



Building God's House

**Knowing Jesus
and making Him known**

**Transforming Lives and
Communities**



**Annual
Report
2023**

Pages 1- 19

These pages represent our report to The Charities Commission in a format and with content as required for charities with an income greater than £100,000

Ecumenical Church Council formally approved the report on
14th March 2024

Pages 20-28

These pages celebrate the mission and ministry of The Dorcan Church and are reports that have been offered by the Church family.

ANNUAL REPORT and FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the year ended 31st December 2023

Legal and Administrative information

Chair of ECC

Nathalie Marshall
6 Sutton Road
Eldene
SWINDON
SN3 6BX

Charity number

1143702

Churchwarden

Diane Killick
15, Popplechurch Drive
Covingham
Swindon
SN3 5DE

Churchwarden

Vacancy

ECC Secretary

Nicki Broom
18 Fairlawn
Liden
Swindon
SN3 56ET

ECC Treasurer

Mr Anthony Prichard
1, Poltondale
Covingham
Swindon
SN3 5BN

Bankers

The Co-operative Bank,
PO Box 250,
Skelmersdale
WN8 6WT

Independent Examiner

Mr Paul J Crowley FCA
Derrick Newman Limited Chartered
Accountants,
29 Bath Road,
Swindon SN1 4AS

Church Address Details

St Pauls
St Paul's Drive
Covingham
Swindon SN3 5BY

St Timothy's
Grundys
Liden
Swindon SN3 6HP

Church office at St Pauls: 01793 435987 | dorcan.church.office@gmail.com
www.dorcanchurch.org.uk



THE DORCAN CHURCH

*A Local Ecumenical Partnership between
The Church of England & the Methodist Church
Serving the Swindon urban villages of Covingham, Nythe, Liden & Eldene.*

Through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the world has been reconciled to God, and in Jesus Christ unity has been offered to all people. Through the Word, we are called into a relationship with God and with one another as the children of God – a relationship inaugurated by Baptism into Christ through the Holy Spirit, nurtured and deepened through the ministry of word and sacrament and expressed in a confession of one faith and a common life of loving service.

(From the Declaration of Intent of the Dorcan Church)

OUR PURPOSE

“Transforming lives and communities,
Knowing Jesus, and making Him known”

OUR PICTURE OF CHURCH

“A growing and vibrant church,
confident in its purpose and trusting in God”

A church which makes Jesus known
A church of disciples
A church in, and for, the community
A church which cares

ROLE OF ECC

The Trustees of the Dorcan Church are the Dorcan Ecumenical Church Council, which has the responsibility of co-operating with the Incumbents in promoting the activities of the Church in the Community. Members of the Dorcan Ecumenical Church Council are either ex-officio, elected at the Annual Church Meeting or co-opted in accordance with the Constitution Governing Document dated 10th April 2011, as amended from time to time thereafter.

Membership of Ecumenical Church Council (2023-2024)

Elected Members (elected for 3-year term)

Nicki Broom	until 2026
Nicki Clinch	until 2026
Nathalie Marshall	until 2026
Neil Marshall	until 2026
Peter Mulcock	until 2026
Chris Rose	until 2026
Clare Rose	until 2026
Jenny Poole	until 2026
Clare Smith	until 2024
Albertine Davies	until 2024
Janet Prichard	until 2025
Tony Prichard	until 2025
Anne Davey RIP	until 2025

Co-opted Members (co-opted for 1-year term)

Sue Morgans	until 2024
-------------	------------

Deanery Synod Representatives (elected for a 3-year term)

Jenny Poole	until 2026
-------------	------------

Churchwarden (appointed on an annual basis)

Diane Killick	until 2024
---------------	------------

Vacancy

Ministers

Revd Trudie Wigley	ex-officio
Revd Stuart Fisher	ex-officio
Revd Stephen Roe	ex-officio

ECC officers

Diane Killick	Church Warden
Vacancy	Church Warden
Nathalie Marshall	Chair
Tony Prichard	Treasurer
Nicki Broom	ECC Secretary

Other Appointments: Church Stewards (Appointed on an annual basis)

Other non-trustee elected Positions:

St Paul's

Nathalie Marshall	Senior Church Steward
Neil Marshall	
Diane Killick	Church Warden
Angela Davidson	
Clare Rose	
Jo Hannigan	
Nicki Broom	ECC Secretary

St Timothy's

Jo Bush
 Sarah Paterson
 Brenda Phillips
 Ruth Dartnel
No Senior Church Steward appointed

Representatives to the Methodist Circuit meeting

Nathalie Marshall
 Tony Prichard

Additional Facts and Figures

Average Sunday Attendance (October count statistics):

St Pauls	46 adults	4 under 16s
St Timothy's	19 adults	8 under 16
Messy Church (monthly)	14 adults	22 under 16
Church at home services	0 people participated online	
Total	79 adults	34 under 16s

Typical week-day attendance: 2023 average

Tiny Tots St Paul's	24 adult's	20 children	
Tiny Tots St Timothy's	23 adult's	24 children	
Cids Café St Paul's	30 adult's	0 children	4 volunteers
Cid's Too St Tim's	15 adult's	7 children	2 volunteers
Blaze	7 adult's	20 children	
Youth Group	8 adult's	20 children	
Morning Prayer	4 adults		
Total	111 adult's	91 children	

Occasional offices:

	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015
Baptisms	3	3	1	0	12	10	15	14	15
Funerals	7	7	16	18	16	24	9	13	16
Confirmations	0	0	0	0	5	4	0	1	4
Weddings	1	0	1	0	1	0	2	0	1

CHANGES IN APPOINTMENTS OF AUTHORISED MINISTRIES

No changes to report this year

Trudie Wigley

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The method of appointment of ECC members is set out in the Constitution Governing Document dated 10th April 2011, as amended thereafter. All those who are part of the church are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and may then stand for election to ECC. The maximum number of elected members to ECC is 13.

Meetings of ECC

The trustees met 6 times during 2023 in January, March, June, July, September and November, all in person. We are grateful to everyone who serves on ECC, for their time, energy and wisdom, and for the discussions we have had this year. It has not always been easy as we have had some challenging conversations, particularly on the LEP future and Living in Love and Faith, yet we have navigated though challenges with grace and tolerance which is down to the love and compassion of each member. Thank you.

