

**COMBINED REPORTS  
for  
WHITEFRIARS CHURCH ANNUAL MEETINGS**

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**Synodical Government Measure 1969**

**CHURCH ELECTORAL ROLL CERTIFICATE**

Parish of Whitefriars, Rushden in the Deanery of Higham and the diocese of Peterborough

I hereby certify that the number of names entered upon the church electoral roll of the above parish, as revised in preparation for the Annual Parochial Church Meeting held in the year 2024, is 94 (ninety four).

Signed: *J G Watkin*

**J G Watkin**  
**Electoral Roll Officer**

Dated: 24<sup>th</sup> March, 2024

## Higham Deanery Synod – report to 2024 Annual Parochial Meetings

1. Higham Deanery Synod has so far met three times since the 2023 Annual Parochial meetings:

i) **Wednesday 1st March at St Mary's Church, Rushden**

A special event by the Gen2 team, it provided an interactive opportunity for those present to explore the role played by young people and opportunities for helping them to grow in faith.

ii) **Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> June at St John the Baptist, Chelveston**

**Haydon Spenceley**, Diocesan Director of ordinands and Director of Vocation and Formation spoke to the Synod about his role, in which he oversees training for all types of roles within the Diocese. Deanery Mission Youth Enable (DMYE) **Lizzie Mouesbauer** (now Coyston, after her wedding to Mikey), shared some good news youth work stories from around the Deanery. This was **Chris Youngman's** last Synod before retiring on 13<sup>th</sup> July. He was thanked for his hard work and leadership during his time as the Rural Dean. **Carolyn Wignall** was elected Deanery Lay Chair, filling the vacancy created after **Christ Butts** left to continue his ministry in Wellingborough Deanery.

ii) **Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> October at St Peter's Church Rushden**

**Chris Dalliston**, Dean of Peterborough, spoke to the Synod on various news and topics at Peterborough Cathedral. He reminded us that we are not alone, we are all part of the larger, worldwide church – and noted that Bishop Debbie Sellin would be good for the entire diocese and especially for children and young people. A reminder was given about the **Illuminate** youth mission event in March 2024. Andrew Presland updated us from General Synod on **Prayers of Love and Faith**.

2. **Other news from 2023 and early 2024:**

- Thank you to all parishes in the Deanery for their contributions to the **Diocesan parish share**.
- Sue Clarke led three **Deanery litter picks** during Lent 2023.
- We held a **Deanery Prayer event** on Tuesday 23rd May, as part of Canon Steve Benoy's walk around the Diocese for Thy Kingdom Come.
- Our annual **Beer & Hymns evening** at Newton Bromswold took place on Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> July
- In December, **Lizzie and Mikey Coyston** announced their move to Lymington Baptist Church in Hampshire, where Lizzie is to be the Families Worker. Many thanks to Lizzie for her work and enthusiasm. The parishes of the Deanery can hopefully continue to provide youth work, working together as opportunities permit. Thanks to **Amanda Newman** for looking after the finances given for Lizzie.
- Welcome to **Nicki Hobbs**, who has generously agreed to serve as our Rural Dean for a year, as well as also being Rural Dean of Kettering and Rector of Broughton, Cransley and Mawsley.

**Looking ahead:**

- Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> March, Deanery Synod at Finedon Parish Church, with Chad speaking on Wild Church: an open meeting – all welcome
- Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> May – Thy Kingdom Come – evening event at Hargrave: details to follow.
- Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> June, Deanery Synod at St Mary's Higham – David Crisp, disability awareness
- Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> July, Beer and Hymns at The Swan in Newton Bromswold.
- **Thank you** to Helen Smedley for being our Secretary, as she prepares to stand down in April.

- **Vacancies on the Synod – and the Synod Standing Committee** - will then exist for: i) Secretary, ii) Treasurer and iii) Representative on the Diocesan Board of Finance, although the second two of these roles could be carried out by the same person. Please contact Carolyn Wignall ([carolyn@davidwignallassociates.com](mailto:carolyn@davidwignallassociates.com)) if interested.
- **Elections to Peterborough Diocesan Synod** will be taking place later in the Spring: three clergy and three laity to be elected.

