

THE PARISH CHURCH OF ST. BENEDICT, NORTHAMPTON

Serving the community in Camp Hill, Briar Hill, East & West Hunsbury, and Hunsbury Meadows

Annual Report for the year 2022

**For the annual meeting to be held on Sunday 26th February 2023 at
11:10am**

*Our mission: to encourage the people of the parish
to worship God in a loving, caring environment and
help them to find faith and fulfilment in Jesus*

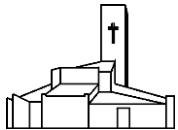


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Serving the community in Camp Hill, Briar Hill, East & West Hunsbury and
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**Minutes of the Annual Parish Church Meeting
and Meeting of the Parishioners
Sunday 27th February 2022**

Present:

Revd Griff (*Chair*)
Marion Angus
Dawn Bolt
Geoffrey Brown
David Bull
Bill Christie
Hazel Christie
Julie Creasey
Norman Critchlow
Keith Dunkley
Jane Emerton
Lesley Flood
Catherine Galvin
Chris George
Liz Hodges
Mary Laraman
Phil Laraman
Fiona Murphy
Sylvia Northam
Chris Newton
Nigel Parker
Mike Popay
Janet Selling
Malcolm Shepherd
Dorothy Simms
Paula Swain
Constance Thomas
Richard Warr

Apologies

Juliette Dunkley
Sue Franklin
Rowena Griffiths
Alison Marlow
Des Peasland
Jennie Peasland
Carolyn Runc
Linda Warr

Opening Remarks

1. Rev Griff [vicar] thanked everyone for their support during his 9 months in office. He said it had been difficult, challenging but very enjoyable and rewarding.

Annual Meeting of Parishioners

The meeting opened at 11:20 with a welcome from the vicar.

Election of Churchwardens

2. The vicar reminded the meeting that churchwardens are elected annually and can, under Church Representation Rules, serve up to six years in succession without a break. Notwithstanding, St Benedict's had passed a resolution previously that the successive term of office was to be limited to three years. As a result, Alison Marlow will stand down as she had been in post for three years. Keith Dunkley, who was only elected last year offered himself for re-election, but no one else has come forward as another nominee. The vicar asked whether the meeting was prepared to go forward with only one warden, provided it was understood that if more assistance from the congregation was required, members would be prepared to get involved. By a show of hands, the meeting voted on moving forward with only one

churchwarden and duly re-elected Keith Dunkley to the post. *[All were in favour with none were against and there were no abstentions].*

Rev Griff commended Alison and Keith for their considerable efforts and support throughout the year, a gift of thanks was given to each.

Annual Parish Church Meeting

Opening remarks

The vicar thanked everyone for supporting him particularly with his new initiatives. Working with three of the four primary schools in the parish had met with a positive response and by opening the church to families, who don't normally step inside the building, under the banner Fun, Faith & Fellowship nearly 30 had attended the first event in Briar Hill (LightFair). Also having held a further event in St Benedict's, these are showing our presence in the community and taking the Gospel message to those on the fringes.

The vicar's attempts to inject more awareness into the South Northampton Partnership of Churches has been somewhat thwarted by the other churches being in vacancy for most of the year. However, he can see the potential for further involvement together. For example, the service we held jointly with the Baptist church in Nov.

1. The minutes of APCM held on 23rd May 2021

The minutes of the last APCM meeting had been circulated, were received, and then approved by the meeting with just one small language amendment from Marion Angus, so the Vicar, as chair, would make and initial the change, and sign the minutes accordingly.

[by a show of hands, all were in favour of the minutes being a true record. none were against and there were no abstentions. All those present had been at the previous meeting].

2. Matters Arising:

There were no matters arising that were not covered by this year's APCM's agenda.

3. Consideration of Reports for 2021

[a] Annual Report of PCC – was noted. The Chair commented on some of the salient points from his own perspective. He said he was blessed to have the support of Lesley and Paula, our Licensed Lay Ministers, our retired minister Paul Hunt, the church wardens, an active PCC member and all those who work on a regular basis to lead our church sponsored organisations in building God's Kingdom here in the parish of St Benedict's. Unfortunately, with the church initially being closed and then only open when covid 19 restrictions permitted, many community groups and Junior Church were unable to meet regularly for much of the year. The vicar mentioned that we continue to provide the services to all those members who cannot attend services in person, online. In a similar way, the vicar also thanked Richard Warr for his commitment to sending out the weekly newsletter and twice weekly advice of when services would be held and in what medium

[b] Electoral Roll Report – The PCC Secretary advised the meetings that there are now 93 names on the Electoral Roll. Six new members have been added since the roll was completely updated in 2019, but sadly five had either died, or ceased to worship at St

Benedict's. Included in the 93 names were 24 who do not live in the ecclesiastical parish but worship regularly at St Benedict's.

[c] Policies & Procedures – The Vicar highlighted that we still have a fair way to go regarding our policies, particularly safeguarding, which had been updated by both the national church and the Peterborough Diocese. Though praising those who have concluded their training he emphasised that any new PCC member or representative will have a 3-month window to ensure that they have completed all the relevant checks and training in place to allow them to continue serving in that role for the church. The Data Protection policy is still a work in progress but has been hindered by the fact that no-one came forward to act as Chief Information Officer, as per the guidelines.

[d] Church Wardens' Report – noted.

There have been no significant issues relating to the fabric of the church during the year. The next statutory Quinquennial inspection will be undertaken in 2023. During the pandemic, every effort has been made to keep the church clean, particularly after it had been closed for a while, with congregation working groups helping to keep both the inside and grounds well-manicured to keep up appearances. All covid restrictions have been in use, like sanitiser gel, face masks and where necessary gloves.

There were no other questions from the members, but Rev Griff thanked the churchwardens for their considerable diligence in all matters church related and noted that from a legal and safety perspective all items of maintenance had been satisfactorily attended to.

[e] 2018 Report and Accounts – noted.

