



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

## Annual Report for the year 2023

**Annual meeting to be held on Sunday  
25th February 2024 at 11:45am**

**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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## **Minutes of the Annual Parish Church Meeting and Meeting of the Parishioners Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> February 2023**

### **Present:**

Revd Griff (*Chair*)  
Marion Angus  
Dawn Bolt  
Geoffrey Brown  
Amaka Chinwuba  
Trish Coniff  
Norman Critchlow  
Mary Dickson  
Keith Dunkley  
Juliette Dunkley  
Lesley Flood  
Liz Hodges  
Mike Grant  
Rowena Griffiths

Mary Laraman  
Phil Laraman  
Rosemary Morgan  
Sylvia Northam  
Onyinye Ndefo  
Karen Parkhouse  
Des Peasland  
Jenny Peasland  
Carolyn Runc  
Janet Selling  
Malcolm Shepherd  
Paula Swain  
Constance Thomas

### **Apologies**

Bill Christie  
Hazel Christie  
Julie Creasey  
Sue Franklin  
Catherine Galvin  
Alison Marlow  
Fiona Murphy  
Chris Newton  
Julia Rogers  
Linda Warr  
Richard Warr

### **Opening Remarks**

1. Rev Griff [vicar] thanked everyone for their support during his second full year in office. He felt we had made progress on a number of fronts, including the introduction of two new forms of engagement with a monthly Family, Fun, and Fellowship and a Sunday afternoon service.

### **Annual Meeting of Parishioners**

The meeting opened at 12:00 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 their successive term of office was to be limited to three years. As a result, Keith Dunkley, who was elected in 2021 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; none were against and there was one abstention].*

Rev Griff commended Keith for his commitment, effort, and support throughout the year.

### **Annual Parish Church Meeting**

#### Opening remarks

The vicar briefly outlined the agenda for the meeting and thanked so many of the congregation for being in attendance to hear about what had been achieved over the last year and some of his proposals for the current year. He indicated he was concerned that the church was not able to pay its parish share in full and warned that if the level of giving couldn't be increased he

would come under pressure from the Diocese to take on responsibility for work in another parish as well as St Benedict's.

### 1. The minutes of APCM held on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2023

The minutes of the last APCM meeting had been circulated, were received, and then approved by the meeting.

*[a motion to adopt the minutes was proposed by Dawn Bolt and Seconded by Malcolm Shepherd and by a show of hands, the majority were in favour of the minutes being a true record. None were against, but there were abstentions from a few who had not been able to attend the APCM in 2022 or not seen the minutes that had been circulated prior].*

### 2. Matters Arising:

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

### 3. Consideration of Reports for 2022

[a] Annual Report of PCC – was noted. The Chair briefly commented on some of the salient points from his own perspective. He said he was blessed to have had the support of Lesley, Paula, Paul Hunt, the church wardens, an active PCC, 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. 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 Electoral Roll Officer advised the meetings that there are now 95 names on the Electoral Roll as two new members have been added since the last APCM. Included in the 95 names are 24 who do not live in the ecclesiastical parish but worship regularly at St Benedict's.

[c] Policies & Procedures – The Vicar confirmed that we were following the Diocese's stance on Safeguarding matters, but further work was required regarding Data Protection. Anyone receiving the weekly newsletter electronically would need to fill in a special [GDPR] form which would be available in church shortly. The Data Protection policy is still work in progress but has been hindered by the fact that no-one has come forward to act as Chief Information Officer, as per the church's guidelines.

[d] Church Warden's Report – noted.

There have been no significant issues relating to the fabric of the church during the year, but the next statutory Quinquennial inspection will be undertaken later this year.

There were no other questions from the members, so Rev Griff thanked the churchwarden for his 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] 2022 Report and Accounts

The financial accounts for 2022, as approved by the PCC, had again been distributed to members and were noted. The Chair commented on the work done by Carolyn Runc during the year, to both simplify the book-keeping and act as a focal point for all banking relationships. As a result, she has stepped forward to take on the role of Parish Treasurer for which the PCC is most grateful *[round of applause]*. Unfortunately, this means she can't be the church's Independent Reviewer of accounts, so we've had to look outside the parish for someone else to help us. Whilst we've secured the services of a third party this work has not been completed, so this APCM will have to be adjourned at the end of this meeting and church members will be

informed if there are any changes to the financial accounts when this review exercise is complete.

Although total income in 2022 was up on the previous year, this was due to a small number of one-off donations and not from regular church giving, so another Stewardship campaign will be launched later this year. Church expenditure is being held to a minimum and for the time being there has not been a significant rise in utility bills, compared to the current arrangement through Parish Buying. It was also noted that those who hire the hall are now being billed for light & heat in line with current costs. To address the shortfall in parish share payments, Revd Griff informed the meeting that we had prepared a budget for this current year and as a result the PCC agreed to increase the monthly share contributions to £3,500 [from £3,000]. The problems, previously noted, with regard to our arrangements with the Coop and HSBC banks are likely to be resolved shortly as the church has secured a new account with the Metrobank which has a branch in town. Therefore, the Treasurer will begin to transfer our banking activity to Metrobank as soon as possible. As this means that those members who pay their collections electronically, rather than by envelope or the plate, will need to also make changes, Revd Griff provided members with an information slip showing details of the new church account for them to use.

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, so 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 two 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 a highly active and community focussed church. He thanked all those involved.