Committees and working groups

The aims of the charity are affected through a number of committees and teams, as follows:

Centre Management Committee: The Centre Management Committee meets to co-ordinate property-related matters across the Dorcan Church in support of the Church's Vision and Mission. It forms a link between the 'do-ers' and the decision-making processes at Finance and ECC. It provides oversight to the Centre Administrator in the letting, maintenance and development of the premises at St Paul's and St Timothy's. The Centre Management Committee also sets out to balance the use of the centres both a) to help enable the mission of the church and b) to provide facilities for the benefit of the community. The committee also delegates to other sub-groups, such as the AV scoping team.

Children and Young People: Our strong ministry to CYP continues through our schools' work - assemblies, Christmas unwrapped, Easter cracked open, festival services; missional outreach to young people and pre-schoolers in our community through Blaze/Youth group, Messy Church and Tiny Tots; as well as nurturing and caring for those children and young people who worship with us and are a part of The Dorcan Church. Currently each area of our CYP work meets independently and we do need to look at periodically coming together to support each other and look holistically at our CYP ministry.

Finance Committee: The team worked under the delegated authority of ECC and looks after our financial resources, managing the day-to-day finances of income, giving and expenditure. It looks to prepare an annual budget for approval by the ECC.

Focus group: The group was created post-Covid to work on strategy and direction and to provide a place of initial thinking to discuss creative ideas and their role within priorities agreed by ECC. We were not able to progress the suggestion to use this as an initial place for our LEP work, however when our new legal constitution is implemented towards the end of 2024/early 2025 and then bedded in, we will need to turn and look at the mission and ministry at Dorcan Church. This will include how we might engage and seek resources, through the Diocese "Transforming Church Together" strategy and possibly the Methodist "New Places for New People" vision.

"Nuts and Bolts" team: The team comprises the Church Warden(s), Senior Steward and Incumbents. The group meets every 3-4 weeks and focuses on the day-to-day running of the church, centre, and upcoming services. It also serves as a sharing and ideas forum amongst these officers to aid communication and smooth running, as well as being a place of support and accountability.

Preaching team: The team met four times together, studying the Bible and praying together. It also focus on some of the practicalities of worship, as well as planning, spiritual growth, discipleship, preaching and prayer ministry.

Safeguarding: Safeguarding practice is central to the mission and ministry of the church. The safeguarding team work to ensure that children and vulnerable adults are safe in our churches, and that all those who are survivors of abuse are listened to, valued and supported. Whilst we are set up as a team, we currently do not have an overall Parish Safeguarding Officer who provides oversight and review and this needs to be addressed with urgency. **It should be noted that Safeguarding remains the legal responsibility of the ECC.**

Standing Committee: The standing committee is authorised by the ECC. It has the power to transact the business of the ECC between meetings, subject to any direction from ECC. It comprises seven people, with a quorum of five from the Ministers (including Anglican and Methodist incumbents), Churchwarden, Treasurer and two others from ECC. If there is business to transact, it meets between the bi-monthly ECC meeting to agree risk assessments, finances, attend to other day-to-day requirements and deal with urgent items that cannot wait until the next ECC.

Trudie Wigley

ELECTORAL ROLL Membership & Church Links

2024/23	2023/22	2022/21	2021/20	2020/19*	2019/18	2018/17	2017/16	2016/15
144	141	139	146	147*	162	161	159	152

*Full electoral role revision

We've come to that time of year in our church life when the **t's** must be crossed and the **i's** dotted. The time when we are bound by our superiors to count everyone who has signed up to be an official Member of this church. However, I hasten to add that our church doesn't just consist of Members only, but of a kaleidoscope of other lovely people who worship with us, and who's presence enhances our church life. Sadly, we have Members who have passed on to glory this year, and we grieve with their loved ones in their loss.

So the official bit.

Currently, to my knowledge, there are (144) people who have officially signed up as a Member of the Dorcan Church. If anyone is considering Membership, please have a chat with one of the staff, or me. I would be delighted to give you a form! You wouldn't be signing your life away, but it is a way of showing your commitment to the life and work of this church.

LINKS

When new people have been worshipping with us for some time, we like to allocate to them someone who will keep an eye out for them if they've been missing at church for a while. This role is not intrusive, and it probably would mean just a phone call to touch base with the person they're linked with. We would aim to allocate a **LINK** person to everyone who regularly worships with us, but sadly we need a few more people to offer to be take on this role. If this is something you think you could offer, please speak to me.

On a different note... a reminder that despite the difficulties we face both in our church and in our lives. God loves each one of us with a passion we cannot comprehend. To Him be praise and glory. Amen

Barbara Wilcox
Electoral Roll/Membership Secretary

CHURCHWARDEN REPORT

Sorting out my spare wardrobe I came across 8 old diaries, and couldn't remember why on earth they had been kept, until I was requested to complete this report!!

We are very fortunate to have a steady number of folk at our services, in particular the 10.30, and have been delighted to welcome new faces. So many are involved with the preparation, leading and continuity, of all services and we are very thankful for their involvement. One of the hottest days in the year saw a beautiful wedding in St Paul's, such a pleasure to see and be involved in. Baptisms are few and far between, similarly funerals, times are changing, but what doesn't is Christmas. I think every chair in the building was used for the Carol service, and Christingle, in fact they were coming in early and saving seats!!

St Tim's was also bursting at the seams at Christmas, especially the Christingle. On regular Sunday services it is such a delight to see quite a few younger faces. Messy Church is a firm favourite with families.

Our lovely administrator & centre manager Maggie Johnson performs weekly miracles, with PowerPoints, looking after and supporting many of the various activities within the building, and is a welcoming first contact, both in person and phone.

As previously mentioned, times are changing and we are about to undergo a significant one, and with God's help we will continue to serve each other and Him. Be blessed

Diane Killick
Church Warden

FABRIC REPORT

St Paul's church centre has been very popular for family parties, and regular hirers, with new additions.