2021 had been another difficult year. The previous Treasurer's health in January 2021 exposed a weakness, namely that no one else knew how the financial procedures worked, so there were no handover notes for the new Treasurer to digest. So being able to produce quarterly financial accounts had not been possible until the end of the year. Changing bank mandates to get access to the bank accounts also proved very problematic. Thanks to the hard work of our Treasurer Connie and Independent Reviewer, Carolyn, financial accounts for the year were produced and included in the Annual Report, which the congregation have seen. Of note are the following. [1] unrestricted income fell from £55,110 to £47,892 which meant we were only able to pay the diocese £36,000 in parish share, which is used to cover clergy and Diocesan costs. This is approximately 50% of what was requested of us and were it to continue at this level, it could mean the vicar would have to operate partially outside of the parish, which would significantly affect our growth strategy. Other fund-raising events also came to nought because of the restrictions arising out of the pandemic. [2] Church running costs are also below their prior year amounts, as the church was closed under the covid rules for part of the year. [3] Despite all the disruptions, the church was able to raise, in a combination of grants and congregational giving, £5,000 to cover the cost of repairing the bells, which should happen in 2022. [4] Fund raising for the Porch fund was severely curtailed because of the covid restrictions. [5] The church has £8,530 in its unrestricted bank accounts, which is slightly above the minimum needed for compliance with its Reserves Policy. [6] How best to use the restricted fund balances will be discussed during 2022. So far, the PCC have discussed, merging the Pastoral Care Fund (which was set up initially under the FDWG) and Vicar's Discretionary Funds, to ensure support can be given to those in need. This new fund will be called the Pastoral

Fund, which will follow the same ideology of supporting those in need but in a much more open, clear, and accountable manner.

The meeting recorded their appreciation for the considerable work Connie and Carolyn had done on behalf of the church and for making sure the accounts were approved by the PCC and available for this meeting. *[a generous handclap followed]*

The report from the Independent Reviewer was also noted.

The chair also thanked Richard Warr in his role of Planned Giving Officer and for dutifully claiming back Gift Aid from the Government, expeditiously.

There being no adjustments or further concerns from the meeting, the accounts as presented were approved by a show of hands and signed by the vicar, as Chair of the meeting. *[there were none against and no abstentions]*

[f] Other Reports – noted. Rev Griff spoke as to how the number and range of church activities and the efforts of the many volunteers showed that St Benedict's was an active and community focussed church. He thanked all those involved. Nevertheless, he hoped more working groups would be formed to take care of these community initiatives, rather than any activity being solely reliant on just one person. In effect it would be good if everyone in the congregation could have a role in the church, based on their availability.

5. Election of PCC Members

Based on the Average Sunday Attendance figures, St Benedict's is permitted to have 9 elected members of the congregation on its PCC. Following a review of the current membership there were eight vacancies. Juliette Dunkley and Julie Creasey had come to the end of their trienniums but stood for re-election, Catherine Galvin, continues into year two or her triennium the following decided not to stand again for personal reasons: Sue Franklin, Mary Roach, Chris Newton and Fiona Murphy. Further nominations, which had been appropriately proposed and seconded were received from Dawn Bolt, Nigel Parker, and Remi Boxall. *[by a show of hands all new and returning members were declared elected to the PCC, there were 4 abstentions, the rest were in favour]*. This brings the number elected to the PCC to 6 with 3 vacancies.

The Vicar then informed the meeting that the PCC now consists of himself, Churchwardens, Licensed Lay Ministers, Deanery Reps and up to 9 elected members, who must be on the electoral Roll. He also stressed that for anyone to be on the PCC they would have to comply with the Church of England's guidelines with effect to Safeguarding, which effectively means passing the church's Basic Awareness and Safeguarding Foundations courses.

6. Appointment of:

- [a] Sidespersons – under changes made to the Church Representation Rules, this is now a matter for the PCC.
- (b) SNPC Representatives - Liz Hodges agreed to continue in the role, but the vicar would like more representation and asked for offers to help.
- (c) Independent Examiner - Carolyn Runc agreed to continue in this role and was generously thanked for her financial oversight.
- (d) PCC Treasurer – Constance Thomas agreed to continue in this role, having worked diligently to get to know how the financial procedures work.
- [e] PCC Secretary – Norman Critchlow agreed to continue in this role, but only for another year. His recent blackout and fall in church followed by hospitalisation had made him seriously question

his ability to continue for more than another year. At which point the vicar praised Norman for commendable service to the church and deanery

The vicar spoke about the ideal of people to shadow the church's key roles undertaken by lay members, such as Church Warden, Treasurer, and Secretary and asked the congregation to come forward if they thought they had the skill set to take on any of these tasks in the future. The vicar also mentioned there would also be, for each role that anyone takes onboard, the need to agree and sign a copy of their roles & responsibilities.

7. Any Other Business –

In a sort of question-and-answer session the following points were made. The Vicar responded by saying: -

[a] He was going to try to re-start the Home and Bible Study groups, which had been cancelled due to covid restrictions, after Easter.

[b] That having the uniformed organisations in church is always a blessing and he hopes to engage further with them.

[c] He agreed with comments about needing to find different income streams in both the short and long term. That's why he had developed a better profile with the local funeral directors but re-building the congregation to what it was when the church last paid its parish share in **full [in 2013]**, would take time. He also accepted that many in the congregation were on fixed incomes and with the recent inflationary pressure on household expenditure, it would be a struggle for these groups to increase their planned giving.

[d] There are a lot of successes in the parish, and he acknowledged that Tots & Toddlers were now self-funded because more people were coming to each session.

[e] We are in the planning stages of a Summer fundraiser (Fri 3rd June) in conjunction with the jubilee weekend activities and Christmas Fayre (Sat 3rd Dec) in 2022, as fund raising events.

[f] The vicar believes and as stipulated in our annual review; we might be needed to re-evaluate the Porch Project in full because of the amount of funding we still needed to raise [£70k-80k as stated 2019]. Citing that the Bell Appeal [circa £5k] had only met its goal because of one very generous donation.