*Andrew Presland (Deanery Standing Committee), February 2024*

# FINANCE REPORT

**whitefriarschurchrushden**  
**Statement of Financial Activities**  
**For the period from 01 January 2023 to 31 December 2023**

	Unrestricted funds	Designated funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds	Total funds	Prior year total funds
<b><i>Income and endowments from:</i></b>						
Donations and legacies	103,957.13	—	15,321.41	—	119,278.54	118,216.74
Income from charitable activities	3,408.00	5,312.61	31,057.18	—	39,777.79	4,947.16
Other income	891.00	—	1,674.11	—	2,565.11	2,671.67
<b>Total income</b>	<b>108,256.13</b>	<b>5,312.61</b>	<b>48,052.70</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>161,621.44</b>	<b>125,835.57</b>
<b><i>Expenditure on:</i></b>						
Expenditure on charitable activities	100,238.20	4,693.91	24,411.74	—	129,343.85	120,287.40
Other expenditure	988.31	3,817.23	668.96	—	5,474.50	3,984.43
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>101,226.51</b>	<b>8,511.14</b>	<b>25,080.70</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>134,818.35</b>	<b>124,271.83</b>
<b>Net income / (expenditure) resources before transfer</b>	<b>7,029.62</b>	<b>(3,198.53)</b>	<b>22,972.00</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>26,803.09</b>	<b>1,563.74</b>
<b><i>Transfers</i></b>						
Gross transfers between funds - in	—	—	5,000.00	—	5,000.00	1,128.77
Gross transfers between funds - out	(5,000.00)	—	—	—	(5,000.00)	(1,128.77)
<b><i>Other recognised gains / losses</i></b>						
<b>Net movement in funds</b>	<b>2,029.62</b>	<b>(3,198.53)</b>	<b>27,972.00</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>26,803.09</b>	<b>1,563.74</b>
<b><i>Reconciliation of funds</i></b>						
<b>Total funds brought forward</b>	<b>19,247.89</b>	<b>32,276.78</b>	<b>3,772.15</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>55,296.82</b>	<b>53,733.08</b>
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>	<b>21,277.51</b>	<b>29,078.25</b>	<b>31,744.15</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>82,099.91</b>	<b>55,296.82</b>
<b><i>Represented by</i></b>						
Unrestricted						
General fund	21,277.51	—	—	—	21,277.51	19,247.89
Designated						
Bridge Reserve	—	2,960.16	—	—	2,960.16	6,512.16
Mini Bus	—	3,996.39	—	—	3,996.39	2,501.01
Mission Fund	—	20,925.80	—	—	20,925.80	22,067.71
PA Fund	—	1,120.54	—	—	1,120.54	1,120.54
Vicarage Reserve	—	75.36	—	—	75.36	75.36
Restricted						
Children's & Youth Fund	—	—	1,419.64	—	1,419.64	2,812.16
Compassion	—	—	28.75	—	28.75	(157.45)
LZ7 Mission	—	—	30,202.02	—	30,202.02	—
Youth Residentials	—	—	93.74	—	93.74	1,117.44

**whitefriarschurchrushden**  
**Balance sheet (Church of England)**  
**As at: 31 December 2023**

	<b>As at 31/12/2023</b>	<b>As at 31/12/2022</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
<hr/>		
<b>Current assets</b>		
Cash at bank and in hand	82,099.91	55,296.82
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	82,099.91	55,296.82
	<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>Net current assets less current liabilities</b>	<b>82,099.91</b>	<b>55,296.82</b>
	<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>	<b>82,099.91</b>	<b>55,296.82</b>
	<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>Total net assets less liabilities</b>	<b>82,099.91</b>	<b>55,296.82</b>
	<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>Represented by</b>		
<hr/>		
<b>Unrestricted</b>		
Unrestricted - General fund	21,277.51	19,247.89
<b>Designated</b>		
Designated - Bridge Reserve	2,960.16	6,512.16
Designated - Bridge management	—	—
Designated - Mini Bus	3,996.39	2,501.01
Designated - Mission Fund	20,925.80	22,067.71
Designated - PA Fund	1,120.54	1,120.54
Designated - Vicarage Reserve	75.36	75.36
<b>Restricted</b>		
Restricted - Constance Travis	—	—
Restricted - Youth Residentials	93.74	1,117.44
Restricted - Compassion	28.75	(157.45)
Restricted - Diocesan Mission Fund	—	—
Restricted - Families in Need	—	—
Restricted - Hope Beyond	—	—
Restricted - Heritage Lottery Fund	—	—
Restricted - LZ7 Mission	30,202.02	—
Restricted - Restricted Purposes	—	—
Restricted - Children's & Youth Fund	1,419.64	2,812.16
	<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>Funds of the church</b>	<b>82,099.91</b>	<b>55,296.82</b>
	<hr/>	<hr/>