#### 4.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 five elected member vacancies as Remi Boxall and Nigel Parker had stood down for personal reasons. Putting themselves forward were Mike Grant, Lesley Flood and Marion Angus alongside the new Secretary and Treasurer, Alison Marlow, and Carolyn Runc. As there was room for them all to join the PCC these five, having been nominated and seconded by persons on the electoral roll, were duly elected. *[proposed by Des Peasland, seconded by Paula Swain, by a show of hands all new and returning members were declared elected to the PCC, there were 5 abstentions from those standing for election, the rest were in favour]*. This brings the number of members elected to the PCC to 8 plus treasurer and secretary.

The Vicar again 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. Most existing members have passed these tests so he will allow new members of the PCC up to three months to acquire these skills otherwise they will have to stand down.

#### 5. Appointment of:

[a]Deanery Synod Reps. Although Richard Warr and Norman Critchlow have held these posts for the last nine years, they acknowledged that for the church to maintain its representation on the Deanery Synod they would stand again unless others wished to come forward. Onyinye

Ndefo indicated a willingness to be such a Rep. so all three, as allowed by the Deanery's rules, were voted on by the meeting. *[all in favour]*

(b) SNPC Representatives - Liz Hodges and Catherine Galvin agreed to continue in these roles and the vicar asked for offers to help from anyone else who had time. *[all in favour]*.

(c) Independent Examiner – Lisa Read has agreed to take on this role

(d) PCC Treasurer – Carolyn Runc agreed to take on this role, having worked diligently to get to know how the financial procedures work. *[all in favour]*.

(e) PCC Secretary – Norman Critchlow retired in late 2022, largely for health reasons, and Alison Marlow had agreed to take on this role with immediate effect. *[all in favour]*.

(f) Eco/green church lead - Revd Griff outlined the need for someone to be the lead on the church's plan to be carbon neutral and monitor all that the church contemplates undertaking in the future in terms of its impact on the 'Green Agenda'. Dawn Bolt said she had an interest in this role and was duly elected. *[all in favour]*.

It was brought to the attention of the members that it would be good practice to equip the right people to shadow those in all the church's key roles undertaken by lay members, such as Church Warden, Treasurer, Secretary etc. so that it gave flexibility and continuation 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.

## 6. Any Other Business –

In a question-and-answer session the following points were made.

[a] Porch Project. Revd Griff commented on his concerns that the original scope of the project no longer seemed to be viable as the funds raised were only about 20% of what was needed, and external funding sources seemed to be few and far between as this was a church rather than a community project. With that in mind he felt that we could at least improve access to the church by doing away with the internal wooden doors to the main church entrance and installing automatic glass doors in their place. Early estimates of the cost would be around £15,000 + VAT. A debate ensued as to safety concerns regarding children, the visually impaired and older persons who are frail. The meeting was generally in favour of the Vicar taking his ideas forward and speaking to the DAC [the church's planning body] to see whether they would support the concept. The vicar also said he thought that with any funds left over we could re-surface the disabled access ramp, which would benefit a lot of church goers. The discussion concluded with the meeting approving a proposal "that the vicar be authorised to investigate the feasibility of using the funds raised for the Porch Project to replace the internal wooden doors that separate the church from the porch area with a glass alternative, to improve access to light, conservation of heat and safety concerns with the present heavy wooden door arrangement". *[proposed by Keith Dunkley; seconded by Mike Grant; All in favour, with one abstention.]*

[b] Vicar's Office. The Vicar informed the meeting that he was proposing to change the small room off the parish hall into an office so that he could spend more time working in church which would also enable the church to be open for longer during the day. The costs were considered modest and by a show of hands the meeting was happy to support the idea.

[c] Bell Appeal. During the year the bells had been repaired and the project was complete. He thanked Geoff Brown and Keith Dunkley for managing the project and everyone for their support, both with fund raising and in undertaking some of the work themselves. Overall, it had cost less than £4,000. Now completed the repairs will be dedicated to Anne England a former Tower Captain, for all her work within the church.

[d] Prayer Spaces. The vicar outlined the concept of putting prayer spaces in the local schools and both he and Rowena explained how they were used. In church presently there are two

examples of what they may look like, which were provided by the Lighthouse Trust. Some were already in schools and other establishments were planning to try them out. In principle they look like a gazebo but are filled with all kinds of aids which enable the students to find comfort from them. The meeting thought they were an excellent idea and asked about the cost of having a St Benedict prayer space solely own by St Benedict's. Rowena explained how the consumables (pens, paper, batteries & playdough etc.) would cost roughly £100 annually. To buy one outright might cost up to £800. Nevertheless, the meeting wanted the Vicar and Rowena to keep them informed on the disbursement of these spaces and how they thought they were being used and what benefit they were creating.

## 7. Closing remarks

The Vicar reiterated his gratitude to everyone who had attended the APCM and their commitment to life at St Benedict's. He finished by highlighting the church was in a better place than it had been for some years in regard to paying its parish share and its ongoing mission in the community. Notwithstanding, with regards to the parish share, we were still far off paying the full amount, and that it should not be taken for granted, this could have a knock-on effect on future ministry all round. It was also highlighted that many other parishes are struggling with similar issues and Norman, 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.

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 second full year with us. There followed a well-earned round of applause.

The meeting concluded with Prayer at 13.20pm.

Signed.....