[g] He confirmed that we were awaiting dates for the bell repair work to proceed from the foundry who made and installed the bells originally. They seemed awash with orders and if they couldn't deal with a smallish job for ourselves Geoff Brown felt there were others we could approach. Once completed the repairs will be dedicated to Anne England a former Tower Captain, for all her work within the church.

8. Closing remarks

The Vicar reiterated his gratitude to everyone who had attended the APCM and their commitment to life at St Benedict's. He apologised for having to talk about our ability to pay our Parish share, rather than focus on prayer and mission, but he just wanted everyone to know that we do need to hold this as a main priority if St Benedict's is going to keep a full-time vicar. Most other parishes are struggling with similar issues and the Secretary, who is also the Deanery Treasurer, told the meeting that operationally the diocese had an issue with a shortfall

of income against expenditure and was overdependent on parish share to pay clergy costs in particular.

There were then many expressions of gratitude from several attendees at the meeting for all the work and leadership shown by the Vicar and his wife, Rowena, in their first full year with us, there followed a well-earned round of applause.

The meeting concluded with Prayer at 12.42pm.

Signed.....

Date /..... /.....

St Benedict's Church, Hunsbury, Northampton

Annual Report of the Parochial Church Council for the year ended 31st December 2022

Administrative information

St. Benedict's Church is situated in West Hunsbury, Northampton. For administration purposes the ecclesiastical parish includes West Hunsbury [which incorporates Camp Hill], most of East Hunsbury and Hunsbury Meadows, each of which is served by a parish council with limited powers delegated to them from Northampton Borough Council (NBC)], Briar Hill and Hunsbury Fields who are still within NBC's control.

We are also part of the Diocese of Peterborough within the Church of England.

The correspondence address is The Vicarage, 16 Sentinel Road, Northampton, NN4 9UF.

Vicar: The Revd Jason 'Griff' Griffiths - PCC Chair

Wardens: Keith Dunkley

Licensed Lay Ministers:

Lesley Flood [co-opted to PCC]

Paula Swain [co-opted to PCC]

Representatives on the Deanery Synod:

Richard Warr [ex officio to PCC],

Norman Critchlow [ex officio to PCC]

Elected members of PCC:

Julie Creasey

Juliette Dunkley

Remi Boxall (stood down, due to pressure)

Catherine Galvin

Constance Thomas

Nigel Parker

Other Co-opted members of the PCC:

Constance Thomas - Treasurer

Norman Critchlow - Secretary to October 2022

(Alison Marlow from November 2022)

Other Ordained ministers:

Revd Paul Hunt [retired]

Structure, governance, and management

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. All eligible Church attendees are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and are welcome to stand for election to the PCC. It is worth noting that a new electoral roll was produced for the April 2019 APCM.

Objectives and activities St Benedict's

The PCC has the responsibility of cooperating with the Vicar, in promoting, throughout the ecclesiastical parish, the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social, and ecumenical. It also has maintenance responsibilities for the St Benedict Church buildings and grounds, including the Hall, at St Benedict's Mount, Northampton NN4 9UG.

Opening Remarks

2022 has been the first full year since the covid pandemic that I have been your Priest, and that we have been able to get back to a full and active worship and a church presence. With this it has been an extremely busy and fruitful year, not least with the celebration of the 70 year reign of our blessed Queen Elisabeth II and then showing our respect to her passing in glory. The church, it's leadership and all those who helped out certainly rose to the challenges that we all faced together.

Review of the Year

We have continued throughout this year to focus on what God is calling us to and guiding us, as witness to his message, and how this is shown in our worship and outreach. I realise this has been frustrating for some, that we haven't *just* returned to how worship was previously conducted, but as we can all agree, when we look at the demographic of the congregation we, and I do include myself, are not getting any younger, so some practices have not been reintroduced and others have been reinvented and reinvigorated. For the first half of the year, until Fr Oliver's unfortunate accident, we continued with our 8:30am HC (said service) though numbers often were very low or just a time for myself to reflect. Our main service at 10am has remained a constant in the life of St Benedict's with an average of 40-45 congregational members, though with our special services throughout the year these numbers have risen to 90+. We started our *new Family* service, St Ben's@4 in Oct, and this has seen 6 families attend sometimes but more often than not 2-3 families. Our Mid-week service too has remained a strong backbone of prayer and worship, with an average 12-14 people coming. Our weekly prayer continues with Morning Prayer being said every Saturday in person and we have the Friday night Compline, online. Thank you to all those who support these ministries.

We have also gained far more of a presence in the community with our half-termly services, of Family Fun & Fellowship, with a strong Gospel focus. These have seen numbers vary from 5 to 30 families, being actively involved.

Lastly under the guidance of Paula (LLM), who was relicensed in October at Peterborough cathedral, we have a monthly healing service, which she leads and I assist. She continues to remain a blessing to this community of Christ.

We were also able to re-engage with the variety of differing services & activities that St Benedict's is familiar with, starting in January with the joint SNPC service, Archdeacons installation for myself, don't worry though, despite the delay I have been your vicar since May 21! This momentum continued with more services involving: Girl Guides; Bishop Donald taking the confirmation of Tochukwu Ogbuefi (TJ); Lent & Holy week which was a full week of reflection and praise; more joint services with our Methodist and Baptist brothers and sisters in Christ; Jubilee Service; Harvest service; Remembrance Sunday and for the first time since arriving at St Benedict's an unrestricted lead up to and celebration of Christmas with Christingle services; Lessons & Carols and our second year of Carols round the tree, which is gaining popularity in the community.

With our increase in worship there has been a return to being able to express ourselves in sung worship, on which St Benedict's prides itself, though this is not easy as we do not have an organist. Occasionally with favours being asked, we managed to have various musicians play our clavinova at the following services: MU services, SNPC and of course of Lessons Carols. Other than that it remains for myself not only to remain priestly at the communion table, but sometimes, feel like an overdressed DJ, controlling the hymns.