## **Independent Examiner's Report to the PCC of Whitefriars Church, Rushden, Northamptonshire.**

This report, on the accounts of Whitefriars Church, Rushden, for the year ended 31 December 2023, which is set out below, is in respect of an examination carried out under s.145 of the Charities Act 2011 (the Charities Act).

### **Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner**

The church's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The church's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act,
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act, and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

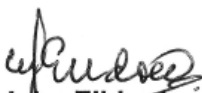
### **Basis of independent examiner's report**

My examination was carried out in accordance with general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the church and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from the trustees 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 accounts present a 'true and fair' view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

### **Independent examiner's statement**

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in, any material respect, the requirements:
  - to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; and
  - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act have not been met;
2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

  
**John Eldred**  
6 Nightingale way  
Higham Ferrers  
NN10 8PR

Date: 23-03-24

## Children and Families Ministry AGM report 2024

### Outreach Ministry

- **Sparklers** has regularly engaged with 20 families over the past year and another 15 families on the fringes and during the school holidays. Our Friday morning group has flourished: each session we are sharing a bible story and songs with our children include visits from Jack (the puppet)
- **GET OWT with sparklers is our school holiday group** this year we had fun in Hall park over Easter, May and July summer holidays a great chance to meet new families and gather with our Sparklers families during the holidays often with older siblings joining us for crafts, bible story trails and outdoor games.
- **Thank you to Victoria** for helping at sparklers this year providing valuable mum experience, creative storytelling and crafty fingers have been a valuable support to me and our families.
- **Thank you to Karen** who attends with her granddaughter but also provides amazing support for our families.
- **Toddlers together** is our town wide gathering of toddler group families, this year we continue to bring all our families together through an Easter egg hunt, Christmas nativity, teddy bears picnic, as well as starting Mums' craft nights which the first 2 were very popular.
- June the **national month of prayer** for toddler groups, last year we gathered a Park Road Baptist to celebrate and pray for all our groups across Rushden and Higham.
- **Our prayer initiative "Say one for me"** was launched in June and most of our families were very willing to share things they would like us to pray for. This year in Sparklers we have seen a few prayers answered including, new jobs, children settling into nursery and a new baby arriving in May!
- This year we held our first **parade service with Whitefriars 4<sup>th</sup> Rushden Beaver unit**. It was a privilege to have the Beavers join our advent service in December.
- The week before Christmas we went **Carol singing in the** Grangeway precinct, it was such a fun but cold way to share some Christmas joy with our neighbours.

### Church Ministry

- What a great start to September 2023 when we **commissioned** over 20 volunteers working across every age of our children and youth ministry. We don't say it enough but thank you for all you do every week of the year.
- We have an amazing team of children's leaders for Energize and Refuel, thank **Lisa Clarke, Linda Mutton, Jeremy Smith, Louise Kemp, Emma Smith**. This wonderful team have worked hard this year, we have explored the I AM series and Luke along with the adults; in September moved on to David and the Psalms
- **Thank you to Lynda for taking on the rota planning and material prep of Jack in the Box** team in September; following Liz moving on to full retirement with Chris. Lynda continues to lead Jack in



the box alongside Victoria Shane and our newest leaders Skye, Lucie, Esme and Ella. Thank you for being so dedicated to sharing God's word with our youngest disciples in church.

- **Worship:** our children have been such an essential part of leading our worship this year, it was great fun planning the Energize and Refuel led service together in April. Not forgetting all your help over the Christmas season with our intergenerational services Christingle and nativity.
- This year our children continue to support **Talent** from compassion through raising money and writing letters to him.
- **Breakfast together** – during the summer last year we had our first children's ministry breakfast together, it was such a lovely way to begin church with toast fellowship and worship. We hope to hold a few more of these mornings in the coming year.

