

THE CHURCH OF ST JAMES THE GREAT, SILSOE

*LIVING OUR FAITH,
LOVING OUR COMMUNITY*



ANNUAL REPORT and FINANCIAL STATEMENTS of the PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL for the year ended 31 DECEMBER 2023

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Dear Church Family

Where did the last year go? It's been a busy year with significant events both in and outside the Church. Louise and I have greatly enjoyed all the opportunities to deepen personal faith and encourage community engagement wherever possible. The Alpha course invited people to explore faith at their own pace and the Christmas Journey enabled hundreds to time travel back to the first Christmas.

Last year was our first full year here and also marked us move from being interim vicars to being permanent. A sort of church equivalent (in footballing terms) of being on loan and now long term signed to the local church team! This gives us all a sense of commitment and longevity and we plan to encourage you all in what is yet to be.

Thank you for all the known and unknown volunteers that are found or hidden in the pages of this Report, beneath the facts and figures are people who faithfully serve God by supporting the Church; the Church would not be here without your efforts, thank you for all that you do.

Do please pray - the Report contains items of challenge and rejoicing and in all of these we need to come together to discern God's will for us as we move into the rest of 2024.

Some opportunities:

- We have an ongoing funding issues, as our income does not cover our expenses as a Church. Can we make this the year that this changes?
- How can we increase our engagement in the village so that people see this Church as their Church?
- We have a comprehensive Mission Action Plan but who will help in turning words into completed acts.

Thank you once again for your support, let us be excited about the future together.

Do get in touch if there's anything in this Report you would like to discuss.

With Love and Prayers

Simon and Louise

2023 SUMMARY



Our Report for 2023 contains much information about the life of our Church during 2023 which we hope you will find interesting and informative. The Report also contains statutory information that we are required to give each year.

Two things we are very grateful for in 2023 were that it was the first year since 2018 we have had a vicar for a full year plus have been able to have the Church open for a full year.

During the year, we have seen the introduction of new types of services, different types of study groups and social get togethers. In October, we were very pleased when Revs Simon and Louise Moore were appointed as our permanent vicars – having previously been licensed for an interim period. Throughout 2023, we have worked closely with the parishes of Flitton and Pulloxhill as a Benefice and there have been more Benefice wide events and initiatives.

Finances are a concern for a lot of churches these days and, unfortunately, Silsoe Church is not an exception. In 2023, despite an increase in fund-raising events, our outgoings were nearly £30 a day more than our income – a shortfall of some £10,500 which we have had to meet from reserves. We receive no day-to-day financial support from either the Government or the Church of England, so all our expenses have to be covered by congregational support, fund raising activities, fees and any grants or community donations we are able to raise.

On pages 10 to 28, you will find in depth reviews of activities and events of Silsoe Parochial Church Council during 2023, together with a detailed breakdown of our finances, which we hope you will find interesting and informative. This year, we have also included a detailed review of the finances and activities of the Benefice (see pages 4 to 9).

If you have any questions about the content of this Report or would like to find out more about Silsoe Church and/or our Parochial Church Council, please do not hesitate to contact any member of the PCC or the Vicars.

BENEFICE of FLITTON, PULLOXHILL & SILSOE

History

The Church of England works with a 'Parish System' – dividing the country up into small areas, each with one or more parish churches looked after by a parochial church council ('PCC'). A PCC is a body corporate (PCC Powers Measures 1956, Church Representation Rules 2006) and is a charity excepted from registration with the Charity Commission. In times gone by, each parish would have its own vicar. However, as rural populations declined parishes joined together to share their clergy. Where one or more parishes join together but remain separate legal entities, the union is called a benefice.

In 1920 the Parishes of Flitton and Pulloxhill joined together to form a benefice; in 1982 the Parish of Silsoe joined them and the Benefice of Flitton, Pulloxhill and Silsoe was created. The Parishes are all part of the Ampthill & Shefford Deanery, within the Diocese of St Albans which is part of the Church of England. The 3 Parishes remain independent of each other but share our Vicars, Revs Simon and Louise Moore. This means that each Parish pays only a part of the vicars' stipend and housing costs which, by agreement, are split so that Silsoe pays 50% and Flitton & Pulloxhill each pay 25%.

A vicar's stipend is set each year by the Church of England assuming that the vicar is reimbursed in full for parochial expenses. 'Parochial expenses' are the day-to-day running costs of the clergy and include things like stationery, books used to prepare sermons/conduct services, travel expenses, entertainment on official occasions to visiting ministers, officers of the church or members of church organisations. By agreement, the 3 Parishes share these costs in the same proportions as they share the stipendiary costs.

A PCC is responsible for co-operating with the clergy in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish the whole mission of the church - pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical – and in recent years, the 3 PCCs have been working more closely together as a Benefice with joint worship and fund raising initiatives. Currently, it is not possible for a Benefice to have a bank account or be registered for Gift Aid. Therefore, to simplify matters and avoid multiple payments and expense claims, all joint expenses and income for the Benefice are managed by Silsoe PCC, with Flitton and Pulloxhill PCCs making periodic contributions to cover their respective shares of the net cost.

Review of Benefice Activities through the year.

Discipleship & Spiritual Growth:

Alpha Course: Starting in January 2023, we ran the Alpha Course on Wednesday evenings at the Vicarage. Each evening began with a meal and was followed by an exploration of the basics of the Christian faith in a welcoming, open and friendly environment.

Lent : In March we ran Lent Groups focusing on prayer, having a particular relationship to the prayer in the last days of Jesus' life. These were held at the Vicarage with the same sessions in the afternoon and evening. In addition, one to one conversations with the either of the vicars or members of the ministry team were offered to encourage people in their spiritual journey.

Messy Church: Through 2023, we have held Messy Sundays on a regular basis around all 3 Parishes. Children, their families and people of all ages come together to enjoy songs, stories, puppets & crafts followed by supper. We are grateful for donations received to assist with Messy Sundays which enabled us to purchase banners to promote the sessions. Contributions received from people attending Messy Sunday are kept to help cover the costs of Messy Sundays and other family centric events and services.


© Bible Reading Fellowship 2021. See messychurch.org.uk

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BENEFACTORY of FLITTON, PULLOXHILL & SILSOE – continued

Review of Benefice Activities through the year – continued

Discipleship & Spiritual Growth: - continued

In May, there was an evening course about **Leading Intercessions**, for both those who already do lead and those interested in doing so.