This year's occasional offices (Baptisms, Weddings & Funerals) have increased all round, taking 17 Baptisms (one being an adult), 1 wedding, 1 church funeral service and 23 crematorium services. These are helping to bring in much needed funds for the Diocese (£4,659)

Though worship isn't only the thing that St Benedict's excels at. Throughout the year we have returned to opening the doors at St Benedict's to various social occasions, ranging from classical music concerts from NMPAT to our very own double act (Cog & Sprocket) in the Soiree.

As mentioned, previously, we celebrated with much joy and sadness this year our late and beloved Queen Elisabeth II. The church joined in with the national celebration of her 70 years as

our monarch and head of the Church of England, which included the Beacon on our roof, part of a national recognition to her service; to our largest fundraiser (cream teas) and getting to know the community at the Jubilee celebration.

After having had such an amazing celebration, it was soon evident that the queen's health was not great and on the 8th Sept the announcement came that she had final gone to rest with her King of Glory, our saviour in heaven. To show our respects, and in coordination with West Hunsbury Parish Council, the very following day the church was opened for those who wanted to come pay their respects and sign the book of condolence, also a memorial structure was erected outside the church for those wishing to leave flowers. This period of mourning, and the church being open for all, remained until the State Funeral which was also broadcast in the church.

Having spent last year building relationships with the local primary schools in our parish, this year this has started to pay dividends with assemblies and classes lessons. For example we are now on a four year cycle as to which school we attend to take the Remembrance service. This should encourage us as many children in our community are learning about Christ.

As a church we have been blessed with having two ordinands in training participating in our worship. Angie Milne was a short term placement of a few weeks and Angie Kennedy is with us for a few years and is playing a large part in our Family Service as well as becoming more involved in our main services. We were selected this year, after much discussion, to take on the training of a curate starting in June '23 and look forward to welcoming Marta Brothers and her family.

From services to swifts, this year we took part in a swift reintroduction programme. We now have bird boxes, made by members of the congregation, fitted to our tower. We look forward to developing our eco presence and efforts in line with the church of England's scheme.

Overall, we are starting to see a full return to a new normality in our parish and in the church, with this there will come challenges we face together and as your vicar and having full support from the PCC (Leadership) and yourselves, I believe Kingdom growth is inevitable.

Financial Review 2022

This year the PCC and myself have been focusing on how we might be able to simplify our banking and ensure that we are working towards a more robust system of accounting and forecasting budgets. Many thanks to Connie for all her hard work over the last 12 months for stepping into the breach and taking the reins of our accounts, now we start to go further to ensure your money is being more wisely budgeted and procedures for payments being modernised. Due to these extra pressures and more time required on the accounts Connie stepped down and the accounting was taken over by Carolyn Runc liaising with myself and Norman to ensure the PCC was kept up to date at all times. During this it was brought to the attention of the PCC that banking with both the HSBC (Business) & Coop were not adequate to our needs and we started the process of looking for another local bank (Metro branch), which we are hoping to complete soon.

General Fund

Total income for the year was £56,500 (2021 this was £53,529). Though a slight increase since last year this still doesn't allow us to be able to pay our full parish share, be able to gracious in our church giving (supported charities), and be able to bless fully the our outreach activities, to build God's Kingdom in the parish.

We are still renting out the hall to the Girl Guides at a supportive rate and have started a further rental agreement, bringing in extra income from the rent to St Dionysious, Indian Orthodox church for the worship area, hall and kitchen (generally once per month).

As with all churches this year we have all been hit with raising utilities bills.

Overall, our general fund expenditure, including fundraising costs, amounted to £53,364 compared to £48,291 in 2021.

The balance in the General Fund at the 31 December 2022 was £15,265

Parish Share

In 2021, we managed to pay £39,000 of the £69,035 Parish share, to ensure the church can justify a full time vicar. This year we have managed £40,000 of the £69,035, at this rate of increase it is increasingly likely we, St Benedict's church, will be asked by the Diocese, what we see as our priorities and how we plan to address this shortfall.

Financial Statements 2022 in full on the following 3 pages

Our accounts have not been externally verified as yet due availability of an external auditor

Though accounts have been approved by the PCC

Financial Statements 2022

Receipts and Payments Accounts

For the 12 months to 31 December 2022

	Note	Unrestricted Fund	Unrestricted Designated Funds	Restricted Funds	Totals 2022	Totals 2021
		£	£	£	£	£
Receipts						
Voluntary Receipts:						
Planned giving		31,299	0	0	31,299	35,117
Collections at services		1,575	0	0	1,575	875
All other giving / voluntary receipts		7,343	0	204	7,547	7,680
Grants		0	0	820	820	0
Gift Aid recovered		9,538	0	385	9,923	7,940
		49,755	0	1,409	51,164	51,612
Activities for generating funds						
Investment income						
Church activities	3a	0	0	0	0	11
Total Receipts		2,854	0	0	2,854	1,676
		55,091	0	1,409	56,500	53,529
Payments						
Parish Share						
Parish Share 2022		40,000	0	0	40,000	0
Parish Share 2021		0	0	0	0	36,000
Parish Share 2020		0	0	0	0	3,000
		40,000	0	0	40,000	39,000
Church activities:						
Clergy and Staffing costs	3b	703	0	0	703	142
Church running expenses		6,822	307	4,410	11,539	9,134
Mission & evangelism		556	0	291	847	15
		8,081	307	4,701	13,089	9,291
Cost of generating funds		275	0	0	275	0
Total payments		48,356	307	4,701	53,364	48,291
Excess of receipts over payments / (payments over receipts)						
Transfers between funds	2	6,735	(307)	(3,292)	3,136	5,238
		0	(172)	172	0	0
		6,735	(479)	(3,120)	3,136	5,238
Cash at bank and in hand at 1 January 2022		8,530	1,784	30,641	40,955	35,717
Cash at bank and in hand at 31 December 2022		15,265	1,305	27,521	44,091	40,955
Statement of Assets and Liabilities						
	Note	Unrestricted Fund	Designated Funds	Restricted Funds	Total 2022	Total 2021
		£	£	£	£	£
Cash Funds						
Cash in hand		90	0	0	90	66
Bank current account - HSBC		3,072	1,305	5,963	10,340	8,706
Bank current account - Co-op		13,264	0	0	13,264	11,173
CBF Deposit funds		0	0	21,557	21,557	21,557
Fees paid to PDBF not yet received		412	0	0	412	0
Of which monies held as agent (see below)	4	(1,573)	0	0	(1,573)	(547)
		15,265	1,305	27,520	44,090	40,955
Other Monetary Assets						
Gift Aid (3 months /Oct-Dec - est)		1,627	0	0	1,627	0
Funeral fees and expenses etc receivable		462	0	0	462	493
Hall rental (including energy charges) outstanding		1,413	0	0	1,413	0
		3,502	0	0	3,502	493
Liabilities						
Gas and electric		519	0	0	519	122
Amounts due as agent re charitable collections	4	1,174	0	0	1,174	547
Amounts due as Agent re St Benedict's Mothers' Union	4	399	0	0	399	0
		2,092	0	0	2,092	669
Parish Share unpaid		£29,036				£10,035
Total Parish Share		£69,036				