### Schools' Ministry

- I continue to work alongside the clergy of Rushden to provide **bible based assemblies for Whitefriars and Denfield**. Over the past 12 months I have had the privilege of visiting Whitefriars Primary fortnightly, some terms even more regularly. Last year we were invited to lead additional harvest and Christmas assemblies at both schools, including a Carol Service at St Mary's. This year I had the privilege of conducting my very first wedding ceremony for Betty O Barley and Harry O Hay and all their invited guests in reception classes at Whitefriars. You will be pleased to hear Mr and Mrs O Hay are still happily married and observe the world from the post on the reception play ground fence!
- **Moral maze lunch club** with year 6, runs every Monday I have 18 – 24 students join me for lunch in the bridge and a friendly debate over moral questions. Thank you, Sara, for supporting this group every week.
- Over the past 12 months Chris and I have been running **Action for Happiness** after school with KS2 at Whitefriars. Each year group is invited for 5 weeks to become Happiness Detectives exploring how we can live happier lives. During the summer term, Gill Taha kindly stepped in to co-lead AFH. In September we started again with yr. 5 and 6.
- **Easter Experience KS2 ( year 3 to 6)** were invite to Jerusalem (The Bridge) to journey through Jesus last days before he was crucified. It was an awesome sit together around the table as Jesus would with his disciples. The children at Whitefriars were fully engaged and asked some amazing questions. Chris had very wrinkled feet after the 8<sup>th</sup> time of being washed.
- **Christmas Experiences with KS1 and 2**. This year we took year 1 to 4 on a journey to Bethlehem with Mary and Joseph to discover what happened and why. **Year 5 and 6** had a new experience called "Escape from Bethlehem" with clues and witness statements from King Herod, Simeon, the magi and Mary and Joseph. The children had to follow the clues to discover where the new parents escaped to.
- **"It's Your Move" Moving on Workshop for year 6**. In July we spent a morning at both Denfield and Whitefriars Schools talking about getting ready for secondary school, how to read school timetables, advice from Auntie Em, think about friendships and interviewing Yr 11 students Jacob

Squires and Bethany Croxon. The students were fully engaged and had some great questions for Jacob and Bethany. Thank you both for coming to help.

- In October we held a **GOLDEN TICKET REUNION** for 22/23 yr 6 students: a fun evening for the children from both schools to catch up with missed friends lots of food, music, games and crafts.
- It has been 6 years since we first **gifted year 3 with the new illustrated Children's Bible** which follow the class through until year 6, now all year groups have 60 copies each of the bible which they use in their RS lessons. This September I visited yr. 3 for a short lesson about their bibles. During the summer term we returned to gift yr6 with their own personal copy of the rainbow bible.
- **Refresh café:** In December I held our first refresh café for families at Whitefriars, I hope to continue these in the summer term. It is a safe and welcoming space for families of primary age children with a message of hope and encouragement at each one.

## Looking forward to 2024

2023 has been a busy year with many amazing moments but it has also been a year of great change with Chris and Josh leaving at the end of the summer term and Lizzie just after Christmas. The week after Chris announced that he would be retiring I had a picture from God; it was someone spinning plates and every time they look down a plate would fall, there was great frustration at not being able to keep all the plates in the air. This was my greatest fear. The message from God was to keep looking up to God it's the only way to keep spinning and the plates will not fall. God has been completely faithful the plates that have needed to be spun are still up as long as we remain focused on God.

## School and outreach Ministry

I have always been amazed by our little town in the middle of Northamptonshire, Rushden is a unique and special place. We are a town that believes in kingdom building and not parish or church building. This has never been more evident than the past 18 months building up to Illuminate Rushden. Every church has played a part in bring the Gospel to over 4000 young people. The Illuminate Concerts have been a huge success and at the moment of writing this we have seen 322 teenagers access the AAA passes and click through the 3 steps of faith. 86 of those have booked to start the AAA youth group. None of this is possible without God and over 18 months of prayer. We are a town with a vision to reach the lost and broken and it's exciting to be part of the town wide body of Christ on that Mission together. **Please keep praying with me how we as a church can continue to pray, support and encourage the young people and their families.**

This year I hope to **re-launch prayer space** at Whitefriars during lunchtime. At the beginning of 2024 I've already had conversations with other church leaders how we can work more closely together to support our primary schools, **including prayer spaces and experiences into Denfield.**