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

## **St Benedict's Church, Hunsbury, Northampton**

### **Annual Report of the Parochial Church Council for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023**

#### **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 (term finishes 2024)

Licensed Lay Ministers:

Lesley Flood [co-opted to PCC - Stood down as of PCC minutes 13<sup>th</sup> Sept 23]

Paula Swain [co-opted to PCC - Deputy Chair]

Representatives on the Deanery Synod:

Richard Warr [ex officio to PCC],

Norman Critchlow [ex officio to PCC]

Onyinye Ndefo [ex officio to PCC]

Elected members of PCC:

Alison Marlow (Secretary)

Carolyn Runc (Treasurer)

Catherine Galvin

Constance Thomas

Dawn Bolt (ECO rep)

Julie Creasey

Juliette Dunkley

Mike Grant

Marion Angus

Marta Brothers (Curate – ordained Jun 2023)

Other Ordained ministers:

Revd Paul Hunt [retired]

Representatives outside of St Benedict's (Non-voting PCC members) SNPC:

Catherine Galvin

Liz Hodges

#### **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 we will be asking all regular members to resign the Electoral roll as per the 5 year rule, ready for the APCC of 2025.

#### **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

2023 has continued to see St Benedict's worshipping community thrive in many differing ways, from our schools involvement, to our increased presence in the wider parish. Our church serves the people of not just West Hunsbury, but also Briar Hill and East Hunsbury (particularly East Hunsbury Parish Council & Grange wood residents club).

St Benedict's church is not only continuing to build upon its presence in the local area, it is also having more impact and presence in the Peterborough Diocese, playing a leading role in the exchange program between the Diocese of Seoul and Peterborough (ask Rev Griff for more information about the exchange). If that wasn't enough, we are demonstrating that as a church we are able and willing to support future ministers of this Diocese. As a training church we have taken on a Curate (Marta) as of June this year, and the continuing training of an Ordinand (Angie). St Benedict's continues to be church that is shining its light for all to see 'let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven' Matthew 5:16

## Review of the year

How do we sum up a year full of excitement and growth, without missing the focus and that focus has always been, having been given, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded' Matthew 28: 18-20 (the great commission).

So let's try! We have continued to build community links, since the first full year after covid, by introducing two more, annual, outreach activities at Briar Hill community centre. The first being a puppet workshop, themed around the Easter story and also a Christingle service, if both of these expand like the Lightfair, which has grown exponentially, it will truly show the impact that we as a church are having sharing the Gospel with the community.

Our services, too have grown, with such a variety of services, from our shared SNPC worship to the Girl Guides Thinking day service. This year saw our Remembrance service taking a slightly different lead, with more involvement from the youth organisations. To the point that we almost ran out of chairs (over 230 congregation members alone), though as has been shown this is not a one off, either! Due to the work being done with the links with the Girl Guides, Scouts and schools, we are regularly having to check that availability for hosting such special services is not just a given but needs to be checked, being such a busy church.

Our main stay 10am service has seen people come and go, due to illness or commitments but continues to be the 3 pillars of stability, prayer, learning and worshipping together with an average attendance of 45, though just one of the services we hold to ensure all have access to understand Christ's love for them. The St Ben's@4 continues weekly with numbers varying from just the organisers to 15 worshipping together. That said all who have been involved with any of the Family Fun services throughout the year, will testify how popular these services have become, to the point that a certain young gentleman Geoffrey Goswell being in the thick of it all, wished he was 20 years younger so he could do more. Though not overlooking over any of our other services (Mid-week HC, EP Friday, MP Sat), we gather together to proclaiming the Gospel message '**Since the gospel is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, we should proclaim it in every situation where we find ourselves' Acts 8:4-onwards.**

For our occasional offices we have seen and been blessed to be involved with 3 weddings this year, particularly having our whole community to witness and celebrate with our LLM Paula wedding service to Julian, what a memorable day that was.

Our commitment to God's Kingdom has been revitalised and has brought further passion and involvement from all, which has shown that St Benedict's has always been good at doing God's work. However, often we are not too good at promoting ourselves, for example we now have the Bronze ECO award.

St Benedict's was also blessed to be chosen to be able to support the Dioceses future ministers training program by offering and being accepted to be a training church, this coming to fruition by us receiving a curate minister in June 23, though not long after starting, she was signed off sick.

This year we have also seen our social calendar being extended further, from the Passover meal during Holy week to our newest event 'The Christmas Tree Festival'.

This year we have continued to reinforced the whole Christian family with our brothers and sisters in Christ (St Dionysius Indian Orthodox church) continuing to worship at St Benedict's. It was a true honour to meet and take part in the official opening and blessing of their worship at St Benedict's, with their honourable Bishop, who just so happens to cover the whole of Europe!

Finally, to end with, how wonderful to see so much coming together at St Benedict's from having the new *welcoming* glass doors being fitted to having our Archdeacons inspection go with flying colours. Though now is not a time to sit back and rest on achievements, oh no, because we are still called to uphold our call to arms '*encourage the people of the parish to worship God in a loving, caring environment and help them to find faith and fulfilment in Jesus*' Amen to that. **Rev Griff**

## TREASURER'S REPORT FOR APCM 25 FEBRUARY 2024

The accounts are prepared on the 'Receipts and Payments' basis, and show a surplus for the year of £1,499 on the General Fund. This is after paying an additional £4,000 Parish Share in December – so we paid a total of £46,000 in 2023 which is about 2/3 of the amount requested.