The party package is well received for the large hall, snug & kitchen, whilst the small hall attracts more sedentary groups. The facilities are used for our own fundraising, with quiz's, afternoon teas, and fun evenings. Our very grateful thanks to Maggie Johnson our centre manager for all her work with the bookings and

payments. There has been and continue to be problems with the building, and huge thanks to the dedicated volunteer team who work tirelessly to fix and sought. The roof is now in an urgent state of repair, and actions are being sought to remedy.

The garden has undergone a tidy up, with considerable work on the trees and surrounding plants. Covingham Parish Council, kindly donated a bench to replace a broken one. Working parties meet regularly to maintain the inside and out.

St Tim's retains its unique charm. It is now home to a beautiful set of cupboards, and shelves, which enable Tiny Tots toys etc to be stored much tidier. This has completely transformed the room, and we are very grateful to Rev Stuart Fisher for his carpentry skills. Swindon Food Collective continue to serve the community on a Friday morning, Tiny Tots on Wednesday afternoons, and CiDs 2 on a Tuesday morning.

Diane Killick
Church Warden

SAFEGUARDING REPORT

Safeguarding practice is central to the mission and ministry of the church. The safeguarding team work to ensure that children and vulnerable adults are safe in our churches, and that all those who are survivors of abuse are listened to, valued and supported. Safeguarding remains the legal responsibility of the ECC. The team met during the year. There are more than 50 volunteers working at various jobs within the Dorcan Church. Each one has been safely recruited and most have completed safeguarding training at the required level. There are one or two still needing to finish their training, but this is in hand. Not only does each one complete training initially, but they have to refresh their training every three years. This is a huge commitment on top of the service they are giving. So, thank you everyone for being prepared to set time aside for this important work. As far as we are aware all those who need DBS clearance for their role have done so. Thank you again for responding and keeping up to date with this, especially as the requirement is every three years now. The organisation we use, Thirty one eight, now informs the verifier two months before a DBS is due. This will prove helpful to keep everyone up to date.

Dianne Lane and Sue Morgans

We are very grateful to Dianne Lane and Sue Morgans for all they do on safeguarding, with their particular focus on safer recruitment, training and DBS checks. Since Jenny Poole stepped down last year we remain without an overall Parish Safeguarding Officer who provides oversight, policy review and a link into the Diocesan Safeguarding team. This needs to be addressed with urgency and a solution found. As safeguarding remains the legal responsibility of the ECC this will be discussed in a future trustee meeting.

Rev Trudie Wigley

CHARITY TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT

The Dorcan Church is a Local Ecumenical Partnership between The Church of England and The Methodist Church, serving the Swindon urban villages of Covingham, Nythe, Liden and Eldene. The partnership includes the congregations worshipping at St Paul's, Covingham and St Timothy's, Liden.

The Church continues to advance the Christian faith across the locality, both as a worshipping community but also as a serving community.

In 2023 we have continued in our work from previous years; using our buildings to reach out to our local community with the love of God. Cids and Cids2 (coffee mornings, one in each centre for our local communities) went from strength to strength, we have enjoyed working with our young people through Messy Church in both centres (moving down to one centre for 2024), Youth Club and Tiny Tots. Our buildings are frequently used by local community groups such as the pre-school, Blood Donation Service, Dance School, Senior Citizens and so many others. We have irregular hiring's, of parties and social events, and hosted our very own afternoon tea as a fundraising event.

We have worked together to try and reduce the ecological impact of our church on our environment by lagging our pipes, planting more bulbs, twinning our toilets, building a bug house and regular eco tips in our notices. St Tim's is having an energy audit this year and we are obtaining grant funding from the Anglican Diocese to upgrade our cavity wall insulation at St Pauls.

Our numbers continue to rebuild back towards 2020 levels, and we are excited to be regularly welcoming new or returning worshipers to our family and look forward to this continuing.

We continue to face many ongoing challenges. A significant hole in our roof is causing water ingress and we have started to fundraise the significant sum of money required for repairs. This is coupled with the ongoing effects of the cost-of-living crisis which is making it harder to reach all our financial obligations.

We face a number of internal challenges which include conversations around our ecumenical identity and constitution, within the Church of England around the discussion of same sex relationships, and the national pressures of the economic landscape and a predicted general election (despite the positive impact on our finances of hosting a polling station!) mean that 2024 will test our resilience. We know however that we have a God who is faithful and just, and who will supply all our needs. In this we trust.

Nathalie Marshall
Senior Steward

FINANCIAL REPORT FOR 2023

Summary.

When we entered 2023, we had £11,325 in our General Fund (this is the fund that covers the vast majority of ongoing running costs of the church and the centres) and a budget that predicted a deficit of almost £11,000 for the coming year. The financial outlook was bleak. It appeared that by the end of the year there would be little or no money left to fund the ongoing operation of The Dorcan Church.

So, come the end of 2023, what position did we actually find ourselves in? Essentially, in a much better place than we anticipated at the start of the year. Rather than having little or no money left, there was £11,454 in the General Fund and our financial position was broadly similar to that at the end of 2022, so we have very much to thank God for. So what changed?

Up until midway through the year it appeared that we were heading towards the deficit/position that had been predicted. But then, following financial appeals at our annual meeting in May and for our gift day in July, you, our congregation, responded magnificently and very generously. £9,300 was raised through gift day donations (rather than the rather cautious £2000 predicted by your Finance Committee!) and this amount, together with the additional gift aid it generated, was by far the most significant factor in our deficit for the year being just £1,373 rather than the predicted £10,923.

So, as always, we are extremely grateful to all of you who have contributed, either by giving directly or by fund-raising on behalf of The Dorcan Church.

Other significant Points to Note.

Income:

- The regular, ongoing congregational offering was in line with our budget expectations.
- Rental income (£33,266) was approximately equal to our budgeted amount.
- A small amount of Grant aid has been received towards the provision of "Warm Spaces" at St. Paul's and St. Timothy's

Expenditure

- Overall, expenditure was largely within budget, despite the significant increase in St Paul's gas prices that we experienced from mid-June onwards.