## Church Ministry

In the coming year the opportunity to work alongside other leaders in Rushden doesn't stop at the youth, please pray as I work alongside Tim (PRBC) and Helen (St Mary's) to see if we can facilitate our own Spree weekend for Primary children. **Is God calling you to be part of this team.**

When Lizzie and Mikie left us in February it left a few gaps in the Sunday morning children and youth ministry. **Can be a part of our children and youth leadership team please pray and come and chat.**

The team who has continued to lead our Sunday morning worship are fantastic and we are really blessed to have each and every one of them from the musicians to service leaders, prayer team, welcomers and preachers. This year I feel it's important to keep mentoring new people including our children and youth as they step into every aspect of leading others in worship.

Our amazing prayer warriors in the Thy Kingdom Come WhatsApp prayer group are brilliant at keeping us daily praying for ministry and Mission both as a church and personally. Over the coming year I want to encourage **more to join the Thy Kingdom Come team and hold our church in prayer.**







2023

## **AGM Youth Report- 2023-2024**

Over the last year Ignite, which is our Sunday evening discipleship group for young people in year 7-13 has been an amazing opportunity for the young people to build relationships with each other, read scripture together, pray together and wrestle with questions they have about what it means to be a Christian and live your life for God. The youth group has seen massive growth through young people bringing their non-Christian friends to Ignite and their friends regularly attending. We currently have 19 young people attending ignite most weeks. The young people have done an amazing job in planning and leading a few services throughout the year, one where they shared how they share with faith with their friends and also an amazing carol service that the young band did an incredible job leading our carols. Thank you to Mikie Coyston and Matt Bundock for leading the youth band so well and giving the young people the confidence to lead the church in worship in such a spirit filled way.

During the summer we took 11 young people away to Limitless for a week-long Christian youth festival. It was brilliant to hang out, eat together, worship together and learn loads from the different speakers. It was amazing to see the young people bond as a group and enjoy hanging out with each other and looking after each other. While we were away all three non-Christian young people that we took to Limitless at different points throughout the week decided to give their lives to Jesus and became Christians. PRAISE GOD!

I go into Rushden academy to do mentoring with students one-to-one during the week. I mentor six students & they need support for lots of different reasons. Some are struggling with their mental health, some have issues at home and some just need a safe place to talk about what is going on for them and be given some helpful advice. I have also been able to support Rosie (The Ethos youth worker) in the year 7 lunch club every week and it has been great to get to know the New Year 7s. This has been great because I have been able to invite the young people, I build relationships with at the lunch club to the Youth café that I run with Park Road Baptist church once a week and a few have come which is great. The youth café is still relatively small but we have a really good personal relationship with the young people that do come and have been having conversations about faith which is awesome.

We took 9 young people away to Romford Baptist Church for a weekend away which was great fun to be able to hang out, read scripture together, eat together, play games and spend quality time as a group that is really difficult to do without residential.

Over the next year there is going to be a lot of change, as I am leaving in February. I have been leading youth ministry within the church for the last 5 years and it has been an absolute privilege to be able to lead your young people, teach them about our incredible God and get to walk alongside them as they work out what it means to be a Christian, who God is and what it all means for them.

There are still lots of really exciting things to look forward to over the next year. The youth team are taking the young people to Limitless again in the summer, which is amazing and the young people are going to have a brilliant time meeting with God and getting to spend time together as the group.

Things to pray for:

1. The young team leading the young people once I have left, the youth team are brilliant, and I completely trust that they are the right people to lead your young people once I have left.
2. Pray for the church as they discern the right next steps in regard to the youth ministry.





## **Whitefriars Church, Rushden (Charity Number 1130312): Trustees' Annual Report for 2023**

### **Background**

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) of Whitefriars Church, Rushden, has the responsibility of promoting the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical in the parish. It became a registered charity during 2009, with the PCC members being registered as its trustees. It has complied with its duty of 'promoting in the ecclesiastical parish the whole mission of the church', and in section 4 of the Charities Act 2006 to have due regard to public benefit, guidance published by the Charity Commission.

### **Review of activities in 2023**

This is an outline summary of the activities of the church.