In March we opened a current account with Metro Bank and gradually all receipts and payments are being moved to this new account. It is intended that the HSBC and Co-operative bank accounts will be closed in due course when no more receipts and payments go through them. As the new doors have been installed, the monies held in the two CCLA deposit accounts were transferred to the Metro bank account in December and the CCLA accounts were closed. As we now therefore have substantial funds in the Metro Bank, we will open two new deposit accounts with them – one for amounts in restricted funds, and another for the General Fund not immediately required. Funds will therefore be more readily accessible for further work on the Porch Project and remedial work on the roof identified by the Quinquennial inspection.

During the year funds were collected for various charities, and these were all paid over in December. The amounts were as follows:

Wildlife Trust	£ 190.00
HomeStart	£ 140.00
Children's Society - Boxes	£ 216.23
Children's Society – Christingle collections	£ 221.05
MacMillan Cancer Support (this includes 10% from the Bells refurbishment in 2022)	£ 325.00
Earthquake in Turkey and Syria	£ 300.00

In addition, £522 was collected at the SSAFA concert (this did not go through our bank account).

The accounts show transfers from the 'Designated Funds' to the 'General Fund' as follows:

Fabric Fund	£ 301
Legacies	£ 53
Children's work from Swimathon	£ 188
TOTAL	<u>£ 542</u>

These Designated Funds are no longer required so have been written back to the General Fund. This just leaves the 'Bell Ringers Fund' as a Designated Fund as – per last year's report – there is further work required on the bells.

Income from the rent of the church, hall and facilities has increased this year, mainly due to the arrangement with St Dionysius IOC. The accounts also include hall and facilities hire from the Guides etc for both 2022 and 2023 as both year's charges were received in 2023.

We were in contract with Total Energies as our energy provider through Parish Buying until 30 September 2023. Because of the high standing charges experienced with Total Energies in 2022/23, we decided to change our supplier to Octopus. This is a one-year fixed contract with no standing charges for gas or electricity, and lower unit rates than we had been paying with Total Energies. We had to pay a deposit of just over £1,000, which is shown in the 'Statement of Assets and Liabilities'. In 2022, we had also been entitled to a rebate towards energy costs, and the Diocese had also contributed £755.

**Financial Statements 2023**  
**Receipts and Payments Accounts**  
For the 12 months to 31 December 2023

Note	Unrestricted Fund	Unrestricted Designated Funds	Restricted Funds	Totals 2023	Totals 2022
	£	£	£	£	£
<b>Receipts</b>					
<b>Voluntary Receipts:</b>					
Planned giving	38,377	0	0	38,377	31,299
Collections at services	1,652	0	0	1,652	1,575
All other giving / voluntary receipts	4,276	0	0	4,276	7,547
Grants	0	0	0	0	820
Gift Aid recovered	8,766	0	0	8,766	9,923
	53,071	0	0	53,071	51,164
Activities for generating funds	2,600	0	0	2,600	2,482
Investment income	5	0	979	984	0
Church activities	8,361	0	0	8,361	2,854
<b>Total Receipts</b>	<b>64,037</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>979</b>	<b>65,016</b>	<b>56,500</b>
<b>Payments</b>					
Parish Share	46,000	0	0	46,000	40,000
<b>Church activities:</b>					
Clergy and Staffing costs	1,447	0	0	1,447	703
Church running expenses	13,841	0	18,696	32,537	11,539
Mission & evangelism	1,003	0	0	1,003	847
	16,291	0	18,696	34,987	13,089
Cost of generating funds	247	0	0	247	275
<b>Total payments</b>	<b>62,538</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>18,696</b>	<b>81,234</b>	<b>53,364</b>
Excess of receipts over payments / (payments over receipts)	1,499	0	(17,717)	(16,218)	3,136
Transfers between funds	542	(542)	0	0	0
	2,041	(542)	(17,717)	(16,218)	3,136
Cash at bank and in hand at 1 January 2023	15,265	1,305	27,521	44,091	40,955
Cash at bank and in hand at 31 December 2023	17,306	763	9,804	27,873	44,091

**Statement of Assets and Liabilities**

Note	Unrestricted Fund	Designated Funds	Restricted Funds	Total 2023	Total 2022
	£	£	£	£	£
<b>Cash Funds</b>					
Cash in hand	384	0	0	384	90
Bank current account - HSBC	146	0	0	146	10,340
Bank current account - Co-op	82	0	0	82	13,264
Metro Bank	16,266	763	9,803	26,832	0
CBF Deposit funds	0	0	0	0	21,557
Deposit with Octopus Energy	1,038	0	0	1,038	0
Fees paid to PDBF not yet received	0	0	0	0	412
Of which monies held as Agent (see below)	(609)	0	0	(609)	(1,573)
	17,307	763	9,803	27,873	44,090
<b>Other Monetary Assets</b>					
Gift Aid (3 months /Oct-Dec - est)	2,000	0	0	2,000	1,627
Funeral fees and expenses etc receivable	0	0	0	0	462
Hall rental (including energy charges) outstanding	0	0	0	0	1,413
	2,000	0	0	2,000	3,502
<b>Liabilities</b>					
Amounts due as Agent re charitable collections	10	0	0	10	1,174
Amounts due as Agent re St Benedict's Mothers' Union	599	0	0	599	399
	609	0	0	609	1,573
Quinquennial inspection	1,020	0	0	1,020	0
Gas and electric	90	0	0	90	519
	1,719	0	0	1,719	2,092
Parish Share unpaid	£23,036				£29,036
<b>Total Parish Share</b>	<b>£69,036</b>				