- Denominational Contributions: Regrettably we were unable to meet the amounts expected by either of our parent denominations:
 - Anglican Parish Share. Expected amount: £53,997. Our actual contribution: £51,000 (the same level as for 2020, 2021 & 2022).
 - Methodist Assessment: For 2023-24, expected amount: £26,587. £1,947 relief granted by the Circuit, meaning that we continued to pay £24,640, the same as for 2022-23.
- St Paul's Boiler Replacement (2020) Loans ,
 - Methodist loan: Repayments completed July 2023
 - Anglican loan: £1,000 outstanding at 31.12.2023, repayments due to complete June 2024.

Financial Management

Building on previous years' financial experience we have been able to continue working to a budget. This makes the work of the Finance Committee a lot easier since we are able to monitor progress throughout the year. Gift aid continues to be claimed quarterly which maintains our cash flow such that both our Parish Share and Methodist Assessment have been able to pay when they were due. We continue with the Parish Giving Scheme whereby members can donate by direct debit. Donations and Tax recoverable from Gift Aid are received monthly from this scheme, reducing the work of the Treasurer and further improving our cash flow.

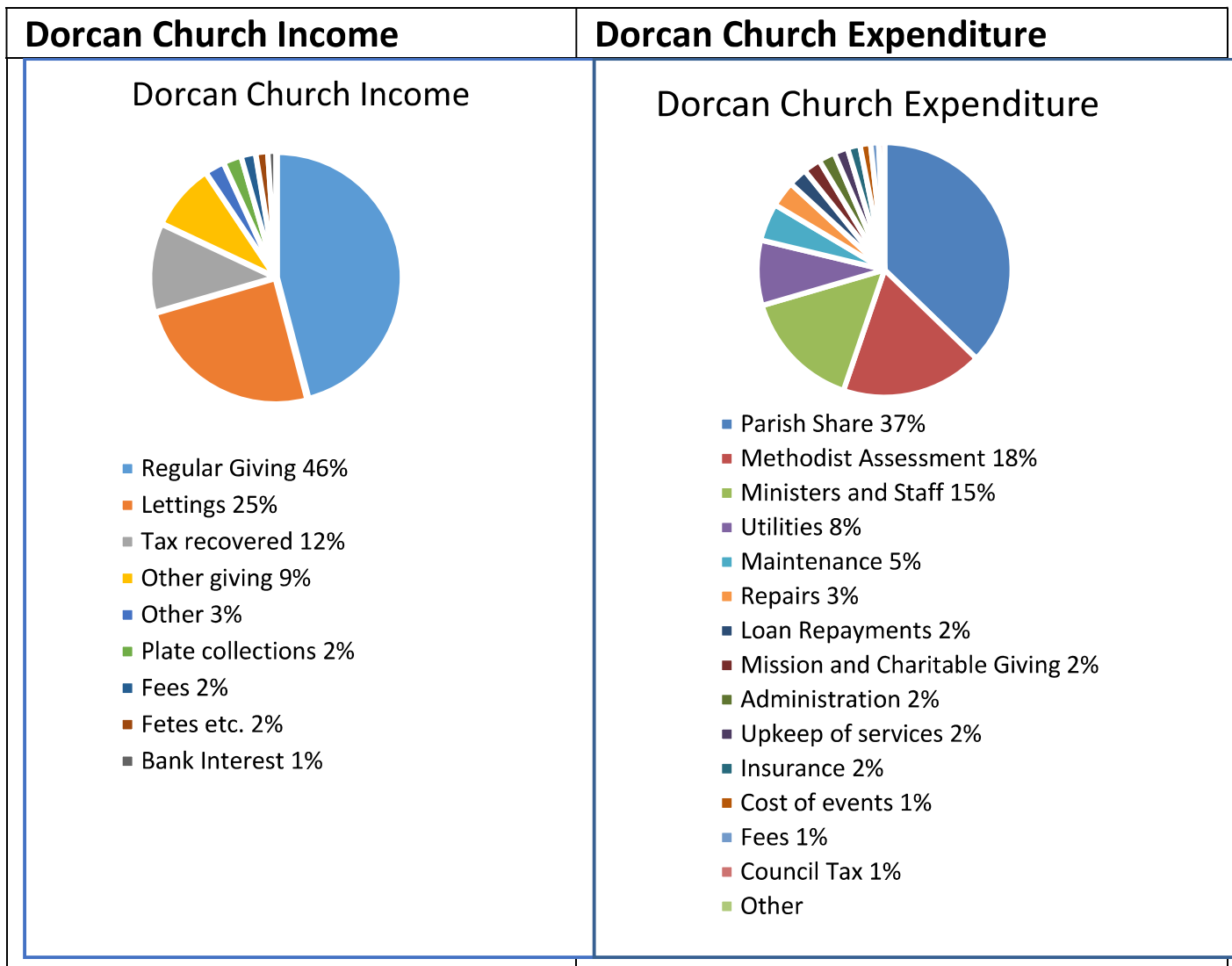
Church Fabric

In order to facilitate the work of the Church it is important that we maintain the fabric of both St. Timothy's and St. Paul's Church and Community Centre. Both are important to our work while bringing financial challenges. This year at St. Tim's we have purchased some folding tables and an outside notice board using funds from Viv Craig's legacy. At St Paul's the pipes in the boiler room have been lagged, both benefiting the environment and reducing our energy bill. This involved significant work and cost (approximately £3k) because of the number, size and configuration of the pipes.

The Future

In 2024, with the focus on raising funds for the large-scale repair to the St Paul's roof, it is vital that we do not lose sight of the ongoing day-to-day financial needs of our Church. If our general income drops, our own outreach and mission or that of our parent denominations, will suffer as a consequence. Maintaining, or if possible, increasing our regular giving through direct debit, standing order or envelope scheme remains key in this regard.