During 2023, the Church has returned to meeting together for worship and for meetings, though some of the smaller committee meetings are still held using Zoom as committee members live and work at some distance and Zoom meetings reduce the negative effects of travel on the environment.

The Church has also become involved in the Greener Church project looking at ways in which members of the church collectively and individually can make small changes to their live-style that can have a beneficial long-term impact on the environment. The Bronze Award has already been achieved.

A small group has continued the monthly worship services in two of the town's residential care homes, though occasional outbreaks of Covid still intervene from time to time. These services follow a range of themes as well as the major festivals and are attended by a good proportion of the residents in each home.

The PCC met six times during 2023. The sub-committees met several times between PCC meetings. Areas of PCC discussion and action during 2023 included a review of the church's safeguarding policy and appropriate training for those holding DBS clearances, updates on the church's children's and youth work and its staffing and funding. All the relevant church policies have now been updated. Some have to be reviewed every year: others are revisited every three years. PCC meetings also included active monitoring of church finances, and consideration of issues from the wider church, through reports from Deanery, Diocesan and General Synods and the Rushden & Higham Council of Churches.

The vicar, Revd. Chris Youngman, decided that he would retire during the summer: this coincided with the need for surgery and would provide him with the time to recuperate afterwards. Our curate, Revd. Josh Thorne, also secured a living of his own during the summer months. We held a celebratory service and shared lunch at the end of August to wish them both well.

The work of our employees: Emma Croxon has continued to develop as Children and Families Minister, working with pre-school children and those at primary school; Lizzie Moesbauer, who joined us as a youth work apprentice in September 2018, completed her degree course at Ridley College: her work focuses on teenagers and youth. Sara Owst has continued to provide administrative support for the vicar and staff team on a part time basis.

**GDPR:** there have been no reported breaches of data and the church continues to function within the guidelines laid out in the General Data Protection Regulations. The continued use of Church Suite has been invaluable in enabling safe communication with members of the church within the UK GDPR guidelines.

**Safeguarding** has always had a high priority within the church. Our Safeguarding Policy has been updated in line with the new guidelines laid down by the National Safeguarding Team and the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisors. All members of the church are encouraged to complete a basic safeguarding



training programme that takes about 30 minutes. All those who have contact with children and/or adults at risk also hold current DBS certificates and have completed higher levels of safeguarding training that is appropriate to their role within the church. The church has a nominated Parish Safeguarding Officer and an Assistant Safeguarding Officer: the assistant is also a Diocesan Safeguarding Trainer and Recruiter. There have been no major safeguarding issues reported. The church has continued to keep contact with those who are house-bound or who are unsure about meeting in public following the pandemic.

**PCC membership**

At the annual meeting of 2023, the following were either serving or elected to the PCC.

<i>Vicar</i>	Revd. Chris Youngman	
<i>Curate</i>	Revd. Josh Thorne	
<b>Wardens</b>	<b>Richard Holley</b> [Vacancy]	
<i>Diocesan Synod members</i>	Andrew Presland	(General synod)
<i>Deanery Synod representatives</i>	Richard Holley Steve Holman Rosie Benn	
<i>Elected members</i>	Melvyn Hunter (to 2024) Matt Croxon (to 2024) Jeremy Smith (to 2024) Hannah Barker (to 2025) Celia Underwood (to 2025) Ken Owst (to 2025) Ally Gibson (to 2026) Lynda King (to 2026) Nisha Slater (to 2026)	(PCC secretary)     (Treasurer)  (Safeguarding)

**PCC committees and groups**

*Standing and Resources Committee:* transacts business as required between PCC meetings, including overseeing the finances of Whitefriars Church, drafting the annual budget, monitoring income and expenditure and promoting planned giving.

*Bridge Management and Minibus Management:* carry out routine checks on the state of the Bridge and ensure that safety checks and routine maintenance are carried out; ensure that the minibus is correctly maintained and insured.

*Mission Committee:* promotes a range of mission and outreach activities including mission support, both in this country and overseas. Much of this is promoted to the congregation through the vicar’s bulletin.

Each of these committees has a chair whose responsibilities include ensuring that sub-committees within each meet regularly, that meetings are properly minuted and reports returned to the PCC, management of the budget allocation, ensuring that expenditure is kept within the amounts allocated.