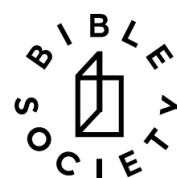
The Christmas Journey: In December Silsoe Church was transformed into 1st Century Palestine for children from Silsoe and Greenfield Schools to come along and visit Joseph, Mary, one of the shepherds and the wise woman who was helping the Wise Men prepare for their journey. On Saturday the Journey was open to everyone and we were delighted when some of the children came back with family and friends to take them on the Journey. We are very grateful to everyone who helped stage the Journey and to St Albans Diocese who provided a grant of £250 to cover some of the costs of staging the Journey and who also covered the cost of transporting children from Greenfield School to Silsoe (paid directly to the School).



In 2024, we will be staging the Journey elsewhere in the Benefice and inviting the classes who did not attend in 2023.

Bible Book Club: Throughout the year, the Bible Book Club met once a month at the Vicarage to share insights and thoughts on particular books or chapters of the Bible and also to ask questions.

Bible Fund: During 2022, funds were raised to help provide pew bible in all three churches and also to support the work of the Bible Society. At the very end of 2022, we were able to purchase 80 NIV Bibles together with 3 large print NIV Bibles. In 2023, we purchased an extra large print NIV Bible for each church for use on the lecterns, a Children’s Rainbow Bible for each church and a further 20 NIV Bibles.



| | 2023 | 2022 |
|------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Bible Fund at start of year | £485 | £0.00 |
| Income through year | £116 | £1,185 |
| Bibles purchased | -£319 | -£700 |
| Donation to Bible Society | -£221 | - |
| Bible Fund at end of year | £61 | £485 |

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BENEFICE of FLITTON, PULLOXHILL & SILSOE – continued**Review of Benefice Activities through the year** – continued**Discipleship & Spiritual Growth:** - continued

Children & Family Fund: The Benefice received a grant of £1,000 from the Diocese of St Albans to help with Children and Family Worship and with mission expenses - a Benefice Restricted Fund has been created for this and Messy Church donations. Christmas Journey grants, donations and expenses were dealt with through this Fund as well.

| | 2023 |
|----------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Children & Family Fund at start of year | £0 |
| Grants received | £1,250 |
| Donations received | £370 |
| Messy Church expenses | -£188 |
| Christmas Journey expenses | -£396 |
| Props & supplies for Children's services | -£65 |
| Children & Family Fund at end of year | <u>£971</u> |

Worship & Services:

Most Sundays, services are held in all three churches in the Benefice with at least one service of Holy Communion. A variety of other services are offered including Morning Worship and All Age Worship. Once a month all congregations come together for a United Benefice service – rotated around the 3 churches. In 2023, we introduced a single pew sheet for Sunday Services, rather than one for each Church and we are grateful to Martyn Gates who has produced the sheets through the year.

As well as Sunday services, there is a regular Said Communion using the Book of Common Prayer held on the 4th Friday of the month at Flitton Church.

Through Holy Week, we held a number of different service: we began with All Age Holy Communion on Palm Sunday, Midday prayers in Silsoe on the Monday, Night Prayers in Pulloxhill on the Tuesday and Morning Prayers in Pulloxhill on the Wednesday. On Maundy Thursday we shared a meal in Silsoe Church before an evening communion service. On Good Friday there were walks of witness and services in Silsoe and Pulloxhill. On Holy Saturday, we held vigil at Flitton before a Sunrise Communion Service on Easter Sunday in Pulloxhill and communion services in both Silsoe and Pulloxhill later in the day.

Throughout August, we held services of night prayer (Compline) each Wednesday evening, rotating around the Benefice churches.

On Wednesday mornings, Rev Simon and Rev Louise hold early morning prayers at 8:30am using Zoom enabling people to join in from their homes.

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BENEFICE of FLITTON, PULLOXHILL & SILSOE – continued**Review of Benefice Activities through the year** – continued**Worship & Services** – continued

In October 2023, Revs Simon and Louise Moore were licensed at Silsoe Church as our permanent vicars by the Archdeacon of Bedford, Dave Middlebrook, having been appointed on an interim basis in 2022. The Licensing was unusual in that it was held outdoors as, unfortunately, Simon and Louise both had Covid and were only present for the formal licensing. After that, they went back to the Vicarage and Archdeacon Dave led the Sunday service for which Simon and Louise had chosen the readings and hymns!

A month later, with Simon and Louise fully recovered, we had a United Benefice service in Flitton Church to celebrate the licensing and followed that with lunch for the Benefice congregation in Flitton Church Hall.

Mission & Neighbourhood Outreach:

Church Vision Mornings: In March and September, Revs Simon and Louise organised Church Vision Mornings to give people from around the Benefice the opportunity to come together to celebrate what has been achieved and discuss what the priorities should be for the future and what people hoped would be achieved both for the Benefice as a whole and their individual churches.

Living in Love and Faith Course: During September and October, people from all 3 Parishes gathered at the Vicarage for a 5 session course which was an opportunity to explore important issues relating to relationships, identity, marriage and civil partnerships from a faith perspective. Conversations have been ongoing in the Church of England over recent years, and parishes have been invited to engage with study, prayer and reflection.

On-line sermons: During the year, Rev Simon began to record a weekly 60 Second Sermon video which is published on the Benefice Website, our Church Facebook pages and our Virtual Vicar YouTube channel. In addition, our Vicars aim to record one of their Sunday Sermons each week and those recordings are available on the Benefice website.

Fellowship & Pastoral Care:

Maundy Meal: On Maundy Thursday, people from around the Benefice gathered in Silsoe Church to share a meal of lamb tagine with bread and salad followed by fruit before sharing communion – keeping close to the story of what happened that night when Jesus had supper with his friends on the night before he died.

Vicarage Tea Party: In August, Revs Simon and Louise hosted a tea party in the Vicarage garden. Parishioners from around the Benefice enjoyed a selection of delicious home made cakes and great conversations.

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BENEFICE of FLITTON, PULLOXHILL & SILSOE – continued

Review of Benefice Activities through the year – continued

Building Costs:

The PCCs do not have to cover the bulk of the cost of providing housing for our vicars – only being required to cover some small expenditure in relation to facilities at the Vicarage. In 2022, the Diocese covered all expenses until the Revs Moore moved into the Vicarage.

Leadership and Administration:

Benefice costs under Leadership and Administration include travel, stationery and postage, telephone & broadband, books and journals, etc. In addition, IT costs covering Zoom, the Benefice website and domain registration are covered by the Benefice. We have a leased heavy duty photocopier which is used to produce the service booklets and weekly pew sheets as well as other communications and invitations. The leasing charges and paper supply costs are covered by the Benefice.

