

go over and above for the children in our care. There are further needs both in terms of family support and for the children. The new funding availability has seen an increase in 2-year-old applications which means there is no longer just a termly intake as parents can now start their children as soon as they have turned 2 if they are entitled to the working family funding rather than waiting until the term after their 2nd or 3rd birthdays. So, after an initial slow start we are nearly at capacity for most sessions again with more children still to be added. This is a huge challenge for all involved, including the children and parents due to them being so young.

Fundraising efforts at Christmas and kind donations from parents have seen us raise over £300 which we used to buy new resources for the children. We are also signed up to the Easyfunding website which allows supporters such as parents and staff to sign up and whenever they make any online purchases a donation is given to the Preschool. We continue to look into grants to expand and improve our outdoor area and hope to secure Funding this year and start work.

Spring at Christ Church Preschool is always such a lovely experience, brighter days with an early sprinkling of summer weather just before we break up for the Easter Holidays.



The children have experienced some lovely creative activities since the start of the year. Revisiting Christmas, celebrating the Nativity and celebrations at home. Shrove Tuesday with yummy pancakes to eat and a pancake race! Making bird feeders, Transport week, Chinese New Year.

Spring on the farm which has led into our lovely spring weather and the new life. St. Patrick's Day and beautifully created cards for Mothering Sunday, with lots of preparation for the Easter Bonnet bonanza!

Parents and family were invited to join the pre-school family in the Church where the children will be showing off their decorated bonnets and entertaining us all with some lovely songs and actions on the last day of term.

Kat Tuck, Preschool Administrator

CHRIST CHURCH HALLS REPORT

Commercial and Charitable Organisations and Individuals Hiring the Halls:

The start of 2024 was busy with many enquiries coming in for one off events. This continued throughout the year with over 50 single events taking place by the end of 2024. The majority of these were children's birthday parties. The variety of bouncy castles and other inflatable play equipment coming through the doors never ceases to amaze!

There were many companies, groups, organisations and individuals who hired the rooms on an irregular basis. Rooms were hired for meetings, workshops and training events.

Our regular hirers during 2024 included Preschool, Brownies, Song Squad, First Class Learning (tuition provider) Pilates, juggling club, a self-help support group, Dance4all over 60's exercise group and a boxing training company.



We were pleased to welcome some new regular hirers during the year. The Lott Dance and Wellbeing group joined us on Monday evenings and a new independent counsellor also joined us

The local jazz trio and a dance group found the space ideal for rehearsals. Music and dance performances and concerts also took place both in the halls and the church. Over the Summer the halls remained busy with one of the regular hirers using the downstairs halls to run a 2-week holiday club.

It is wonderful to see what a blessing the halls are to local families and organisations who find the space here ideal for their activities. Again there were many repeat bookings and people continued to recommend us to their friends and family.

To the left is a photo of the halls through to the hub taken at an event.

Dawn Hire, Centre Bookings Administrator

BEDFORD FOOD BANK [BFB] / CHRIST CHURCH [CC] DISTRIBUTION CENTRE REPORT

“words cannot explain the terror I felt. I was running out of food and for many days I went without food, so my children had enough. Without the foodbank I don’t think I would be here today” [source unknown]

CC continues to be open every Tuesday, for clients, from 1p.m. – 3p.m. We continue with the same team of volunteers, made up of mainly CC members, but with other volunteers who are loyal to the team.

A member of Citizens Advice [CA], [formerly Citizens Advice Bureau {CAB}] attends every week. In a fast changing world, this enables the volunteers and clients to be given the most appropriate, and up to date support and advice. The CA advisors work closely with the clients, and will sign-post them to other organisations as appropriate and necessary – e.g. social services, GP, Debt support services etc.



2024: In Bedford Borough over 24,000 clients have been provided with essential food parcels – which also includes toiletries and extras e.g. bread, milk, fruit, eggs, vegetables and treats such as Easter Eggs etc.

Due to the ongoing work from CA, the clients coming to FB have dropped *slightly*. At CC we feed between 50 and 70 people each week, but with less people attending, this gives the opportunity to have time for ‘a cuppa and a chat’ with those clients who so wish.

Bedford FB is also making changes i.e. sending food crates directly to centres, such as SMART, where clients can pick up food etc. without having to go to a FB distribution centre.