## Financial Statements 2023

For the 12 months to 31 December 2023

### Notes

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

	Balance 1 Jan 2023 £	Receipts £	Payments £	Transfers £	Balance 31 Dec 2023 £
<b>Designated</b>					
Bell Ringers	763	0	0	0	763
Fabric Fund	301	0	0	(301)	0
Legacies	53	0	0	(53)	0
For childrens work (from Swimathon)	188	0	0	(188)	0
	<u>1,305</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>(542)</u>	<u>763</u>
<b>Restricted</b>					
Organ Fund	1,384	0	0	0	1,384
Porch Fund	22,809	979	(17,778)	0	6,010
Play Area Maintenance Fund	1,636	0	0	0	1,636
Media Fund	541	0	(418)	0	123
Pastoral Gift	1,150	0	(500)	0	650
	<u>27,520</u>	<u>979</u>	<u>(18,696)</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>9,803</u>

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 is charged to this fund. When exhausted, the monthly broadband payments will be included in General Fund expenditure.

### 3. Further Analysis of Receipts and Payments

	Unrestricted Fund £	Unrestricted Designated Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Totals 2023 £	Totals 2022 £
<b>Receipts</b>					
<b>a) Church activities</b>					
Fees paid to PCC (incl extras for heating etc)	1,949	0	0	1,949	1,770
Hall lettings	5,792	0	0	5,792	657
Surplus from Cafe	620	0	0	620	427
	<u>8,361</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>8,361</u>	<u>2,854</u>
<b>Payments</b>					
<b>b) Church running expenses</b>					
Church building running expenses	7,518	0	0	7,518	2,327
Church repairs and maintenance (incl insurance)	3,301	0	17,778	21,079	4,812
Cost of Services	627	0	0	627	786
Children & Young People	0	0	0	0	7
Office/ Printing and stationery	555	0	0	555	583
Training	0	0	0	0	160
Miscellaneous	1,061	0	0	1,061	336
Broadband	0	0	418	418	599
Discretionary expenditure	0	0	500	500	33
Flowers	271	0	0	271	422
CCLI Licences	508	0	0	508	474
	<u>13,841</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>18,696</u>	<u>32,537</u>	<u>10,539</u>

## **Churchwarden's Fabric and Contents Report (2023)**

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 2023, the usual maintenance of buildings and contents continued. Many of the priorities highlighted by the 2018 Quinquennial Inspection, particularly regarding the church roof, have again been highlighted by the 2023 Inspection. However, with Covid 19 now less of an issue and with funds becoming available in 2024, remedying our leaky roof has moved to the top of the maintenance agenda. It was proposed that a concise list of roofing issues be made and sent out to at least 3 accredited contractors for quotations. Subject to PCC approval, it was hoped to start work early in 2024. The 5 yearly electrical inspection also raised some issues and it is proposed that these also will be dealt with in 2024.

Some of the other issues raised in the 2018 Quinquennial have now been dealt with, namely: -

- much vegetation removed from around windows
- floor cracks filled
- tower loft hatch made safer
- dry powder fire extinguishers replaced with CO2 ones.

In terms of improvements to St. Benedict's Church, we now have automatically operated inner and outer glass doors at the main entrance which replaced the old heavy and, at times, draughty wooden doors. As a result, the entrance is much more welcoming. After many years of fund raising for this project and amendments to the original plans, this work was completed in November. It will no doubt be gratifying to all those who contributed in one way or another to raising the money, to see this come to fruition. Our thanks are also due to all those involved with the original concept; to Paul Hunt for time spent on the planning and gaining of the necessary consents, and to Revd. Griff whose drive and energy helped push this project 'over the line'.

Cleaning parties were held on a number of occasions throughout the year to ensure the church interior was looking its best. It has been pleasing to see our church members giving their time and effort to care for St. Benedict's. Dawn Bolt has organised her little army 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 to Richard Warr in particular for his regular grass cutting and additional work in the garden areas. Thanks also to Mike Grant who has taken on the responsibility for and maintenance of our memorial garden.

## **Health and safety**

Risk assessments have been routinely done for a variety of events in Church, and mercifully most of the rules and regulations regarding Covid have been relaxed. Hand gel is still 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 are unable to do so.

## **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**

St Benedict's church is blessed to have its own peal of *Bells* and with it the experience and talented ringers to ensure that the call to worship is heard throughout the parish, which sadly is not the case in many churches nowadays. That said, they are always on the lookout for those who might be interested in join them, with practice most Monday evenings at 7:30pm.

With this in mind, it was a pleasure to host and introduce our *Bells* to some of the local Scouts, at the beginning of May, where we, in conjunction with the Peterborough Diocesan Guild of Church Bellringers, gave an exciting and very informative night to the Scouts and their leaders. We are also hoping to extend this to invite to other groups in 2024, particularly as this year is the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Peterborough Diocesan Guild of Church Bellringers.

Geoffrey Brown and Rev. Griff on behalf of the bellringers

### **Bible study group:**

On average, 6 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.

**Rev Griff**

Six or seven members of the congregation meet regularly on a Thursday morning to pray for each other, study the Bible and drink tea or coffee together, not forgetting the biscuits! Recently we have moved to Julie's house and many thanks to her for the warm welcome we receive each week. This year we have studied the book of Esther amongst other passages from the Bible. Currently we are studying the Good Samaritan as a result of the week of prayer for Christian Unity. We are a very friendly group and always happy for new people to join us.