These Financial Statements were approved by the PCC on 15th February 2023

Financial Statements 2022
For the 12 months to 31 December 2022

Notes

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

2. Designated and Restricted Funds

	Balance		Balance		
	1 Jan 2022	Receipts	Payments	Transfers	31 Dec 2022
	£	£	£	£	£
Designated					
Bell Ringers	1,235		(300)	(172)	763
Fabric Fund	301				301
Legacies	53				53
For childrens work (from Swimathon)	195		(7)		188
	1,784	0	(307)	(172)	1,305
Restricted					
Organ Fund	1,384				1,384
Pastoral Care Fund (total of fund donations £850)	850			(850)	0
Porch Fund	22,630	179			22,809
Play Area Maintenance Fund	1,636				1,636
Discretionary Fund	300			(300)	0
Flower Fund	190		(190)		0
Media Fund	1,140		(599)		541
Bell - A - Peel Fund	2,504	1,230	(3,906)	172	0
Pastoral Gift	0				1,150
Rev Anne Farewell gift	7		(7)		0
	30,641	1,409	(4,702)	172	27,520

The Organ fund represents the residual balance of the donations and appeals accumulated to replace the original church organ after the installation of the Tickell organ in 2009. This balance can be spent to improve and maintain the replacement organ, as required.

The Play Area Maintenance Fund represents accumulated contributions from St. Benedict's Church and the (now ceased) St. Benedict's Pre-School which can be used to repair and maintain the outdoor play area alongside the church. Since the PCC would in any case be required to meet any costs in excess of the fund balance, no further transfers are being made into the fund.

The Media fund was set up after the last interregnum. Currently expenditure in respect of the broadband connection and other associated payments are charged to this fund. When exhausted, the monthly broadband payments will be included in General Fund expenditure.

The Bell-A-Peal was to collect donations for the refurbishment of the bells. 10% of donations received, together with associated Gift Aid thereon, was to be given to charity. The shortfall of £172 was charged to the Designated Bell Ringers Fund. In addition the replacement of the bell ropes (£240) was charged to the Designated Bell Ringers Fund.

3. Further Analysis of Receipts and Payments

	Unrestricted	Unrestricted	Restricted	Totals	Totals
	Fund	Designated Funds	Funds	2022	2021
	£	£	£	£	£
Receipts					
a) Church activities					
Fees paid to PCC (incl extras for heating etc)	1,770	0	0	1,770	782
Hall lettings	657	0	0	657	720
Surplus from Cafe	427	0	0	427	174
	2,854	0	0	2,854	1,676

Payments

	Unrestricted	Unrestricted	Restricted	Totals	Totals
	Fund	Designated Funds	Funds	2022	2021
	£	£	£	£	£
b) Church running expenses					
Church building running expenses					
Church repairs and maintenance (incl insurance)	1,958	240	3,614	5,812	2,426
Cost of Services	786	0	0	786	934
Organist fees	0	0	0	0	400
Children & Young People	0	7	0	7	10
Office/ Printing and stationery	583	0	0	583	168
Training	160	0	0	160	220
Miscellaneous	269	60	7	336	1,186
Broadband	0	0	599	599	199
Discretionary expenditure	33	0	0	33	0
Flowers	232		190	422	289
CCLI Licences	474	0	0	474	452
	6,822	307	4,410	11,539	9,134

Financial Statements 2022
For the 12 months to 31 December 2022

Notes (continued)

4 Monies received as agent - funeral fees, charity collections etc, less paid out

	Bal owing b/fwd	Received	Paid out	Bal owing c/fwd
Charitable collections (see below)	547	627	0	1,174
Funds held on behalf of St Benedict's Mothers' Union	0	399	0	399
	547	1,026	0	1,573

Charitable collections

Charity donation re Bells Appeal	291
Charity donation re NMPAT concert	94
Charity donation re Remembrance concert	71
Childrens Society - Christingle & Christmas cards	718
	1,174

Churchwardens' Fabric and Contents Report (2022)

A requirement of the Care of Churches and Jurisdiction Measure 1991 is that Churchwardens inspect the church's fabric and contents on behalf of the PCC and provide a report of findings to the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM).

During 2022, work to deal with the usual maintenance of the building and contents continued. The priorities highlighted by the Quinquennial Inspection of 2018 were mostly focussed on the roof. However, due partly to Covid 19 and to reassessment of the Porch Project in terms of what could usefully be achieved with the funds available, roof repairs have also been delayed. Those repairs are chiefly to do with ingress of rainwater at certain points where roof and wall meet.

One further issue arising from the inspection is the cracking of the tiled floor in some places in the worship area. Assurance was given that the cracking is nothing structural but due to some shrinking in the concrete screed under the tiles. Nevertheless it is unsightly and the surveyor suggested filling the cracks with colour-matched resin. It is hoped to remedy this in 2023.