When there is a funeral service at a crematorium, the fees paid by the family include a fixed amount for travel by the vicar. That travel fee is paid to the PCC where the deceased lived and then passed on to the Benefice Fund to be offset against the mileage paid to the vicars.

During 2023, some donations were received from individuals specifically to cover general Benefice expenses.

Benefice General Fund Income and Expenditure

As previously mentioned, Benefice Income & Expenditure is handled by Silsoe PCC on behalf of all 3 Parishes.

Details of the Benefice Bible Fund and the Children & Family Fund have been given earlier in this report. All other Benefice Income and Expenditure is handled through the Benefice General Fund and are shown on the following page.

The total figures for the Benefice General Fund, the Bible Fund and the Children & Family Fund are not included in the Financial Statements of Silsoe PCC – instead, only Silsoe PCC's share of the net expenses under the Benefice General Fund are included in the Silsoe PCC Accounts. This is a change to the presentation used in 2022 when certain elements of income were included in the Silsoe PCC accounts which led to a distortion of the PCC's income. The 2022 figures have been restated using this new basis and now represent a more accurate picture of the shortfall of Silsoe PCC's expenses over income.

BENEFACTORS of FLITTON, PULLOXHILL & SILSOE – continued**Benefice General Fund Income and Expenditure** - continued

| | 2023 | 2022 |
|------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Income | | |
| Donations received | £211 | £861 |
| Travel fees received | £70 | £140 |
| Total Income | £281 | £1,001 |
| Expense in connection with: | | |
| Discipleship & Spiritual Growth | -£143 | -£105 |
| Worship & Services | -£30 | -£797 |
| Mission & Neighbourhood Outreach | -£7 | - |
| Fellowship & Pastoral Care | -£278 | -£300 |
| The Vicarage Building | -£209 | -£68 |
| Leadership & Administration: | | |
| <i>Benefice photocopier</i> | -£1,450 | -£1,464 |
| <i>Books & Journals</i> | -£141 | -£95 |
| <i>Printer costs</i> | -£179 | -£83 |
| <i>Safeguarding</i> | -£37 | |
| <i>Software licenses</i> | -£85 | |
| <i>Stationery & postage</i> | -£75 | -£181 |
| <i>Telephone & broadband</i> | -£908 | -£370 |
| <i>Travel</i> | -£672 | -£340 |
| <i>Website costs</i> | -£58 | -£58 |
| <i>Zoom</i> | -£68 | -£40 |
| <i>Recruitment costs</i> | - | -£168 |
| Total Expenses | -£4,341 | -£4,069 |
| Shortfall | -£4,060 | -£3,068 |
| Paid by Silsoe PCC | £2,030 | £1,534 |
| Paid by Pulloxhill PCC | £1,015 | £767 |
| Paid by Flitton PCC | £1,015 | £767 |

Non-monetary assets at year end: Gazebos, storage boxes, costumes and assorted craft resources.

In 2022, Worship & Services expenses included the fees paid to vicars who took services before the Revs Moore were appointed. Also in 2022, in addition to the above figures, a grant of £250 towards the cost of a prayer course was received and spent in full.

ABOUT SILSOE CHURCH & PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

Silsoe Church is formally called St James the Great Church and is situated in the High Street, Silsoe, Bedfordshire, MK45 4DR; the correspondence address is The Vicarage, Fir Tree Road, Silsoe, MK45 4EA.

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. The membership of Silsoe PCC consists of the Vicars, Churchwardens and people elected by those members of the congregation who are on the Electoral Roll of the Church. The PCC can co-opt additional members to the Council during the year to fill any vacancies. All those who attend our services are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and stand for election to the PCC.

In 2023, there were 54 parishioners on the **Electoral Roll**, three of whom were not resident in the Parish.

Both our Vicars and two other members of the PCC sit on the **Deanery Synod**. This provides the PCC with an important link between the Parish and the wider structures of the Church of England. PCC members who have served from 1 January 2023 until the date this Report was approved are as follows:

Ex officio or by invitation members:

Vicars & Joint Chairs :

| | |
|-----------------|------------------|
| Rev Simon Moore | Rev Louise Moore |
|-----------------|------------------|

Churchwardens & Joint Lay Chairs:

| | |
|----------------|---------------|
| Gillian Liddle | Simon Stranks |
|----------------|---------------|

Deanery Synod Representatives

| | |
|----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Alan Aldridge | Also Secretary |
| Martyn Gates | Also Health & Safety Officer – Resigned 14 March 2024 |
| Michael Liddle | Co-opted to the PCC 18 January 2024. Deanery Synod representative from 15 March 2024 |

Elected members:

| | |
|-----------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| Gillian Chapple | Treasurer/Webmaster |
| Darren Couzens | Electoral Roll Officer – Resigned 16 April 2023 |
| Gordon Garvie | |
| Maggie Jeeves | Electoral Roll Officer from 17 April 2023 |
| Dr Chris Nixon | Resigned 16 April 2023 |
| Katie Shattock | Safeguarding Recruitment Officer |

We try to enable ordinary people to live out their faith as part of our Parish community through:

- Worship and prayer;
- Spiritual growth through learning about the Gospel and developing their knowledge and trust in Jesus;
- Provision of pastoral care for people living in the Parish;
- Missionary and outreach work;
- Friendship and neighbourhood outreach;
- Providing a warm and welcoming Church; and by

Living Our Faith, Loving Our Community

continued/...

ABOUT SILSOE CHURCH & PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL - continued

The full PCC met 6 times during 2023 with an additional special meeting, held by email, when they confirmed that they would approve the permanent appointment of Revs Simon and Louise Moore. There was an average level of attendance of 75%.

Regular reports were received from the Churchwardens, the Deanery Synod representatives, the Treasurer, the Safeguarding Officer and others regarding services, safeguarding compliance, finances, fund raising, the fabric of the Church and Churchyard and Deanery Synod meetings.

The PCC is required to appoint a **Standing Committee** which has power to transact the business of the PCC between its meetings, subject to any directions given by the PCC. The members of our Standing Committee are the Vicars, Churchwardens, Secretary and Treasurer.

As well as working with our Vicars to promote the whole mission of the church, the PCC is also specifically responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of Silsoe Church and Churchyard and is responsible for making decisions on all matters of general concern and importance to the Parish including deciding on how the funds of the PCC are spent.

The PCC is of the opinion that activities during this year (and preceding years) meet the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit and the guidance on charities for the advancement of religion.

HOW SILSOE CHURCH IS FUNDED

All the costs associated with Silsoe Church and Churchyard – the costs of having a vicar, the maintenance of the building and churchyard, gas, electricity, insurance, grass cutting, service provisions, etc – have to be covered by Silsoe PCC. The Government and the Church of England do not make any contribution to the costs – in fact, the PCC has to make payments to the Diocese of St Albans to help fund the work of the wider church in the Diocese, in providing support services and resources for parish ministries and also towards the cost of the National Church.