**Rowena Griffiths**

### **Church Cleaning Report**

Thank you to all who contributed to cleaning the church this year. Volunteers for the cleaning rota remain low which means we are only able to clean the worship area every two weeks. Other areas of the building, for example, the kitchen, toilets, hall etc. do not receive a regular clean. This year we had three cleaning/maintenance days. These were well attended and those who attended also enjoyed a hot lunch, fellowship and a great sense of achievement. If you think you could join the cleaning rota or take responsibility for cleaning a small area of the church building please speak to myself or any member of the PCC.

**Dawn Bolt**

### **Café Report**

2023 was the first full year of opening since 2019 because of Covid restricting our operations. It is good to see many familiar faces returning with 30 being the average attendees. Although our aim is to have enough money in donations to cover food costs, we made a total profit of £622.75 which is paid to the Church in increments of £100. The March Cafe donations of £169.91 cash plus some card amounts were forwarded to the Disasters Emergency Committee for the Turkish and Syrian Earthquake.

Without the support of Jill Enstone and Carolyn Runc on sandwich production duties, our 'tea boy' Keith, homemade cake makers and the myriad helpers who stay behind to clear tables, wash up or restore the Church to normal, we would not be able to function - so many thanks to you all.

We look forward to welcoming you in 2024 hoping that you enjoy not only the food but also the company of old friends and new acquaintances.

**Juliette Dunkley**

## **Children's Society**

We have continued to support the Children's Society through contributions to house boxes and through the annual Christingle Service. Many thanks to those who have contributed in any way.

The Children's Society carries out excellent work in supporting children and their families through all sorts of difficulties. Amongst others, these include children who have been abused, those struggling with mental or physical health issues, those who have run away from home, and those at risk of being groomed by criminal groups.

If you would like to have a house box, please speak to me as I have plenty of new ones waiting for a home. I collect them twice a year and it doesn't matter how little or how much you put in because, to The Children's Society, every penny counts.

***Marion Angus***

## **Deanery Synod**

The current Deanery Synod representatives, following new triennial elections at the 2023 APCM are Richard Warr, Norman Critchlow and Onyi Ndefo. Norman was also on the Deanery Standing Committee, by virtue of him being the Deanery Treasurer but he resigned from this role in the Autumn, having served for nine years.

During 2023 the Deanery Synod met in person four times during the year under the guidance of the Rural Dean, who had recovered sufficiently from a serious car accident in 2022 to actively take back his role.

In February the meeting was held at St Benedict's and as the main agenda item was finance, parish treasurers had also been asked to attend. The Deanery Treasurer gave a review of the previous year's Parish Share performances across the Deanery. Paul Adams, the Diocesan Stewardship Officer then explained at a macro level, the finding of a nationwide Parish Giving Survey by the UK Anglican church and spoke of possible ways parishes might be able to address their own stewardship campaigns. Lastly, Damian Pickard, a very long serving parish treasurer at Abington spoke about how at St Peter & St Paul's church, they had managed to pay their parish share in full repeatedly over the last decade. After which, there was a lively discussion.

The June meeting was hosted at St Francis church, in Duston, and as it was the last meeting of the previous triennium, it was decided that Bishop John should be invited to thank those who were retiring from Deanery Synod service, by leading them in a Eucharist Service. Refreshments and general/social conversation followed.

The September meeting was held at St Peter's, Weston Favell, with the house of Laity being asked to elect a Lay Chair of the Synod a Deanery Secretary and a Deanery Treasurer, and together with the House of Laity, to propose three members for the Deanery Standing Committee. This was followed by a presentation from the Peterborough Diocese Gen 2 Team who work exclusively with young people. Many in Synod and in parishes who also engage with young people facilitated a lengthy question and answer session.

The Final meeting in November was subjected to a late change in venue and topic, due the unavailability of a proposed speaker from the HM Prison Service, but the meeting was rescued by the Revd Canon Judy Evans, vicar of St Alban's and Diocesan Healing Advisor who spoke deeply and led an informative discussion about Healing Ministry as Mission in the church of England and the Peterborough Diocese, what Parishes could do and the churches ministry to older people and the unique issues around the infirm and frail, whose numbers are growing relatively to the rest of the congregation.

***Norman, Richard & Onyi***



## **Environmental Group Report**

The newly formed environmental group met twice this year. With a little effort and a few changes, we were pleased to be awarded the Church of England/A Rocha Eco church bronze award. Some of the changes we made were using environmentally friendly cleaning products, putting a recycling bin in the kitchen, including environmental issues in our prayers, adding an eco-group notice board to the passage and a newsletter (more to come).

In 2024 we will continue to work towards the silver award and also towards the Wildlife Trust bronze award for our outside spaces. If you think you would like to join us please speak to myself or any member of the group. ***Dawn Bolt***

## **Events Committee**

The Events Committee has met several times during 2023. The group has organised some of the larger fundraising events, including the Soiree and Christmas Tree Fair. However, the main task is to coordinate monthly social and fundraising events organised by members of the congregation. We are happy to help with any events but really depend on you all to suggest and run individual events. These can be purely social or fundraising. Please speak to any of us if you would like to plan an event, Juliette and Keith Dunkley, Chris Hunt, Rev Griff or Marion Angus.