Cleaning parties were held on a number of occasions throughout the year to ensure the church interior was looking its best. It has been gratifying to see our church members giving their time and effort to care for St. Benedict's. Dawn Bolt has organised her little army of helpers for the regular church cleaning and thanks are due to all concerned.

The grounds continued to be maintained by members of the congregation, and thanks are due to Richard Warr in particular for his regular grass cutting and additional work in the garden areas.

Health and Safety

Risk assessments have been routinely done for a variety of events in church, and mercifully most of the rules and regulations surrounding Covid had been relaxed. Hand gel is still is available on entry and mask wearing is now solely an individual's personal choice. Services are still streamed for those who are either reluctant to come into the building yet or unable to do so.

Unlike 2021, it was possible to hold two Christingles (thanks to all those who made it possible). In addition an outdoor Carol Service was held round a tree kindly provided by West Hunsbury Parish Council. Music was provided by musicians from NMPAT with St. Benedict's bell plate players entertaining during indoor refreshments. Our Midnight Mass and Christmas Day services were able to go ahead as planned.

General Maintenance

The annual boilers' servicing did not give rise to any issues, and fire extinguisher and Church alarm system checks did not reveal any problems.

Keith Dunkley (Churchwarden)

OTHER ACTIVITY REPORTS

Bellringers Report

We have seven ringers in our band at the moment who have rung through a momentous year marking both happy and sad times for our monarchy. We have rung for most Sunday services and are always on the lookout for new people to join us. We are proud that we keep the bells ringing across Hunsbury, Camp Hill and Briar Hill. Everyone is welcome and we practise most Monday evenings at 7.30pm. If you are interested in giving bell-ringing a try you can be assured of a warm welcome.

In 2022 we achieved our long-term goal of servicing the bells for their first time in 35 years. Thank you to all the donors who enabled this work to be done. The church now needs to paint the bell frame, redecorate the ringing chamber, replace the carpet for the ringing room floor, replace the sound control under the bells and ensure regular maintenance. The ropes have been refurbished thanks to a local ringer. (*The lighting in the ringing room, belfry and stairs to the organ loft/bell tower is in need of urgent replacement for safety reasons. The redundant plumbing pipes and remaining extraneous boiler ventilation pipes and insulation require removing from the ringing room/tower. A suitable replacement for the broken fan heater also needs to be found.*)

We look forward to continuing to ring in 2023 and further developing our skills and our range of ringing. If you'd like to gain a new skill, why not come and see?

Geoffrey Brown on behalf of the bellringers

Bible study group:

Throughout the first part of the year, we had various sessions and courses, taking place in the evening, from reflections on St Francis of Assis (Lent) to having a better understanding of the sexuality issue that the Church of England faces at present, (Living In Love & Faith), concluding with the Bible Society's Bible Course.

On average, 4 members of our church attended the joint churches Lent study group. It was very interesting to listen to the viewpoints of people from the other churches as well as our own. The members from our church continued to meet on an evening up to June of this year when numbers dwindled and it became apparent that most would prefer a day time study.

Rev Griff

Since May, 6 members of the congregation meet regularly on a Thursday morning to study the Bible and drink tea or coffee together, not forgetting the biscuits! Recently we have followed The Bible Society's Bible Course. This was an excellent course that through a DVD and study looked at the big picture of the whole story of the Bible. Currently we are studying the I Am sayings of Jesus. We are always happy for new people to join us.

Rowena Griffiths

Children's Society

Many thanks to everyone who has a house box and collects money for The Children's Society, it is much appreciated. Thanks to Marion Angus who has kindly taken over the organisation of the boxes from October 2022.

Sue Wilson

Church Cleaning

A big thank you to all who contributed their time and effort to keep the church clean this last year.

Unfortunately the number of volunteers has again decreased from last year. We now have only 8 people on the cleaning rota which means we are only able to clean the church once every 2 weeks.

We desperately need new volunteers if we are to maintain a high level of cleanliness for all who worship and visit here.

Dawn Bolt

Deanery Synod

The Deanery Synod representatives are Richard Warr and Norman Critchlow, but both will be up for re-election at this year's APCM. Norman is also on the Deanery Standing Committee, by virtue of him being the Deanery Treasurer.

During 2022 the Deanery Synod went back to meeting in person, to the relief of many members. It was then announced that current members would have to stand for re-election in 2023, so that the triennial cycle could get back to where it would have been until interrupted by the pandemic in 2020.

2022 was also another somewhat difficult year when the Rural Dean was seriously injured in a car accident in the Autumn. He was both hospitalised and then had to undergo a period of recovery at home. Consequently Jane Butler, team lead Minister at Kingsthorpe, [who is Deputy Rural Dean] was made Acting Dean until Oliver could resume his role, which he did towards the end of the year.

The Synod normally meets four times during the year, but because of the unexpected death of the Queen, the October meeting was cancelled, so only three meetings went ahead.

In February the main agenda item was a presentation from Councillor Jonathan Nunn. The Leader of the newly created West Northampton Council who spoke about how the centre of Northampton was going to be transformed and regenerated. He elaborated on ten key projects for which funding was already available. These included a revamp of the market square, the demolition of the existing Debenhams building in The Drapery to facilitate the creation of in-town student accommodation and the refurbishment of the old M&S store in Abington St into a mixed use retail and apartment complex. After which, there was a lively discussion.

The June meeting was hosted by the University of Northampton and focussed on the work of chaplains in education, healthcare and the community who were ministering in the area. All spoke passionately about 'keeping God alive' and acting as a bridge between God and people, particularly those experiencing difficult to manage situations. In other words, these were spiritual/pastoral roles in support of those who can no longer meet their fellow Christians in church particularly where healthcare and old age define a person's mobility and interaction with other Christians.

With the October meeting being cancelled, as outlined above, the year finished on a sombre analysis of Funeral Ministry. It led to a discussion about the current trend of drumming down how much fuss a family should be making when a relative or friend demises.