Tony Prichard & Pete Mulcock Finance Committee



Income	%	£	Expenditure	%	£
Regular Giving	46%	62,419	Parish Share	37%	51,000
Lettings	25%	33,267	Ministers and Staff	15%	20,934
Other giving	11%	11,662	Methodist Assessment	18%	24,640
Tax recovered	12%	15,564	Utilities	8%	11,305
Plate collections	2%	3,212	Maintenance	5%	6,564
Fêtes etc.	2%	2,098	Repairs	3%	4,519
Other	2%	3,443	Mission & Charitable Giving	2%	3,023
Fees	2%	2,528	Administration	2%	2,885
Bank Interest	1%	1,409	Insurance	2%	2,169
			Upkeep of services	2%	2,396
			Loan Repayments	2%	3,250
			Cost of events	1%	1,891
			Fees	1%	1,370
			Council Tax	1%	1,029
Totals		135,602			136,975

DEANERY SYNOD 2023 ANNUAL REPORT

2023 was a year when a new Deanery Synod was elected on the 3-yearly cycle. The clergy remain the same as they are on Deanery synod as part of their role, but all the lay members of synod were re-elected at the APCMS. 15 members stood down, including John Bishop from New Town after 50 years on Deanery Synod, and 10 new members joined, while 22 continued in role. We are very grateful to everyone who serves on Deanery Synod and helps us to work together as parishes with a shared commitment to seeing God's Kingdom come across the Deanery.

Deanery Synod met 4 times during the year, with the Deanery Leadership team (DLT) meeting between synods to plan the agenda and work on the Deanery Vision. The Deanery vision was kicked off by the DLT in May, with input from the clergy chapter and we are hoping to develop begin implementing the plan that flows from it parts of it during 2024.

In February we met at St John's Haydon Wick with Archdeacon Christopher to hear the progress on the Diocesan Vision, Transforming Church. Together (TC.T) and to discuss what it might mean for our parish and how we can work together across the Deanery.

In May, at St Philip's Upper Stratton, Chris Dobson came in his role as Adviser for Parish Discipleship and Evangelism to follow up one of the strands from TC.T, developing discipleship and evangelism. He was keen to hear of our experiences of discipleship and evangelism to inform his work.

In July, with the new synod elected, we had a barbeque as one of the final events at Legge House. This helped us to get to know one another better and we received feedback on the draft Deanery vision. David Cain was re-elected as Lay - chair and Helen Watt as Deanery synod Secretary. We were grateful to Chris Pope for his years as Deanery treasurer and elected Anthony Slack in his place. The house of laity elected James Greenslade, Abby Scott and Dave Templar as members of DLT and the clergy elected Toby Boutle, Elveen Mead and Lydia Morey.

The final meeting of the year was at St Michael's Highworth in November when the Deanery vision was presented and there was discussion about the way forward under each of the 9 headlines. You can find the Vision document presented to the November Synod here <https://nschurch.org.uk/swindon-deanery-vision.php>

At every meeting we heard updates on local and diocesan priorities, including Racial Justice, eco church and the cost of living crisis, as well as worshipping in a variety of styles and enjoying the hospitality of the host church.

We encourage anyone with an interest in the wider deanery and the topic under discussion to come to our meetings. The dates for 2024 are 6th February, 22nd May, 9th July and 3rd October. Please speak to your Deanery Synod representative, Jenny Poole, if you want to know more. Sally Robertson, Area Dean.

Jenny Poole
Lay Representative

DIOCESAN SYNOD 2023 ANNUAL REPORT

The Diocesan Synod, which is the primary, elected representative body drawn from across the Diocese of Bristol, met three times in 2023 in March, June and November. The purpose of synod is to consider and express an opinion on matters affecting the diocese, to advise the Bishop on matters she seeks thought on and to approve the expenditure in the annual Diocesan budget. Over the year synod hears and discusses a wide range of topics and there have been three main areas of focus:

Transforming church. Together: This is the strategy for the next season in the life of the Diocese and has twelve priorities that support parishes and the diocese in their mission and ministry. Funding of £6.8m has been granted from National Church and Diocesan Support Services has been resourced to support delivery of the strategy. More details on TC.T can be found at <https://www.bristol.anglican.org/visionandpriorities/transforming-church/> and in due course we will be considering how we at Dorcan Church might engage with the strategy in our context.

Carbon Net Zero (CNZ): Both General and Diocesan synod have declared a climate emergency and committed to CNZ by 2030. Grants are available to churches to support this journey, in which we have started to engage with energy audits and wall cavity insulation, and it is being financed from use of £2.19m of Diocesan reserves.

Living in Love and Faith: Diocesan synod has been kept well-informed on developments at General Synod, these in turn have been shared at Dorcan Church in a paper circulated in December 2023. This remains a very polarised debate at General Synod, which is replicated at Diocesan synod. At the moment Diocesan Synod is not required to pass any vote on prayers or services for same-sex couples, however developments are followed closely as this topic impacts significantly on our mission and ministry across the diocese.

Other significant agenda items included: the process and approval of identifying the next *Bishop of Swindon* following +Lee's retirement; *Diocesan Safeguarding Review* (including past case review 2); the *Risk Register* with a particular eye on parish share levels and the LLF discussions; the *future of the Uganda link* following the government's harsh Anti-Homosexuality Act 2023 and the Ugandan church's (Anglican communion) support of the Act (with the exception of the death penalty for aggravated homosexuality); the highlighting of *disability* and the sunflower lanyards.

Synod is a place where the voice of parishes can be heard, and the national Church of England informed and challenged. Whilst there is invariably some tedious business to be transacted, it has become increasingly participative, engaging and diverse and if you would like to be a part of shaping the future of the church of England please do consider standing, or come along and see what happens (guests are always welcome). Do have a chat with Trudie who co-chairs Diocesan Synod.

Rev Trudie Wigley
Co-Chair of Bristol Diocesan Synod

BRISTOL METHODIST DISTRICT REPORT

As is the practice, the District Autumn Synod was held at Kingswood School, Bath, with a focus on mission. The Synod was addressed by the Bishop of Bath and Wells, who spoke about 'Ecumenism and Mission', and by Revd Dr Al Barrett, Rector of Hodge Hill Church in Birmingham, who concentrated on 'Justice and Mission'.