The PCC has several sources of income, the main one being **congregational giving** – at services, by bank transfer and donations. If the donor has completed a Gift Aid declaration, we are able to claim 25% of the donation from HMRC. In some circumstances under the Gift Aid Small Donations Scheme (GASDS) we are also able to claim 25% of service collections and donations which are made in the Church building even if they are not covered by Gift Aid declarations.

We may receive donations from **local community organisations** and are sometimes able to apply for **grants** from a variety of organisations. Silsoe Community Society donated £200 to help cover the cost of having the Church illuminated at Christmas. We also received £70 from Ampthill Deanery Synod to help cover the cost of heat and light when the Synod met in Silsoe Church.

We also receive donations from the Silsoe Church Estate charity. The Church Estate is completely separate from Silsoe PCC and St James the Great; it was established in the 1930s and, under the terms of its Trust documentation, is allowed to make donations towards the upkeep of the Church and the maintenance of Church services. However, the donations are limited to the clear income of the fund - the Trustees may not spend the capital. In 2023, the Church Estate donated £2,813 to the PCC (2022: £1,616).

As a PCC, we run a number of **fund raising events** through the year to help with cover running costs.

When a couple marry in our Church or there is a funeral or burial, there are **fees** payable which are set nationally by the Church of England. Part of those fees has to be paid to the Diocese of St Albans and the rest of the fees are retained by the PCC.

In the past, we have been fortunate to receive a number of **bequests** and we have been able to invest those to generate additional **investment income**. Some of the capital from those bequests has been used to cover large projects and also to cover the shortfall in the years when our income has not been sufficient to cover our expenses.

Sometimes, donations and grants are given to us with **restrictions** as to what the money can be used for and the PCC can only use the money for those purposes. Within our Report we show when restricted money is received and how we spend it. If the money is not used up in the year, we have to carry the excess forward – we are not allowed to use it for other purposes – and a restricted fund is created. We do not hold restricted funds in separate bank accounts, we use our accounting records to keep track of the funds and to apportion investment income to them appropriately.

On the following page you will find a breakdown of our income for 2023.

continued/...

HOW SILSOE CHURCH IS FUNDED – continued

| | 2023 | 2022 <i>restated – see page 8</i> |
|----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Congregational Giving | | |
| <i>Collections at church services</i> | £6,563 | £5,837 |
| <i>Collections at weddings, funerals & baptisms</i> | £628 | £1,182 |
| <i>Regular giving by standing order</i> | £9,954 | £8,499 |
| <i>Gift Aid and GASDS rebates</i> | £4,083 | £3,408 |
| Personal Donations | | |
| <i>Unrestricted use</i> | £900 | £753 |
| <i>Restricted use</i> | £390 | £269 |
| <i>Bequests</i> | £1,000 | - |
| <i>Gift Aid and GASDS rebates</i> | £276 | £190 |
| Community Donations & Grants (Restricted use) | £3,334 | £2,946 |
| Fund Raising Income (Gross) | £2,895 | £1,992 |
| Fees | £4,919 | £5,372 |
| Investment Income (Restricted use) | £675 | £662 |
| Investment Income (General use) | £1,753 | £1,338 |
| Sundry Income | £10 | £25 |
| TOTAL INCOME | <u>£37,380</u> | <u>£32,529</u> |

We are very grateful to all the individuals and organisations who support the Church throughout the year both financially and with their time and talents. Thank you.

DISCIPLESHIP and SPIRITUAL GROWTH

As noted on pages 4 to 6, there have been a number of Benefice wide opportunities for Discipleship and Spiritual Growth, including the Lent and Alpha courses, the Bible Book Club, Messy Church and the Christmas Journey, which we were very happy to host in Silsoe Church.



At Easter, Harvest time and Christmas children from Silsoe VC Lower School usually have special services in the Church when we welcome them, their parents and teachers to celebrate these occasions and classes from the school visit the Church and Churchyard on a regular basis as part of their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The church appoints 2 **Governors to the School**; Simon Stranks served as a Foundation Governor during 2023 – his term of office came to an end during the year but the School, Simon and the PCC were all happy for Simon to continue as a Foundation Governor for a further term. Angela Ayres joined Simon as a Foundation Governor towards the end of 2023 – hers is a Diocesan appointment on the recommendation of the PCC.

| Discipleship & Spiritual Growth Expenses | 2023 | 2022 |
|------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Share of Benefice Discipleship & Spiritual Growth expenses | -£72 | -£52 |
| Messy Church | = | -£35 |
| Total Expenditure | -£72 | -£87 |

In 2023, the costs of Messy Church and the Christmas Journey were fully covered by grants and donations

WORSHIP and SERVICES

During 2023 there were 42 Sunday services in our Church in addition to services for baptisms, weddings and funerals. The average weekly attendance on a 'normal' Sunday was 31 adults and 1 child (2022: 28 adults, 2 children).

Throughout the year we have had a number of special services. At **Easter**, we had services on Maundy Thursday (after we had shared a meal), Good Friday and Easter Sunday.

In May, we held a special Communion Service for the **coronation** of King Charles III. In June, we celebrated **Father's Day** with a Morning Worship service – having celebrated **Mothering Sunday** in March with an All Age Communion Service.

We welcomed some four-legged friends to Church for a **Pet Service** at the beginning of July. On the first Sunday in August, we held a **Healing Service** for the first time in many years. A week later and it was time for our version of **Songs of Praise**. Also in August we had **Compline** services.

We were delighted to welcome children from Silsoe VC Lower School to the Church to celebrate Harvest time and on the following Sunday, had **Harvest Festival**. At these services, we heard about the **Bishop of St Albans Harvest Appeal** which supported Mission Direct in their work in Kumi, Uganda, by providing materially poor families with chickens. We were able to donate **£112** to the Appeal (2022: £245) with a further £207 being donated directly from the services.



On 8 November, in front of Silsoe Church, the Archdeacon of Bedford **licensed** Revs Simon & Louise Moore as our permanent vicars. After this unusual licensing (due to Covid), Archdeacon Dave led a United Benefice Communion Service.

For **Remembrance Day**, the Scouts and Beavers paraded along the High Street to the Church. The Remembrance Service began with wreath laying in the Churchyard which, once again, had been beautifully decorated by the Silsoe Hobbies Group using the knitted poppies they had collected in 2022.