We would like to thank you for supporting our efforts during 2023, whether by practical help, donations, attendance or prayer. ***Marion Angus***

## **Family Service (StBen's@4)**

Our weekly 4 o'clock family service has now been running for over a year. We have seen a number of different families attending including five regular families with young people between the ages of 2 - 16. Our service entails lively songs, a talk on a passage from the Bible (often using puppets or God Story clips), and a variety of craft activities, with a discussion group for the young people. Many thanks to Angie for her help and support. We pray that this ministry will continue to grow.

***Rowena Griffiths***

## **Flower Report**

We have managed throughout the year to use more of our own garden flowers and mostly other British grown ones whenever possible. For the major festivals we have supplemented with some imported flowers, but still tried to ensure that they are responsibly grown and fairly traded, i.e. from Waitrose who have sustainability agreements with their foreign suppliers.

We also invested in a small quantity of alternative water retentive blocks which claim to be completely biodegradable. We were not completely satisfied with them, but will keep looking. Since agreeing to host the church of St Dionysus twice a week on Saturdays and immediately before our own services at Christmas and possibly Easter, the flower team has been working on how and where we can best place arrangements and decorations so that we can all enjoy them with as little cause for moving them as possible. This seemed to work well at Christmas this year. ***Chris Hunt***

## **Food Bank Report**

We have collected tinned/packeted food in Church throughout the year and have distributed it to Food Banks at St. Mary's in Towcester Road as well as Briar Hill. It is always gratefully received and shows that our congregation has thought of those less fortunate. We will continue with this for as long as there is a need. ***Keith Dunkley***

### **Home Alone Lunch 2023**

Home Alone 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 me on the day. A number of us have cars and are able to transport people to The Queen Eleanor from church and back to their own homes afterwards.

We have continued to dine at The Queen Eleanor. There is a wide range of items on the menu and prices to suit everyone. In January and in the summer, we enjoyed meals at the Vicarage, hosted by Rowena and Griff.

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

***Marion Angus***

### **Junior Church**

Our weekly numbers have dropped and on average we have between 0 and 4 children per week. We have continued to plan sessions every week but at the end of the year we finally decided to drop the number of sessions to just the first and third Sunday of the month. Next year we will need some investment in our craft materials to continue to provide interesting and enjoyable sessions for our young people. We currently have three helpers, thank you to Fiona, Titi and Dawn for their commitment and many thanks to all the wonderful teachers and helpers who work hard to provide children's church.

***Constance Thomas, Marion Angus and Rowena Griffiths***

### **Licensed Lay Minister**

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

I have been able to reach out to you all in a pastoral way, reflecting the love of Christ and my commitment to serve has been ongoing.

Due to increasing family commitments and demands on my personal time outside of church and work, I had to step down from my roles as chair of the Worship committee and parish safeguarding officer in June 2023. These continued demands means that I haven't been able to further examine and develop a new healing service for 2024 or a prayer space within church. I continue to discuss with Rev Griff what St Benedict's needs from a pastoral and prayerful perspective. As your Licensed Lay Minister, I continue to support the church as part of the ministry team and 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 White.***

### **Mothers' Union Report**

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 in the UK and throughout the world.

Our Branch meets on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Mondays in the month from 10 a.m. - noon. We had several visiting speakers including a gentleman from the Blood Bikers Charity and a visit from 3 local fire officers who came with their fire engine. We have also mended Service Order booklets, knitted poppies for the Remembrance display and prepared doves for the Prayer Spaces in local schools. Some of our meetings are open to non-members, so please join us if you can. There is no charge. We continue to support MU in the Diocese in their work with inmates in

Peterborough and Wellingborough Prisons. Some of our knitted items go to projects in several African countries. Our meetings are informal and fun! If you are interested in finding out more, please contact Catherine or me, or better still, come and join us for a meeting. You will be made most welcome. **Juliette Dunkley**

### **Ordinand's Report**

I would first like to thank everyone for making me feel so welcome at St. Benedict's and for giving me an opportunity to experience the traditional style of church that I had not fully experienced before, having come from a very low, ecumenical sending church.

I have learnt a great deal so far thanks to the insight of Griff, Paul and a huge number of the incredibly talented church members. I have had the privilege to preach during Sunday morning worship and plan and lead the St. Bens @ 4 family service which is wonderful to see growing in numbers. Up until the end of August most of my time was spent working full time for a local charity, supporting local people who find themselves in the criminal justice system. I left that position in August to concentrate on my studies and vocation. This has allowed me to spend more time in the parish, getting to know people, supporting Griff and Rowena in schools mission, and helping out at the tots group and bible study. I am looking forward to learning more from you all in the coming months and thank you for your ongoing support and prayers.

**Angie Kennedy**

### **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, Lent, New Life, our summer BBQ, Harvest, light fair, and Christmas. The light fair being held at Briar Hill community centre. On the whole these have been well attended with between 30-60 people attending each one and some of the families then coming along to St Ben's@4.

The light fair was very successful this year with over 80 people attending. Thank you to all the volunteers helped to run the crafts and helped with serving cake and drinks. Special thanks to Serien for all her hard work preparing and running the crafts. This year we also held a Christingle service in Briar Hill with 30 people attending. Thank you to Chris for the puppet show which was greatly enjoyed.