The Spring Synod will be held in April, and will be the last for Revd Dr Jonathan Pye as Chair of District, as he will be retiring at the end of August. As reported last year, Revd Dr Marcus Torchon was nominated as the new Chair of District from September 2024. This appointment was approved by the Methodist Conference, and a Welcome Service for Marcus will be held on Saturday August 31st at 3.30pm at St Mary Redcliffe Church in Bristol, to which all are invited. Marcus is currently Superintendent Minister of the Telford Circuit.

We send both Jonathan and Marcus our best wishes and prayers for this next stage of their ministry.

Deacon Stephen Roe

NORTH WILTSHIRE CIRCUIT REPORT

In 2023 the North Wiltshire Methodist Circuit started the process of applying for funding under the "New People New Places" scheme from Connexion with a vision to work in a missional way on the new estate in Chippenham. Older manses have been sold and a new one purchased on the new estate and Rev Andrew Bird is due to move in to this manse and work amongst this community. The grant is to recruit a mission enabler and specialist professionals to grow the work in this area, with a potential to replicate the work in the new development in Swindon East. Pewsey Methodist chapel celebrated its 150th anniversary in various ways with the local community. Rev Stephen Skinner has been re-invited for another 2 years appointment from Sept 2024, and Luckington and Sherston chapels closed and are now for sale. The Circuit is looking forward to celebrating the ordination of Rev Rach Collins on Sunday 30 June during the Methodist Conference in Leeds. The circuit suffers through diminishing numbers of local preachers, but still proclaims the name of Jesus and the way of Methodism throughout North Wiltshire.

Nathalie Marshall

END OF CHARITIES COMMISSION REPORT

CELEBRATING THE MISSION AND MINISTRY OF THE DORCAN CHURCH

The following pages are reports that have been voluntarily offered from the Church family to mark and celebrate our mission and ministry. These are not all-encompassing of all that we do, yet paint a wonderful picture of some of the ways we have been serving the community and sharing the Good News of Jesus. Well done amazing Church for all that you and all that you are. Thank you!

MINISTRY TO CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

We have an extensive and strong ministry to children and young people in the parish. Thank you to everyone who supports and prays for this important ministry. Without this mission and ministry, we cannot nurture the next generation of disciples and grow God's church to further his kingdom in this place.

Blaze & Youth Club

Blaze for children year 2 to year 6 and Youth Club for children year 7+. These two groups meet fortnightly on a Wednesday evening back to back. We offer board games, table tennis, snooker table, football, computer games, crafts as well as organised team games and a time to share a bit of our Christian Faith, with a mug of hot chocolate. We also hold "special nights" i.e. films, escape room and hire equipment from Youth for Christ etc.

Our numbers vary from week to week but we have about 40 on our books. Our team consists of Chris and Clare, Matt, Becki, Steph, Pete and me. We would love some more help! If you think you could help, even on an ad hoc basis, please talk to one of us! Yes, it is exhausting and yes, it is hard work but the youngsters and their parents appreciate us being there!!

We would also appreciate prayer for our youngsters as well as the team.

Deb Mulcock

Tiny Tots at St. Paul's

This group continues to increase its numbers and averages twenty children and up to twenty four adults each week. Thirty two children attended the Christmas party and the families were very complimentary about the activities, refreshments and quality of the individual gifts that we had selected for each child. During the year we ran themed craft activities and read Bible stories explaining Lent, Easter, God's creation, parables and the nativity journey. Several of the parents now bring their older children to Messy Church, Easter and Christmas activities as well as church

social events. The generous donations by parents and grandparents ensures that we can continue to provide this event free of charge. This year £500 of surplus funds were transferred to the Dorcan Church.

There are five volunteers and two occasional volunteers, Stephen Roe has continued to be a regular visitor and supporter. There is a risk to the continuation of Tiny Tots due to a lack of new volunteers and that our current team are experiencing health problems. Please pray for this group that supports so many families in our community and beyond.

Brenda Fisher

Tiny Tots at St Timothy's

Jo Bush and Sarah Paterson retired from Tiny Tots after years of service and have been very much missed by the other volunteers and the mums and children. Since September Jean Smith, Marie Pottinger and I are there every week, with the help of either Colleen Wiseman or Hazel Merrett, who take it in turns. Stephen Roe pops in regularly to chat to the mums, and we value his input. We have had visitors from outside groups, who have been able to signpost parents to available help and support.

We have 24 children on our books, but there is a core of 12 or so regulars that come each week. They vary from tiny babies to 3 year olds. We are getting to know the mums and delight in the children, seeing them develop and change almost week by week. They love the craft, organised by Jean, especially if it involves sticking or painting! They play happily with the toys, learning to play together and share. When it is time to tidy up ready for songs and stories, they happily throw everything into the boxes. Singing is entered into more enthusiastically than tunefully (led by Dianne, enough said)! Story time can be a challenge, a wide age range and limited ability to sit still for longer than a minute. We soldier on. Snacks and drinks are prepared by Marie and thoroughly enjoyed and wet wipes come into their own. After chairs are replaced in the chapel and toys packed away in a purpose built cupboard, thank you Stuart, we go home tired but happy.

Dianne Lane and Jean Smith

Assemblies and School Services

We have been welcomed into schools (Nythe and Eldene) for assemblies in the past year and continue to approach this ministry with enthusiasm. The schools are always very welcoming and the children and staff are always ready to engage with the subject matter. Topics recently have embraced the school's 'Vision and Values' and guiding principles including 'Being Responsible', 'Being Respectful' and 'Being Confident'. The assemblies are always biblically based and rely on the teaching and actions of Jesus to bring God's love to new generations of children.

Rev Stuart Fisher

I have taken assemblies with different age groups at Covingham Park Primary School on an occasional basis, by invitation. We were also pleased to welcome the school, along with parents, families and friends, to St Paul's for their Harvest and Christmas celebrations. The Year 4 classes came to hear the Christmas story in 'Christmas Unwrapped', and the Year 5 classes to 'Easter Cracked Open'.