Following the Remembrance service, the PCC donated **£175** each to **Help for Heroes** and the **Royal British Legion** (2022: £176.45 each).



Later in November, we gave people the opportunity to remember their loved ones, light a candle, and hear the reading of their names at our **Remembered With Love Service**.

continued/...

WORSHIP and SERVICES - continued

At Christmas, we held our traditional **Carol Service and Midnight Service**, with a **Christingle Service** in early December and a **Crib Service** on Christmas Eve. We made a donation of **£175** to the **Children's Society** from the Christingle Service collection. In 2022, we held combined Christingle & Crib services and donated £293.77 to the Children's Society.



With a wide variety of services on offer in our Church and the other churches in the Benefice, we hope that there is some form of worship for everyone.

We endeavour to enable our community to celebrate and thank God at the milestones of the journey through life - through **baptisms** we thank God for the gift of life, in **marriage** public vows are exchanged with God's blessing and through **funeral services** family and friends express their grief and give thanks for the life which is now complete in this world and to commend the person into God's keeping.

Retiring collections at baptisms, blessings, funerals and memorial services raised £792.47 (2022: £744.57) for the Church.

We have celebrated 6 baptisms, 3 weddings and held 17 services for funerals, burial of ashes and memorials in our Church in 2023 (In 2022: 5 baptisms; 6 weddings, 1 blessing, 15 funerals/burial of ashes/memorial services). Fee income includes the statutory fees charged and optional extras such as heating and administrative assistance.

We are able to decorate our Church with beautiful flower arrangements thanks to the skills of our flower arrangers and also to a donation we received some years ago which was made solely to cover the costs of flower arrangements

| Worship & Services | 2023 | 2022 |
|-----------------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Share of Benefice Worship & Services expenses | -£15 | -£399 |
| Organists | -£745 | -£650 |
| Service books | -£55 | - |
| Christian Copyright Licenses | -£132 | -£123 |
| Palm Crosses/Special candles, etc | -£130 | -£127 |
| Communion items | -£55 | -£122 |
| Donations made | -£637 | -£1,826 |
| Sundry service expenses | -£33 | -£63 |
| Total Expenditure | -£1,802 | -£3,310 |

| Church Flower Fund | 2023 | 2022 |
|--------------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Fund at start of Year | £662 | £702 |
| Donations received | £289 | £262 |
| Interest on fund | £10 | £7 |
| Cost of flowers, foliage, etc. | -£272 | -£309 |
| Fund at end of Year | £689 | £662 |

In 2022, the donations made included £649 from the interim licensing service.

MISSION and NEIGHBOURHOOD OUTREACH

Through 2023 we tried to hold events in the Church which would be of interest to the whole community and which would present an opportunity for people to become familiar with the inside of the building.

On 1 April, we held an **Easter Craft Fair** with 16 stalls offering a variety of crafts for sale. There were Children's Easter activities all day in the Chancel, home made refreshments on sale and a Guess the Number of Eggs competition (won by Tamsin who went home very happy with 214 eggs!).



The Craft Fair raised £490 for the Church (Income £528, Expenses £38).

In July, we held the 2nd **Silsoe Fun Dog Show**, as part of the Silsoe Fun Day. All the dogs (and their owners) were very well behaved and great fun was had by entrants and onlookers alike. Congratulations go to Watson who won Handsomest Boy and went on to win Best in Show and to Maude who was the Most Adorable Adult and Reserve Best In Show



WATSON



MAUDE

Our thanks go to the businesses which sponsored the classes and donated prizes and to everyone who entered. Sponsorship, entry fees and a doggie tombola helped us generate a net profit of £519 (Income £659, Expenses £140) (Net income 2022:£613).

At the end of September, we had our **Harvest Supper** in the Village Hall – people tucked in to a traditional Ploughman's meal whilst tackling the 2 table quizzes. As well as being an enjoyable evening shared with friends and neighbours, the Harvest Supper raised £550 (Income £965, Expenses £415). (In 2022, the Harvest Supper was organised by the Friends of Silsoe Church so the proceeds did not appear in the Church accounts).

continued/...

MISSION and NEIGHBOURHOOD OUTREACH - continued

The 2023 Silsoe Photography Competition was on the theme 'Friendship' and all the entries were displayed at the **Photography Exhibition** in October. We were pleased to welcome the photographers and visitors from the village and beyond who came to have a look at all the wonderful photos on display (and to vote for their favourite).

Congratulations go to Aylth who won the 17 and Under class, Rachel who won the 18 & over and Paul whose image was the People's Choice.



The Photography Competition & Exhibition raised £327 (Income £382, Expenses £55) (2022 net income: £438)



In the evening of 31 October, our Church shone brightly into the night and was a warm and welcoming place when Rev Louise, Rev Simon and helpers invited children and their parents to take **Light into Darkness** by making and decorating a lantern as well as warm up with hot chocolate and sweets.

On the Saturday of **The Christmas Journey** event, we were delighted when children who had been earlier in the week, came back with their parents and siblings to take them on the Journey (See page 5 for more information). On 20 December, Rev Simon, Rev Louise and Jackie Williams led a group of **carol singers** around Silsoe starting from the Church and ending at the Star and Garter – an enjoyable time for all plus they raised £300 for Keech Hospice Care.

Throughout 2023 we continued to sell greetings cards from the **Silsoe Greetings Card Project**, raising £346 for the Church (2022 net income £294). All production expenses were covered by card sales in 2022 so all future sales are clear funds for the Church.

We are very grateful to everybody who helped with and/or contributed to our fund raising initiatives this year.

continued/...

MISSION and NEIGHBOURHOOD OUTREACH - continued

Together with the Parish Council, the PCC supports the production of the local monthly Parish magazine, **Silsoe News**, by providing grants to help cover costs, when these are not met by advertising income. In 2023 a grant of £250 was made (2022: £250). Silsoe News is distributed free to every house in the village and provides local news and information to the whole community, including a full list of services for each church in the Benefice, as well as keeping our parishioners informed of the important matters affecting our Church.

General information about the Benefice can be found at <https://3churches.uk/> and information specific to St James the Great, Silsoe can be found at <https://silsoe.3churches.uk/>.

We also have a **Facebook** page - <https://www.facebook.com/ThreeChurchesUBSFP/>

Each week, we publish on our Benefice website and our Church Facebook page details of the services being held around the Benefice and various notices and upcoming events. Information is also posted to the Silsoe Network Facebook page.

| Mission & Neighbourhood Outreach | 2023 | 2022 |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|-------------|
| Fund Raising Income net of expenses of £667 (2023), £516 (2022) | £2,228 | £1,476 |
| Expenses | | |
| Share of Benefice Mission & Neighbourhood Outreach expenses | -£4 | - |
| Silsoe News | -£250 | -£250 |
| Sundries | - | -£41 |
| Total Net Income | £1,974 | £1,185 |

FELLOWSHIP and PASTORAL CARE

After a service in the Church, there's tea and coffee and a chance to chat with our fellow congregation members.