STATS:

2022 19,606

2023 24,537

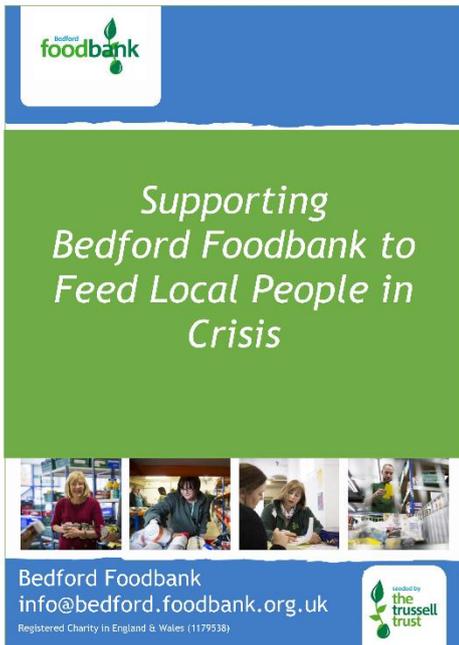
2024 24,258

This is down by 279 – but 1 person having to come to a food bank, is 1 too many

For Christmas 2024, CCFB supplied some ‘special extras’ for 5 families that were given Christmas hampers from CC – these are families who have children at Castle Newnham School, and staff asked us for support.

Developments:

Ben Williams [our curate]: now a fully trained BF volunteer, and we believe Ben is enjoying himself, particularly as he is getting behind the wheel of the FB Van! People may remember, when FB gave feedback on a Mission Sunday, Ben particularly mentioned that he feels engaging with the FB community is part of his curacy role.



Plastic Carrier Bags: Quote from management:

'We [BFB] have been purchasing 'bags for life' for the last 3 years at 5p per bag. In December 2024, our supplier informed us that the bags would be increasing to 30p per bag from January 2025'.

BFB are sourcing bags for 8p each and 6p for smaller ones. If anyone has used, but clean, strong bags – plastic, canvas, hessian etc. please put them in the FB Distribution box in the Hub. Our clients are rallying round and re-using their bags, but any donations would be gratefully received.

CC and BFB: are continually grateful for everyone's financial support, and for all the donations we receive on a weekly basis – e.g. food, nappies, cereals, sun cream, pots, pans, bedding to name but a few. [Please do ask for further information if needed].

Thank you to church office team, for supporting us when we're not there – we know anyone calling at church will be given the right support and information, till they can access a distribution centre.

Penny Cooper, Christ Church Foodbank Co-ordinator

LADIES' MINISTRY REPORT

Ladies Elevenses Time (LETs) / Come Together

All ladies are welcome to join us on the first Saturday of each month to enjoy a morning of friendship and blessing. This year we have heard talks from Almira Pasic, who spoke about her Warsaw prayer visit and from Gwyneth James and Sue Bradley who played some beautiful cello music and shared about their walk with Jesus. Ruth Janes and Gillian Lindley told us about their visit to Home of Hope, and in December we enjoyed a 'pop-up' playlet from Innkeepers wives in Bethlehem!

In June and January Ladies Elevenses joined with Men's Breakfast. In June we heard from Edwin and Peta Martin and in January several people shared their testimony. We also enjoyed the 'Bacon Butties'!!

As always, thanks go to all who enable our meetings to run so smoothly, including those serving in the kitchen and on the Welcome Desk, also to Ruth Janes who regularly brings her craft stall with all proceeds going to the Home of Hope.

Ladies Weekend Away



In October 30 ladies spent a wonderful weekend together at The Garden House in Stamford. It was a time of fun, food and fellowship. We were challenged by talks from Mhairi Brown and Sue Marshall and blessed by the worship led by Eilidh Brown and leading from Laura Jewell. The weekend was a real blessing to all.

Lesley Greenslade on behalf of the Ladies Ministry Team

MEN'S MINISTRIES REPORT

Men's Breakfast

Men's breakfast runs each month from 9:00 to 10:30am, normally on the fourth Saturday of the month. The pattern for the morning is to have breakfast and chat until approximately 10:00am and we then break away for a discussion about a topic relevant to men in Christ Church – this is led by different members of the group. We meet at Christ Church and numerous breakfast options are available with the most popular being the egg and/or bacon and/or sausage bap plus tea/coffee. Also available are cereal, toast, croissants, jam and orange juice. Veggie options available on request. If a favourite item is not listed please let us know so we can source it for the breakfasts.



A joint meeting with Ladies Elevenses is held twice a year. This is well attended and enjoyed by all and yes bacon butties are still available. Men's breakfast is a valuable time to build up friendships and develop support networks. Suggestions for topics for discussion are welcome. We would love to see more men join this group. Please do come along. See John Betteley for further information. A men's weekend away is planned for October 2025 – still time to sign up.