The new deanery leadership team will now have to include in their 2023 programme a further review of the Deanery Reorganisation Plan, which was formally approved by Synod in January 2021, subsequently forwarded to the Northampton Archdeaconry Missionary & Pastoral Committee later that year but which has now been returned to the Deanery Standing Committee for a further review. This plan is therefore still on the table and is being discussed at several levels within the Deanery.

Norman Critchlow & Richard Warr

Eve - formerly Nene Valley Christian Family Refuge

Many thanks to everyone who has donated items for the women and children at Eve, your kindness is much appreciated.

Sue Wilson

Family Service (StBen's@4)

Our weekly 4 o'clock family service began in October. During the past few months, we have seen a number of families attending including 2 regular families. Our service entails lively songs, a talk on a passage from the Bible (often using puppets), and a variety of activities. Many thanks to Angie and Chris for their help and support. We are praying that this ministry will continue to grow.

Floral Arrangements

This year we have continued to follow as much as possible our new policy of eliminating the use of Oasis and using as many locally grown or British grown flowers as we can. The 'flower ladies' are trying to grow more flowers for picking in their own gardens and would like to encourage members of the congregation to do the same.

Our few remaining blocks of oasis have been used for the main festivals only and we are using our newly acquired pots and jardinières. We are pleased to welcome Sylvia to the team and would be very happy to be joined by anyone else with an interest in floral decorations.

Chris Hunt

The Food Bank

Many thanks to everyone who has donated food, essential household items and baby necessities to those in need. We as a church continue to look out for ways to support those in our communities, who might need that extra help, with this we can now not only refer to foodbanks but also Rev Griff, in accordance with the Trussell Trust guidelines can now issue foodbank vouchers. Also having a greater presence at Briar Hill community, and the staff who run the Foodbank we have better opportunities to recognise individual needs.

Home Alone Lunch

Home Alone lunch usually meets on the third Sunday of each month after church to eat lunch together at a local venue. There are occasionally changes to the date when it clashes with other events, for example, Mothering Sunday, Easter Sunday or Father's Day.

The group is open to anyone who attends St. Benedict's or lives within the parish who would otherwise be eating at home alone, including those who live with others but would be at home alone on that particular Sunday. Diners can be of any age. There is no need to book in advance, if you would like to come just tell us on the day. A number of us have cars and are able to transport people to our chosen venue from church and back to their own homes afterwards.

We began the year meeting at The Grange Inn but, after their refurbishment, the menu and prices changed, so we began to eat at the Queen Eleanor. There is a wide range of items on the menu and prices to suit everyone. During the summer we also ate a very enjoyable meal at the vicarage, hosted by Rowena and Griff.

We usually have 10 to 12 people attending but is has been as many as 15. With lots of company and conversation as well as the food, you would be more than welcome to join us.

Marion Angus

Junior Church & Youth Group

Our weekly numbers are very small as many families have not returned to weekly church on a Sunday morning. We have tried using a new scheme of teaching and it would have worked well if we could guarantee a regular attendance, however with such small numbers and occasional attendance, we have decided to return to following the Children's Bible stories for our sessions. We are currently short of a few helpers. Many thanks are due to the wonderful teachers and helpers who work hard to provide children's church.

Constance Thomas, Marion Angus and Rowena Griffiths

Licensed Lay Pastoral Ministers [Lesley & Paula]

Lesley: With the removal of most Covid restrictions, pastoral care in 2022 returned to some normality, with home visits possible and monthly Holy Communion services able to resume in King Richard Court. In church, Baptism services following visits made in late 2021, were completed by April and several further Baptisms were held throughout the year.

My time was also spent in offering prayer and support for those in special need in our church family. I also kept in contact, mostly by phone but with some home visiting, with past members of our congregation who have been unable for various reasons, to return to church following the pandemic.

Sadly, it was necessary for me to retire from licensed lay ministry in October, as I was unable to accept the opportunity to re-license due to increasing family commitments. I would like to extend my grateful thanks for the support and encouragement I have received from our church family throughout my years as a Licensed Lay Minister – you made it possible for me to respond to God's call.

Lesley Flood

Paula: My role as Licensed Lay Minister for St Benedict's church continues to develop.

My commitment to serve is ongoing, and I hope that my care and love for you all as my brothers and sisters in Christ is evident, especially when I spend time in conversation both at church and by telephone, reaching out in a pastoral way.

In my role as Licensed Lay Minister, I have the new role as Chair of the Worship Committee. There are 6 of us who meet 4 times a year to discuss plans for how we as a church worship, we share thoughts and suggest actions with the PCC, who oversee any changes to worship at St Benedict's.

Alongside Rev Griff, I am part of the Healing Service, which is a gentle reflective time once a month, where we provide hands on healing and anointing with oil. The service is a healing reflective space where music is played and the spirit is present. This began in September 2022 and continues on the first Sunday of every month at 6pm.

As your Licensed Lay Minister, I vow to keep Jesus Christ, our Prince of Peace, at the heart of everything I do in serving the community of St Benedict's church.

Your sister in our Lord Jesus Christ,

Paula Swain

Mothers Union

Our members are part of the worldwide Mothers' Union which helps both Christians and non-Christians. Their projects to do this focus on improving the lives of women and children throughout the world.

Our Branch meets at 10a.m. on the first and third Mondays in each month. We have listened to speakers on topics varying from Domestic Abuse to a Pilgrimage. We have also taken part in activities including crafts and carol singing at a care home. New members are always made

welcome. For more information or the chance to come to a taster meeting, please contact me.
Juliette Dunkley

Outreach - Church Activities

Family, fun and fellowship continues on a Sunday afternoon every half term with crafts, stories, songs and food for primary aged, and younger children. Topics covered this year have been a Pancake Party, Palm Sunday, The Good Shepherd, our Summer BBQ, Autumn, light fair, and Christmas. The light fair being held at Briar Hill community centre. On the whole these have been well attended with between 30-50 people attending each one.