On Maundy Thursday, we were delighted to host the **Maundy Meal** for the Benefice where we shared a lamb tagine before communion..

In August, people from all 3 parishes had a chance to meet up at the **Vicarage Tea Party** – our thanks go to Revs Simon and Louise for hosting and to everybody who contributed cakes and other goodies.



On Mothering Sunday we gave **posies** to the mothers and grandmothers at our Mothering Sunday service.

We are pleased to offer Silsoe Church as a place for **quiet reflection and private prayer** throughout the week, with the Church being open daily from 9am to 4pm.

As a village, Silsoe has generously supported the local **Food Banks** and the Church has been used as a collection point. In addition, food donated at our various Harvest services has been sent to food banks.



In September, Martyn Gates was presented with the Order of St Albans by Bishop Alan. The honour is bestowed on people who have offered faithful and committed service over a substantial period of time. In his citation, the Bishop referred to Martyn's support and advice to the Diocese on architectural matters and specifically ensuring adequate facilities are available for the disabled throughout the Diocese.

Martyn, seen here with Rev Simon at St Albans Abby, is proudly displaying his engraved silver medal and certificate.

Martyn and his wife Margaret will be leaving the village in 2024 and will be greatly missed. We are very grateful to Martyn for all his hard work for the PCC over many years. During Bernard Nixon's Tenure Margaret helped with the Sunday school and monthly with the family service. Also, in Steven

Holroyd's time, she was a Foundation Governor at Silsoe School for 8 years. We wish them every happiness in their new life in Lincolnshire

| Fellowship & Pastoral Care Expenses | 2023 | 2022 |
|-------------------------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Share of Benefice Fellowship & Pastoral Care expenses | -£139 | -£150 |
| Sundries | -£30 | -£39 |
| Total Expenses | -£169 | -£189 |

BUILDING and CHURCHYARD

We are very grateful to everybody who keeps our Church looking clean and tidy from week to week. As well as the regular cleaning, we have had some deep cleaning sessions.

The grass in the Churchyard is cut during the growing season by outside contractors. In March 2023 we held a Churchyard Spring Clean – thanks to everyone who came along with their gardening tools to help.

We have a waste disposal contract which enables people who are tending family graves to dispose of old flowers, etc in addition to enabling us to get dispose of general rubbish from the Church. Our contract covers us for a certain weight each month – if the bin is overweight we have to pay an additional charge.

The PCC is responsible for the maintenance of certain graves and gravestones in the Churchyard, having received bequests from the families many years ago. The capital of the bequests is invested to produce an income, which can be used for the upkeep and maintenance of the Churchyard if it is not needed for the families' graves and gravestones. In 2023, one of the gravestones needed to have the lettering redone - the first time we have had to spend money on it for many years. The PCC is not allowed to use any capital on maintenance.

| Churchyard | General | | Grave Bequest Fund | |
|----------------------------|----------------|---------|--------------------|-------|
| | 2023 | 2022 | 2023 | 2022 |
| Income | | | £665 | £662 |
| Expenses | | | | |
| Grave repairs | - | - | -£504 | - |
| Rubbish Disposal | -£957 | -£842 | | |
| Grass Cutting | -£979 | -£843 | -£161 | -£662 |
| Tree surgery | - | -£2,880 | | |
| Repairs to churchyard wall | | -£1,435 | | |
| Churchyard sundries | -£11 | -£60 | - | - |
| Net Expenses | -£1,947 | -£6,060 | - | - |

On Saturday 12th August 2023 Archdeacon Dave Middlebrook came to inspect the Church and various records - 'The Archdeacons' Visitation'. Our Churchwardens Gillian Liddle and Simon Stranks accompanied him and were delighted to report that the Archdeacon found everything to be in good order.

In November, the routine servicing of the central heating system found a fault with the pressurisation unit and this had to be replaced at a cost of some £2,600 in order to ensure that the Church kept people warm through the winter services.

The organ proved a bit temperamental in 2023, needing two repair visits in addition to regular service visits.

Gas and electricity continue to be our largest expenses in maintaining the Church and Churchyard. These costs are offset very slightly by the fees charged for heat at life events. We received a grant from Silsoe Church Estate to help cover the costs of services and from Silsoe Community Society to help with lighting the Church at Christmas.

continued/...

BUILDING and CHURCHYARD - continued

| Buildings | General | | Restricted Grants | |
|-------------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|--------------------------|-------------|
| | 2023 | 2022 | 2023 | 2022 |
| Income | | | £3,504 | £3,241 |
| Expenses | | | | |
| Share of Benefice Building expenses | -£104 | -£34 | | |
| General repairs & maintenance to Church | -£767 | -£367 | | |
| Central heating repairs & maintenance | -£3,532 | -£818 | | |
| Clock maintenance | -£180 | -£150 | | |
| Electrical testing of equipment & systems | -£960 | -£75 | | |
| Fire extinguisher maintenance | -£388 | -£316 | | |
| Repairs & maintenance of organ & piano | -£373 | -£220 | | |
| Floor repairs | - | -£402 | | |
| Electricity, gas & water | -£754 | -£479 | -£3,504 | -£3,241 |
| Quinquennial Inspection | - | -£1,595 | - | - |
| Net Expenses | -£7,058 | -£4,456 | - | - |

We are grateful to Martyn Gates and Michael Olney who keep a watchful eye on the fabric of the Church and to Jill Liddle who liaises with contractors needing access to the Church to carry out their work.

LEADERSHIP and ADMINISTRATION

SAFEGUARDING and HEALTH and SAFETY

Our Church fully supports and endorses the Church of England's safeguarding policy for children, young people and adults and safeguarding has been an agenda item for every PCC meeting. Elaine Couzens, our Parish Safeguarding Officer, usually attends PCC meetings to update the PCC in connection with safeguarding requirements. As at 31st December 2023, the PCC and Parish Safeguarding Officer are working together to follow the Diocese safeguarding policies, procedures and training requirements. The Parish Safeguarding Officers for all 3 parishes within the Benefice plan to have regular meetings in 2024 to share best practice and support safeguarding within the three churches. At the end of 2023, all PCC members held DBS certificates.

A link to the Parish Safeguarding Handbook can be found on our website at www.3churches.uk/safeguarding-information/

The PCC are grateful to Martyn Gates who has kept a watchful eye on things as the Health and Safety Officer during 2023.