Melvyn Hunter - PCC Secretary  
2024

## **SAFEGUARDING REPORT – 2023**

We continue to give safeguarding a high profile in order to ensure that our children, youth and vulnerable adults are well cared for.

By the end of the year, we had 41 individuals holding enhanced DBS clearances, showing the dedication of so many to leading and assisting with the many groups that we have in Whitefriars. During the year, all relevant training was either completed or updated as required by our Safer Church Policy.

There was one safeguarding issue that was reported: this was dealt with in-house as it was deemed not to require escalation: a record was kept of the event, what was done and the outcomes.

The Diocesan safeguarding team and thirtyone:eight continue to provide us with support as required, and training is provided by either the Diocese (including the team of volunteer instructors) or the Church of England on-line training portal.

Lynda King  
Parish Safeguarding Officer

## **UK GDPR REPORT 2023**

The Data Protection Officer is happy to report that there have been no breaches of data during 2023.

The continued use of Church Suite has enabled regular and secure communication between church leaders and members of the church to be maintained.

Melvyn Hunter.

## Churchwarden's report April 2024

Have you noticed any differences in the last 12 months?

From one perspective there have been some massive changes – Rev Chris retired last summer, closely followed by our curate Josh Thorne when he moved to Northampton. Then Lizzie felt that God was calling her to move to Lymington in February, together with her husband Mikey who was leading the Youth Band.

But have you noticed any significant difference? Of course we miss those that have left for pastures new, but Whitefriars has continued to do well, despite losing our leaders - and this is due to the magnificent effort of our remaining staff and a whole host of volunteers who continue to step up and do their best to keep the church operating and moving forward.

There are too many people to thank individually, but I would personally like to thank everyone who turn up faithfully and make Whitefriars the best church in town that also has an impact in the local community and schools. There is one person I will mention, however, and that is Melvyn. He carries out some of the tasks normally done by the churchwardens and I am not sure how I would have survived without him.

The guys that I bring from Recovery House are very positive about coming to Whitefriars because you are very welcoming and friendly - and it has been lovely to see 3 of them continue on their faith journey this year, despite being free to not go to church. You should all be proud of yourselves, so keep on looking out for newcomers. There is a distinct possibility that we may get some teenagers and their parents because of the Illuminate outreach events recently. At the time of writing, 322 children have done the 3 steps of faith on the AAA pass and 86 have booked a ticket for the AAA series. These potential newcomers may be people that do not know how we behave in church, what language we use, or our normal procedures – so please continue to be welcoming, friendly and gracious towards them.

One of Chris Youngman's major priorities was that we become disciples of Christ who make other disciples. He also said that all our small groups should put as much emphasis on outreach as we do our relationships with God and each other. How are we doing with that? Are we still asking the 2 Discipleship Questions, or has your group regressed into its comfort zone of doing bible studies with no outward focus? If you are not a member of a Discipleship group, please consider joining one so that we can all consider some important spiritual issues facing the church.

After a lot of work by the PCC on the Parish Profile and adverts for our vicar's post it was disappointing that there were no applicants. There does seem to be a shortage of vicars across the country, and it seems that Evangelicals in particular, are reluctant to move currently because of the controversial proposals coming out of General Synod. All the recent local vacancies for incumbents have taken a considerable time to fill, so maybe I shouldn't have been surprised. I see this as a test of our faith but am convinced that God will bring the right person to us if we pray and remain faithful.

There was some discontent from a few people about some of the words in the Parish Profile. The PCC has listened to this and made a few changes to the profile and an advert, but we are aware that we cannot please all of the people, all of the time. Some others have been upset because we have made the changes. Remember that the PCC are elected by you to use our best judgement, rather than to carry out a referendum every time we need to make decisions about the church. At the end of the day I want to please God, not please people, when there is a conflict of interests.

Looking forward, the vicar's post will continue to be advertised until Ally Gibson and I feel we have a suitable candidate that is willing to come and lead us. Also, the new Bishop of Peterborough, Rt Rev Debbie Sellin, has offered to come to preach at Whitefriars in July this year.

Please take every opportunity to continue to pray for our church – both locally for God's choice of a new leader and that we can continue to glorify God through our witness in the community - and for God's church in England generally that we get strong leadership in accordance with God's wishes.