Deacon Stephen Roe

We have a strong relationship with Liden Academy and every month I am warmly invited to lead an assembly. The theme will be linked to the church seasons, their values topics, or something I just fancy doing for fun. They sing with gusto and it is a joy to see some of them also coming to Messy at St Timothy's. We also hold school festival services at Timothy's with parents invited for Harvest and Christmas, although the size of St Tim's means we repeat this 3-4 times in the same day. I am also invited to judge the Easter bonnet competition (fun!) and school celebrations such as the summer fayre, Christmas jumper day etc. We also invite Liden for Christmas unwrapped and Easter cracked open at St Timothy's and it's a delight to also be there for these and to strengthen connections.

Rev Trudie Wigley

As well as our strong links with our primary schools, we are increasingly strengthening links with Dorcan Academy secondary school. Every month I am invited into the school to meet and pray with the Head Teacher, and at Christmas the Academy held their first Carol service post -Covid to which I was invited to preach. I am also now on the oversight governing board at the Academy (a steep learning curve), and encouragingly there is a renewed buzz and hopefulness following their fully deserved Good Ofsted last year.

Rev Trudie Wigley

It's Your Move

Can you remember going up to the Big school? Quite a transformation! Could be scary, not knowing what to expect, and those rumours..... A small team have been going into our local primary schools to Year 6 to share "It's Your Move", a very helpful booklet from Scripture Union, which address' many of the questions students have. It's a fun session, games, and sharing information, which is very well received by students & teachers.

Diane Killick

At the end of each Summer Term, Year 6 pupils are guided through what it may mean for them as individuals, as they grow and transition from junior school to Secondary education. They are engaged in activities under the heading of 'It's Your Move' and are invited to participate in activities which reflect the responsibilities expected of children who are maturing in an ever changing world.

Rev Stuart Fisher

Easter Cracked Open and Christmas Unwrapped

Christmas, and Easter, are such wonderful Christian festivals which we all enjoy and reflect. Christmas Unwrapped and Easter Cracked Open share these festivals with Years 4 & 5. Sessions have been held at both St Paul's & St Tim's for Covingham Park, Nythe, Liden & Eldene schools exploring the real story of these festivals, with activities, stories and games.

Huge thanks to everyone involved so that we may share these very precious events.

Sue Morgans and Diane Killick

We have actively engaged the schools in the stories of the 'Real' Christmas and Easter events as told in the gospel stories. On these occasions, the children and staff have been welcomed into our church buildings under the umbrellas of 'Christmas unwrapped' and 'Easter Cracked Open' for which we are really grateful to the organisational skills of our willing and loving volunteers, without which these events could not take place.

Rev Stuart Fisher

Messy Church

Over the past year we have been hosting a monthly Messy Church at St Tim's in the morning and St Paul's in the afternoon. We have an enthusiastic and dedicated team of helpers who enable families to come and enjoy crafts, a meal (either breakfast or tea) and worship time together. This year we have welcomed many new families at St Tim's and enjoyed getting to know them as they explored learning more about what it is to have faith in God and follow Jesus. Our sessions explore a different theme each month and included a Messy Nativity at Christmas, which was really fun. After a series of prayer walks and prayerful consideration as a team, we have decided to continue with one Messy Church session each month to take place at St Tim's for the Dorcan church. We would love to get more people involved so we would love to expand our publicity and reach out to our communities at Liden and Covingham.

Clare Smith

Christmas Toy Appeal

This was the second year that we hosted the Christmas toy/gift event at St Paul's. Sixty five families benefited from generous donations from The Dorcan Church and the wider parish/circuit. Again, this was staffed by volunteers, displaying the gifts attractively, after moving large boxes from one place to another (and less heavy ones back again at the end). We opened for four consecutive days for four to six hours each time.

It was humbling to listen to their stories and hear how they coped with life's blows and difficulties. It was a privilege to meet them and laugh and cry with them. Thank you all for your generous gifts that enable them to give their children a happy Christmas.

Dianne Lane and Sandra Marshall

GROUPS AND COURSES

There are a number of home/cell groups meeting across the Dorcan Church and the fellowship, encouragement and learning are important as we journey on in our discipleship. Meeting together in the week is integral to our Christ-like living and we have others who wish to join groups, and additionally we want to encourage as many of our church family as possible to be involved in a small group. However we simply do not have leaders to volunteer or groups who are able to invite others in, due to size or other reasons. Please do think whether you might be able to offer to lead a group, whether a new one or formed from an existing group, or if you are able to open your group to others and their new perspectives. We need each other to support our Christian life and discipleship.

Revd Trudie Wigley

Monday morning group

The original group was formed as a cell group over 20 years ago and used to meet one evening a week. Now that we are all retired we meet in the daytime and the group has been a source of friendship and support as well as a place to learn together about our faith.

Over the past year we have followed 3 courses as well as some one-off Bible studies. They are:- Images of God, The Omega Course and The Difference Course. The Omega Course is designed for people in later life and provoked some interesting discussions on the opportunities and challenges of retirement, coping with illness, grief etc. We are in the middle of the Difference Course at the moment and finding the story films and varied practical exercises as well as in depth discussions of Bible stories thought-provoking and engaging.

Jenny Poole

Tuesday evening Group

The group consists of 12 members who meet for prayer and Bible study on a Tuesday evening. The group has grown since lock down, so moved from a home, to the small hall at St Paul's. We all appreciate the fellowship and friendship that studying and praying together brings, and have experienced answers to prayer.

Over the last year we have studied St John's gospel, Elijah, The Holy Spirt, Bold I approach (the essence of prayer), the book of Revelation, Pete Greig's Prayer Course and are at present following the Difference Course.

Dianne Lane and Barbara Wilcox

Cell Group

We meet fortnightly at St Tim's Church. We are a diverse group who support each other immensely. In the past year we have studied "women in the Bible", Psalms and Corinthians and are now doing the Romans Course. We have had a trip to Bath Abbey and Avebury manor as well as meeting to do crafts to sell at the Christmas Bazaar.

Deb Mulcock

Thursday evening group

We are a new group of 13 members, comprising of those who wished to continue after the evening Lent 2023 and a few people who have subsequently joined. We meet in the Rectory, St Tim's or The Marshall's home. We're a motley bunch and getting to know each other, and we enjoy learning together and encouraging each other in our discipleship. We studied three courses last year – Failure, Prayer course and LLF - and going into 2024 are currently joining in with many other of the church family and following The Difference Course for Lent 2024.