DEANERY SYNOD

Our Deanery Synod representatives in 2023 were Rev Simon and Rev Louise from the House of Clergy, and Alan Aldridge and Martyn Gates from the House of Laity. Alan serves as the Deanery Secretary, while Martyn has held the roles of Deanery Treasurer and served on various committees within the Diocese. Lay Members are elected for a three-year term, which will conclude in 2026.

The Deanery has undergone a number of changes during the year, including clergy vacancies and the transition of the Rural Dean position from Lynda Klimas to Rev Claire Harald, who also serves as the vicar of Flitwick. Three Deanery meetings were held in 2023 - in March at Maulden, June at Flitwick, and November at Silsoe. These meetings typically feature a guest speaker, updates from the Rural Dean and Treasurer, reports from various synods, and insights from parish representatives. Notable speakers included Madeline and Archie Russell from the Beds and Herts Historic Building Trust and Ann Wise, the Diocese Historic Buildings Support Officer. The June meeting marked the beginning of a new triennium, with new members joining the Synod. The November meeting featured a presentation by the Very Revd Jo Kelly Moore, Dean of St Albans Cathedral, focusing on the Cathedral's role in the Diocese and gathering feedback from Synod members. This meeting also marked the Rural Dean's final gathering before passing on the role to the new appointee.

With Martyn relocating, Michael Liddle has volunteered to take his place as our second Synod Lay member, a decision that has been warmly accepted by the PCC. His appointment will be finalized at the 2024 Annual Parochial Church Meeting; Martyn's departure will result in the loss of the valuable knowledge and advice he has provided to the Deanery and Diocese, for which the PCC and Deanery members have expressed gratitude.

PARISH SHARE

The Parish Share is the money the PCC has to pay to the Diocesan Common Fund which is used to cover the cost of providing clergy to minister in our parishes; their stipends and related costs, their housing and training, both pre and post ordination. Money is also used to fund the work of the wider church in our Diocese, in providing support services and resources for parish ministries, and also a contribution towards the costs of the National Church.

Our Parish Share is made up of two parts, the Stipend Contribution – which is a contribution towards the cost of the provision of clergy; and the Ministry Support Contribution – which goes to support the wider church.

continued/...

LEADERSHIP and ADMINISTRATION continued**PARISH SHARE** – continued

Silsoe's Ministry Support Contribution is calculated using a formula based on the 3 year average of the number of people on the Electoral Roll and the usual Sunday attendance at services, together with a factor decided by the Diocese which reflects their perception of the variations of the 'ability to pay' between parishes.

| | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 |
|-------------------------------|---------|----------------|---------|
| Stipend Contribution | £12,539 | £14,444 | £14,837 |
| Ministry Support Contribution | £12,148 | £12,574 | £12,816 |
| Total Parish Share | £24,687 | £27,018 | £27,653 |

The Stipend Contribution in 2022 was reduced as we had vicars for only part of the year.

CONTACTLESS GIVING

During 2023 we received a grant of £250 from St Albans Diocese to help with the costs of providing contactless giving options within the Church. In order to provide contactless giving facilities we have had to introduce limited wi-fi connectivity to the Church. The whole of the grant was used up in the year.

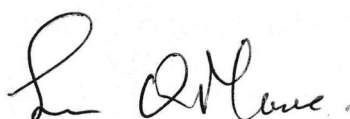
FINANCE CHARGES

In order to provide people with the opportunity to make contactless donations, it has been necessary for the PCC to have a contract with an organisation which processes credit and debit card payments. All such organisations charge for their services by taking a percentage of the amount paid by card. The charge varies depending on the type of card used and whether it is a business or personal card.

Leadership & Administration Expenses

| | 2023 | 2022 |
|--------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Share of Benefice Leadership & Administration expenses | -£1,696 | -£899 |
| Parish Share | -£27,018 | -£24,687 |
| Insurance | -£2,290 | -£2,158 |
| Contactless Giving facilities (<i>net of grant</i>) | -£105 | - |
| Travel | -£14 | -£14 |
| Stationery & postage | -£64 | -£97 |
| Safeguarding expenses | - | -£9 |
| Finance charges | -£17 | -£3 |
| Sundry expenses | <u>-</u> | <u>-£1,000</u> |
| Total Net Expenditure | -£31,204 | -£28,867 |

Signed:



Approved by the PCC on 14 March 2024 and signed on their behalf by Reverend Simon Moore

FINANCIAL REVIEW & STATEMENTS

This year our financial information has been presented in a different way to previous years, with detailed income and expenditure shown in the body of the Report – please refer to the appropriate section of the Report when looking at the summary information in the following pages.

Silsoe Parochial Church Council - Summary Income & Expenditure 2023

| INCOME | 2023 | 2022 – restated <i>See Page 8</i> |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Congregational Giving & Personal Donations | £23,794 | £20,137 |
| Community Donations & Grants Received | £3,334 | £2,946 |
| Fund Raising Income (<i>Gross</i>) | £2,895 | £1,992 |
| Fees | £4,919 | £5,372 |
| Interest & Investment Income | £2,428 | £2,057 |
| Sundry Income | <u>£10</u> | <u>£25</u> |
| TOTAL INCOME | <u>£37,380</u> | <u>£32,529</u> |
| EXPENDITURE | | |
| Discipleship & Spiritual Growth | -£72 | -£87 |
| Worship & Services | -£2,074 | -£3,619 |
| Mission & Neighbourhood Outreach (<i>incl Fund Raising expenses</i>) | -£921 | -£807 |
| Fellowship & Pastoral Care | -£169 | -£189 |
| Buildings & Churchyard | -£13,174 | -£14,419 |
| Leadership & Administration | -£31,455 | -£28,867 |
| | <u>-£47,865</u> | <u>-£47,988</u> |
| TOTAL EXPENDITURE | | |
| EXCESS OF EXPENDITURE OVER INCOME | <u>-£10,485</u> | <u>-£15,459</u> |

In 2023 our income increased by nearly £5,000 compared to 2022 whilst our expenditure remained almost level. Although it was pleasing to see this increase, we still do not raise sufficient funds to cover our expenses and we have depleted our reserves by £10,485 in order to cover the shortfall (2022: £15,459). We have seen a shortfall of income over expenditure in 7 out of the last 10 years and have used up reserves of some £123,000 in that period; £80,000 of this shortfall was the major building work which was carried out in 2015. We have been able to cover the shortfalls due to two sizeable bequests which were left to the Church in 2003 and 2013.