The light fair was very successful this year with over 80 people attending. A few more volunteers would have greatly helped to run some of the crafts and help with serving cake and drinks.

Our involvement with the Guides and Scouts is growing. Rev Griff regularly visits the guide sections including an Easter Hunt where they learnt about the story of the first Easter. The rainbows, brownies, guides and rangers meet in the church on a Tuesday evening and have taken part in a number of services including Thinking Day and Remembrance. The Beaver scouts came to visit us and learnt about the features of a church. The cubs and scouts are already booked in for visits next year.

Outreach - Schools

The work in schools has been growing rapidly. We currently have direct contact with 4 primary schools. During the year we have been into the schools for assemblies, specifically for Harvest, Remembrance, Christmas, Lent and Easter. A number of classes have come to the church to learn about Christianity, and we have taken RE sessions in the schools. This Christmas we provided 'Christmas Unwrapped' for the year 5 and year 6 classes in only one of the schools, (due to an outbreak of scarlet fever in another school). This is an hour and a half lively presentation and craft connected to the Christmas story. We are planning to follow this up later in the year with 'Easter Unwrapped.' We are already in contact with a fifth school to visit in next year.

Rowena Griffiths

Planned Giving

Firstly, a big thank you to everyone who gives to St Benedict's by means of the planned giving schemes whether weekly, monthly, or quarterly.

Without your ongoing generosity our church and our work in the Parish at large will not be able to continue.

Why participate in our Planned Giving scheme?

Planned giving using weekly envelopes or bank standing order enables the treasurer and PCC to budget realistically for the coming year.

The money donated regularly through Planned Giving has this year been our church's main source of income; it helps pay our Parish Share, day to day church running costs, heating, lighting and maintenance costs and materials for the services and work in the community.

If we know what our income will be, then, just like at home, it enables a budget for the year to be arrived at so that as a church we can live within our means and not have to rely on continuous fundraising events to pay our regular outgoings.

At year ending December 31st 2022 there were 45 members of the congregation taking part in the regular giving scheme using a bank standing order (35), weekly envelopes (10) or by planned contributions over the year.

The trend of changing from using weekly envelopes to bank standing order has continued this year. Where an individual meets the HMRC requirements we can, with the donors permission reclaim gift aid on their donations.

The Gift aid reclaimed from HMRC during the past year was approximately £6682. The GASDS (Gift Aid Small Donations Scheme) which allows us to claim Gift Aid on the loose change collections and small donations made at our church services and social events in 2022 increased our Gift Aid claim by £995.21 .

The Planned Giving scheme is also open to individuals who although they do not regularly attend the church but would like to play their part in supporting its work.

Please also consider writing a legacy in favour of St Benedict's in your Will. If you would like more information on this please ask or take one of the leaflets in church.

If you do not yet participate in the Planned Giving scheme using weekly envelopes or monthly standing order please do consider doing so and just contact me for information.
Richard Warr, Parish Planned Giving Officer,

Safeguarding

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and we continue to provide a safe place for all who attend groups and who worship at St Benedict's church. Our church continues to place safeguarding as a high priority and we adhere to The Diocesan guidelines around safeguarding, including training and vetting of volunteers.

The past year has seen us complete the Church of England's safeguarding dashboard. We have ensured that anyone who has a position of trust in church and PCC members have completed the basic foundation safeguarding training and have been vetted using the DBS process.

As a church, we pray that we provide a safe and nurturing place where all are welcomed and protected, showing God's love.

Thank you for your commitment to making our church a safe place to be.

Many blessings.

Paula Swain - Safeguarding Officer.

St Benedict's Monthly Café

The monthly cafe, held on the first Wednesday of the month, continues to be well supported. It is a community event with West Hunsbury Parish Council holding a surgery each time. The cafe has proved very popular. Our visitors enjoy a round of freshly-made sandwiches, several cakes and as many cups of tea or coffee as they wish.

Carolyn Runc and Jill Enstone are my regular helpers for making the sandwiches. We are lucky there are many who restore the church seating or clear away and wash up when the meal is finished. Without their help and that of the Sunday furniture movers, it would be very difficult to continue with the cafe – so a big thank you to everyone involved.

Any monies left after food expenses have been deducted go to St. Benedict's. Last year this amounted to £400.

Juliette Dunkley

Tots and Toddlers Group

St. Benedict's Tots and Toddlers meets in the church hall on Tuesdays in term time from 10 – 11.30 am for children from birth to starting school although many leave to go to nursery once they are three. The attendance has remained good with 14 children on the register. Of these, eight to 10 children, with their parents/grandparents/carers, attend on a regular basis.

We have continued with our format of offering the adults a drink on their arrival, a time for the children to play, a healthy snack and drink for the children at the table in church, then more time to play. The adults and children then join in 'tidy up time before moving into church for a 10-15 minute worship and singing time.

At our Christmas party the children all received a book about the Christmas Story from Santa and sang Away in a Manger to him. If you have friends or neighbours with young children, please invite them to join us. We make a small charge of £1 per child per session which covers costs.

Marion Angus and Rowena Griffiths

Youth Group

Thanks to help from Marion, our youth group have continued to meet up in 2022 and have taken on a number of activities, some outside of our church family by attending UNITE Youth at Kings Park Conference in Moulton Park (accompanied by Rev Griff, Rowena & Marion) where they have interacted with young people from all over the county as far as Kettering and Corby. We were due to join in the Annual Rotary Swimathon at Northampton School for Boys which was unfortunately cancelled. We then made the decision to complete a walkathon around Sixfields Reservoir instead and was accompanied by Liz Hodges and managed to raise £175. A huge thank you to all who sponsored and those who took part.

However, despite all the success of 2022, it is with regret that after nearly 6 years we are no longer able to continue with the sessions, as we do not have the required number of helpers to ensure that the young people can continue to enjoy their time with us.

I would like to extend a massive Thank you to Marion for all her help with the group for the past year and a half and hopefully sometime in the not too distant future, we might be able to resume the sessions.

Constance Thomas