Our involvement with the Guides and Scouts continues to grow. Rev Griff regularly visits the guide sections and spent one evening discussing communion with the older members. 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 Scouts came to visit us and learnt about bell ringing. Thank you to the Diocesan guild of church bell ringers and the bell plate ringers who helped to provide a very interesting evening. The cubs visited, they sang songs and learnt about what we do in church and the Squirrels (4-5-year-old scouts) met Scruffy (a dog puppet) and talked about Celebrations. The scouts and guides paraded into church at the beginning of Remembrance and participated in much of the service.

### **Outreach - Schools**

The work in primary schools has been growing rapidly and as a result of lower church attendance many teachers are happy for us to teach the children about Jesus and stories from the Bible. We currently have direct contact with 5 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 aspects of Christianity, and we have taken RE sessions in the schools. Prayer Spaces were up in the church for a week in February and a number of teachers engaged with the resource. As a result, in May we held prayer spaces in Simon de Senlis school for three days. The children were provided with time to think and pray about some of the 'bigger issues' in their lives. The staff were pleasantly surprised at the children's thoughtfulness. **Rowena Griffiths**

### **Parish Safeguarding Officer**

St Benedict's church continues to follow the Diocesan guidelines around safeguarding, including the training and vetting of all volunteers.

Due to increasing family demands on my time, I stepped down as parish safeguarding officer in June 2023, and we currently have a vacancy for this post at St Benedict's church. Rev Griff will liaise with the diocese on all matters of a safeguarding nature.

As a Church, we pray that we provide a safe and nurturing place to worship God, where all are welcomed and protected, reflecting Gods love for everyone. Thank you for your commitment to making our church a safe and nurturing place to be.

Many blessings **Paula White**

### **Parish Planned Giving Officer**

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 our 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 fund-raising events to pay our regular outgoings.

At year ending December 31<sup>st</sup> 2023 there were 41 members of the congregation taking part in the regular giving scheme using a bank standing order (29), weekly envelopes (12) or by planned contributions over the year.

The number using weekly envelopes has remained steady but the number of giving regularly by bank standing order has declined from 35 to 29. This may be in part to individuals leaving St Benedict's or not renewing a standing order when the church changed banks. 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 2023 was approximately £8913 plus 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 2023 increased our Gift Aid claim by £1254.

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)**

## **South Northampton Partnership of Churches (SNPC)**

SNPC committee and its various ministers and representatives from St Benedict's, Towcester Road Methodist Church, Abbey Centre Baptist Churches and Ss Francis and Teresa RC have organised numerous events during 2023, everything from resurrecting the Walk of Witness, starting at St Benedict's, this drew quite a bit of attention. One lady just out for a stroll, happily joined us and walked the whole distance, giving her the chance to ask everything about the churches we represented to the annual SNPC quiz. The SNPC has gone from having only one minister/vicar (in 2022) in the whole of the SNPC, now to all churches have their own minister in place. This has now allowed for us as members of the SNPC to revisit and revise our commitment together in the Covenant document, which we are working towards signing. This bond has been cemented with various worship opportunities together, including a new service this year for the first Sunday in Advent, which was a great success. It is a blessing to be within the partnership and to share with other churches.

**Liz Hodges and Rev. Griff**

## **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, nine to twelve children, with their parents, grandparents or carers, attend on a regular basis.

We follow a routine 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 preceded by grace, then more time to play. The adults and children then join in 'tidy up time' before moving into church for a 10–15-minute story from the Bible, worship and singing time.

We have received some lovely gifts of toys this year, including a work bench, kitchen, bikes and a doll's house. At our Christmas party the children all received a Christian book 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**

## **Webpage**

I would like to extend heartfelt thanks in particular to Mike Grant who worked tirelessly in 2023 gathering photos and the relevant information to ensure our new website, is contemporary, approachable and something we can all be proud of. It has to be said, been a challenge, 'that being quite an underestimate, if ever there has been!' However through perseverance the Webpage, went live in January 2024. Now the next challenge is to ensure you (*all*) keep it up to date, with articles and pictures, send anything you find of interest regarding church life to [admin@stbens.uk](mailto:admin@stbens.uk). Let's us also not underestimate the need for a digital presence, because whilst our previous / dated website was taken offline, we used the centralised facility 'A Church Near You' portal. Although not as good as the real thing, it did manage to achieve some 'internet presence' and this webpage 'A Church Near You' received more than 9,000 visits to our page within this time, and so its usefulness should not be underestimated.

Thanks are also due to Keith Mesdag for his hard work on this project. Also this year St Benedict's church was granted 10 free Microsoft licences, due to its charitable status, which is helping with our public image ([XX@stbens.uk](mailto:XX@stbens.uk) emails) and making our online access much better than ever before, especially our electronic calendars.

**Mike Grant & Rev. Griff**

Do ensure you look for the new webpage at the below web address, because the more people who search for and look at our webpage then the easier it will become to find.

[www.stbenedictschurchnorthampton.uk](http://www.stbenedictschurchnorthampton.uk)



### **Youth Fellowship Report 2023**

At the end of 2022, a decision was made that it was no longer possible for the youth fellowship to continue to meet in its previous format on a fortnightly basis due to a shortage of helpers. The youth fellowship however, has not completely folded as we continue to look at various ways to encourage our young people. During 2023 we reached out to them and have actively encouraged them to actively engage with other young people from across the county by attending a couple of the quarterly UNITE Christian events that take place at Kings Park Conference.

In an attempt to rebuild the youth fellowship, Griff has contacted and met with parents to discuss their preferences regarding a 'best fit' for future youth fellowship meeting days. We pray that 2024 will be a successful year for all.

***Constance Thomas***