Men's Socials

Men's socials have been organised with visits to the rugby, Chinese food and curry nights. The socials in particular are excellent opportunities to invite friends to come along.. Suggestions for new social evenings/days are always welcome. Maybe we can see MK Dons next season. Please feel free to join us as you would be most welcome. See John Betteley for further information.

Left: Men's Social at Bedford Blues rugby afternoon.

John Betteley

WALKING GROUP REPORT

We are a friendly group that met on the 1st and 3rd Sunday of each month, in the hub at Christ Church at 2:30pm and set off for our walk after we have prayed. . Everyone is welcome to come. We usually split into strollers and striders. We walk locally or go further afield with a car share.

Last year we have been down to the Embankment , Putnoe Woods, the Harpur Suite for a Glenn Miller event (photo) and we even did some dancing! We also been to see the Bishop of St Albans' garden followed by a picnic on the hill next to the Cathedral. We also went to the Secret Farm at Moggerhanger, for their Christmas fair. We have done our usual walk to see snowdrops and bluebells. At the end of our walks we either go back to hub or cafe for a drink and cake. Some time we go to someone's house for refreshments.



Wendy Pegg

GO4GOLD REPORT



Welcome to G4G. We are a group meeting on a Friday afternoon from 2.00 - 3.30pm for anyone who is free at that time, with £1 entry. On the first Friday of the month we have a Christian film, with ice cream/popcorn.

The second Friday we now have a Soup Lunch running before a social when we have a quiz, bingo and chat with cuppa and cake.

The third Friday we look forward to a visiting speaker and on the fourth Friday, another social. When we had a fifth Friday, Angharad Hughes kindly gave us some exercises to follow.

We enjoyed Christmas time together on Dec 20th. In the summer we were invited to the garden of Clive and Ros Just which was a lovely occasion. Speakers at our group have included Will Rawes - Carbon footprint matters". We have heard from Becky and Trish about their work with Impact, Nadine Mnatzaganian talked about mental health. We heard from our vicar David Thomas about his beginning with us and from Ray Evans who has retired from his work at Grace church. We also heard from some of our members about their holiday in Tunisia.

So please do come and join us on Friday afternoon, all ages are Welcome!!!

Pat Mathias

COACH HOLIDAY REPORT

Christ Church Holiday to Royal Lemington Spa, July 2024.

It was a joy and pleasure to be joined by folk from St James Church, Biddenham as we journeyed together for a five-day holiday in Royal Lemington Spa staying at The Angel Hotel, an old coaching Inn in the centre of the town. A pleasure too to be safely driven by Clive from Gold Hill Holidays and our party led by the “indomitable” Rachel! The Hotel itself is probably one of the best we have ever stayed in, with good accommodation, pleasant facilities but most of all, kind, considerate and helpful staff who had that maxim of ensuring we had an enjoyable time – and we certainly did! Part of that enjoyment was the food, which was plentiful, varied, beautifully cooked and served in style. A “must return” location!



As always, our days were pleasantly filled. En-route from Bedford to Royal Lemington Spa, we were able to be children again by riding on a miniature railway that had been opened especially for us – how kind was that! Then a glorious day in Coventry visiting the old and new Cathedrals – a must on any visit to that vibrant City. Next door to the Cathedral is the Parish Church of Coventry, Holy Trinity Church where we were wonderfully greeted by Richard and Sarah Hibbert. Richard became our guide for the day where we learnt much of the long history of the Church and the City in which it proudly stands. Then a “must visit” to Stratford upon Avon with the “obligatory” cruise on a broad beamed canal boat followed the next day by a visit to “The Well Healing Centre” and a town guided tour of Leamington Spa in the afternoon – so interesting.

With our evening meetings an ever-present joy it was a wonderful holiday – many thanks Rachel! All must whet your appetite for the next Holiday to sunny Portsmouth!

David Gundry

BOXING DAY FUN - 26th December 2024

Much fun was had by all, a really enjoyable day shared with a wide range of ages participating in a variety of activities in the halls at Christ Church. The teenagers very kindly organised a carousel of some really fun table games, which tested our skills. We also had fun helping Wendy with her Advent jigsaw. We brought our own picnic lunches and enjoyed them together on beautifully decorated tables. The festivities continued with a movie matinee including ice creams and popcorn, as well as a Christmas themed quiz. The day together was finished off with a wonderful afternoon tea and festive fizz. A Sing a Long made this a very special day spending time getting to know each other as we celebrated the love and joy of Christmas.



Collette Denley-Currie