We are very grateful to our congregation who, despite the economic climate in 2023, increased their financial support of the Church by just over £2,650 overall. Details of the Community Grants and Donations we received can be found on page 12. The Church Estate charity has made donations to help with costs for many years. However, due to a change in the Estate's circumstances, we expect their contribution in 2024 to reduce significantly and may not receive any money at all from the charity.

Investment income, which is primarily interest on cash deposits, has been in decline for several years due to low interest rates. Although interest rates have now increased, they do not match inflation and, with the erosion of our capital due to the shortfalls, we have less money to invest. Investment opportunities are limited as the PCC do not consider it appropriate to place money in investments where the capital invested is at risk.

continued/...

FINANCIAL REVIEW & STATEMENTS - continued

Restricted, Unrestricted and Designated Funds

It is a requirement of the Charities Act and the Church Accounting Regulations that information contained in PCC financial statements be presented in such a way so as to demonstrate that where the PCC has received money for specific purposes, that money has only been used for those purposes. Where money is donated for a specific cause (or with certain restrictions placed on its use) it is known as 'Restricted Funds', all other funds are known as 'Unrestricted Funds'.

The PCC may use Unrestricted Funds for any purposes it sees fit and may, if it feels it appropriate, create Designated Funds for specific purposes. At a later date, the PCC may re-designate those funds for other purposes.

At the end of 2023 the following Restricted Funds were in place:

Maintenance of the Church, Churchyard and specific graves - *'the Grave Bequests'*
Provision of flowers, oasis, foliage, etc - *'the Flower Fund'*

In addition there were 3 Restricted Funds handling Benefice income & expenditure:

Joint Benefice income and expenditure – *'the Benefice General Fund'*
Provision of bibles for Benefice churches & the world-wide community – *'the Benefice Bible Fund'*
Encouragement of Children and Family worship – *'the Benefice Children & Family Fund'*

During 2023, other Restricted Funds were created but these were fully paid out during the year.

The Restricted Funds are not held in separate bank accounts; accounting records are used to keep track of the funds and to apportion investment income to them appropriately.

A summary of the assets held and the allocation between funds is shown on the following page.

Examination of the financial statements

The PCC is required to have its financial statements examined by an Independent Examiner but is not required to have a formal audit. An Independent Examiner is described under the Charities Act as an independent person who is considered to have the requisite ability and practical experience to carry out a competent examination of the financial statements. 'Independent' means the individual must have no connection with the PCC or the Parish that might appear to be prejudicial to an impartial examination of the financial statements.

John Playle has been our Independent Examiner for several years and was elected as our Independent Examiner for the 2023 accounts at the 2022 Annual Parochial Church Council. Unfortunately John has become ill and was not able to perform the examination. We wish John well and pray for his recovery. We are grateful to Mick Platt, who has undertaken the examination at short notice. Mick has a background in finance and is Chief Executive Officer of a property management company. He is also the Independent Examiner for Flitton PCC. The Independent Examiner's report can be found on Page 29

FINANCIAL REVIEW & STATEMENTS – continued**Asset Statements as at 31 December 2023**

| | Silsoe PCC | | Benefice Funds | |
|-----------------------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| | 2023 | 2022 | 2023 | 2022 |
| OPENING BALANCE as at 1 January | £151,186 | £169,534 | £485 | £0 |
| Change in market value of investments | £2,065 | -£2,889 | - | - |
| Excess of Expenditure over income | -£10,485 | -£15,459 | £546 | £485 |
| Closing balance as at 31 December | <u>£142,766</u> | <u>£151,186</u> | <u>£1,031</u> | <u>£485</u> |
| Made up of | | | | |
| Investments with the Central Board of Finance | £23,826 | £21,761 | - | - |
| Bank accounts & cash | £32,860 | £46,599 | £1,031 | £485 |
| Term deposits & notice accounts | £83,392 | £81,643 | - | - |
| Plus: Money due but not received | £4,382 | £4,504 | - | - |
| Less: Money owed but not paid | -£1,694 | -£3,321 | - | - |
| | <u>£142,766</u> | <u>£151,186</u> | <u>£1,031</u> | <u>£485</u> |
| Allocation between funds | | | | |
| General Reserves – Unrestricted | £118,251 | £128,763 | - | - |
| Grave Bequests – Restricted | £23,826 | £21,761 | - | - |
| Flower Fund – Restricted | £689 | £662 | - | - |
| Benefice Bible Fund – Restricted | - | - | £61 | £485 |
| Benefice Children & Family Fund - Restricted | - | - | £970 | - |
| | <u>£142,766</u> | <u>£151,186</u> | <u>£1,031</u> | <u>£485</u> |

INVESTMENTS:

The investments with the Central Board of Finance cannot be spent. These represent the capital bequests for the Grave Trusts. The PCC is required to maintain the original capital which is invested with the Central Board of Finance of the Church of England. The capital value has been assessed using the bid price.

BANK ACCOUNTS:

The PCC has a number of bank accounts and deposit accounts with different organisations, making use of fixed term deposits to try to maximise interest earned. The PCC's main current account is with the Co-operative Bank. The fixed term and notice deposits are with Cambridge & Counties Bank

continued/...

FINANCIAL REVIEW - continued

NON-MONETARY ASSETS:

The PCC holds the following non-monetary assets:


- Church plate, communion linen & vestments
- Ornaments and furniture in the Chancel, Vestry and body of the Church
- Sound system in the Church
- Contactless giving equipment
- Sundry pieces of office equipment and machines
- Sundry fundraising stock – greetings cards, dog show prizes

BENEFICE NON-MONETARY ASSETS:

The Benefice has a number of non-monetary assets which are held by the Vicars and in various locations around the Benefice:

- Gazebos
- Storage boxes
- Costumes
- Assorted craft resources

Signed:



Mrs Gillian A Chapple – Treasurer

Date: 14 March 2024

REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT EXAMINER

This is my report to the Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish (PCC) of St James the Great, Silsoe on the annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2023 set out on Pages 3 to 28.

The PCC is responsible for the preparation of the annual report and financial statements in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act') a

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

An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the PCC and a comparison of the financial statements presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the financial statements, and seeking explanations from the Standing Committee concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the financial statements present a 'true and fair' view and my report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below

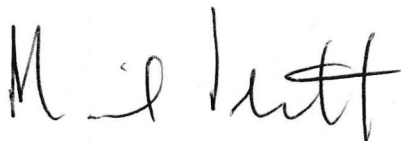
Independent Examiner's Statement

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

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records

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

Signed:



Mick Platt, FCA (Fellow of ICAEW), AMCT

Date: 29 March 2024