Rev Trudie Wigley and Deacon Stephen Roe

Lent course 2023

A number of house groups studied "Failure – what God said about sin, mistakes and messing stuff up". In addition there were these two groups that ran just for Lent:

The Tuesday Lent course included a 'Lent Lunch' and followed the recent book by Emma Ineson on 'Failure'. The course was well attended and we engaged with the subject matter wholly, concluding failure is part of learning and not allowing failure to become our identity or 'label' but also allowing us to help others overcome their own failures and helping them to avoid being identified that way.

Revd Stuart Fisher

The Thursday evening Lent course was offered for those who work or for whom the evening was better, and was well attended by 14 people. There were helpful and lively discussions on failure, and more importantly the hope that we have in the reconciling work of Jesus. The material was not the easiest to prepare, but we overcome this and approached Easter with renewed and deeper understanding.

Revd Trudie Wigley and Deacon Stephen Roe

Living in Love and Faith

A number of house groups studies Living in Love and Faith over the year. In addition, there was the opportunity to join stand-alone courses which were open to everyone and 21 people attended.

The LLF course led by Rev Stuart was well attended and although this is not a subject many grasp with enthusiasm, it was embraced in a serious manner and enabled the group to learn from the experience of others, which is the main aim and guiding principle of the course. People expressed a desire to actively promote the course to others as it seemed practical and worthwhile. It is hoped to run further courses in the very near future, in 2024.

Rev Stuart Fisher

CiD'S CAFÉ and CiD'S CAFÉ TOO (Café in Dorcan)

CiDs Café – St Paul's

CiD's Café first opened its doors in October 2021. From a small group of helpers sitting round a table drinking tea & coffee with a plate of biscuits and cake, wondering if this was going to work, we have grown into a strong fellowship of with approximately 30 people including helpers attending regularly. They chatter away creating such a wonderful atmosphere as people arrive.

Some members of the church attend when they can and many others from the local community, outside of the church, now attend regularly and this gives our enterprise such a feeling of fellowship and in the knowledge that they all feel so welcome. CiDs café has been designated a Warm Space venue in accordance with local authority guidelines and that in itself spreads news of this initiative to the wider community.

We have been able to celebrate various events in the lives of our regular visitors, including wedding anniversaries, a Christmas Party and birthday celebrations. It is a testament to the volunteers and visitors that we see each week, that they look forward to fellowship with each other and many have made new friends and acquaintances.

I have personally gained by increasing my circle of friends in a way I have never anticipated. I have found great pleasure in serving people because I know they are all so appreciative of what we do for them.

Colin Parsons

CiD's Café Too

CiD's Café Too is held on Tuesday mornings at St Tim's. It began as a reworking of 'Tea and Toast', offering breakfast and a space for parents who had dropped older children off at school, and younger children. At the end of the summer our numbers dropped and we felt that there was a need for a space for some of the older residents of Liden, particularly those living alone, to meet, and we therefore decided to extend the hours until 11.30 in the hope of enabling this. However, that did not work out as envisaged and we were not successful in drawing in older members of the community. Towards the end of the year, we decided to change the timings and room layout, and now open from 10.00am – 12noon, with it clearly being a coffee morning rather than a space for children to play. This does seem to be proving to be a good change at the moment, we have approximately 15 attending each week, most of whom have no other connection with the Church. This has meant that most of the parents and children no longer come, but many do have involvement with St Tim's through Tiny Tots and Messy Church, so our initial feeling is that this has been a good change. We continue to monitor how it is going, seeking God's guidance, and will make further 'tweaks' if necessary.

As with all our activities, we rely on our volunteers to keep them going, and are hugely thankful to them. If you are interested in joining the rota of helpers, please see Stephen or Trudie. It isn't onerous, you need three hours on a Tuesday morning approximately once a month, and the ability to make tea/coffee, and chat.

Deacon Stephen Roe

THE FOOD COLLECTIVE

We Started the Distribution Centre at St Timothy's in July 2022, and started with 12 volunteers.

We are now approaching the end of our second year. Paul as team leader/manager, and Angela Roe as deputy team leader.

We have cut the number of Volunteers attending each week to three, due to the low number of clients we are receiving, although signs are showing we are beginning to a slight increase, as the referees are realising that we are actually here at Liden and their clients don't have to go into town to get food, when they live this end of Dorcan.

The numbers vary between one and five clients, which could evolve to as many as six people in one family. So signs are encouraging going forward, with God's help.

**Paul Tayler
Team Leader /Manager**

REFLECTIONS FROM THE CHURCH ADMINISTRATOR AND COMMUNITY CENTRE OPERATIONAL MANAGER

I can hardly believe that I have been your Church Administrator for just over two years and Community Centre Operational Manager (Hall Bookings) for just over a year. Both job roles had a steep learning curve but as I reflect over the past year in particular; I can see that having both positions is very beneficial not just to me, but for the smooth running of the Church and Centre as the two roles marry well together.

Being your Church Administrator is a privilege and something I enjoy immensely. It's a wide and varied roll (I'm not just answering the telephone, replying to emails and photocopying!) One week I could be doing yearly mission statistics, designing a poster, preparing adverts for the Handymag or help creating power points for a Sunday service. Another time I could be collating Diocesan fees, updating records, organising meetings on doodle poll or the good old fashioned way, updating Facebook or even preparing the booklet for the AGM! The list goes on but by doing these administrative tasks for various people within the Church it allows me to free up other people's time so they can concentrate on their own ministries within the Church and serve our community.

It has been a joy to watch the hall bookings grow over the past year, we now have 22 regular bookings that meet either weekly or monthly. Children's birthday parties are still very popular at the weekends, but these parties rely on a team of volunteers who open and close the hall. Without this amazing team, events couldn't happen so I want to say a huge thank you to all of you who give up your free time to help support our community centre, your help is very much appreciated. Looking forward to seeing what this year brings. Blessings in abundance

Maggie Johnson