

The Parochial Church Council
of the
Ecclesiastical Parish of North Abingdon

Registered Charity No. 1153844

Annual Report
and
Financial Statements

1 January to 31 December 2023

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Administrative Information

The Parish of North Abingdon is part of the Diocese of Oxford within the Church of England

Correspondence address: Christ Church, Northcourt Road, Abingdon, Oxfordshire OX14 1PL

Website: www.cca.uk.net

Bankers: NatWest, 11 Market Place, Abingdon, Oxfordshire OX14 3HH

Independent Examiners: Wenn Townsend, Victoria House, 10 Broad Street, Abingdon, Oxfordshire OX14 3LH

The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of North Abingdon is a charity registered with the Charity Commission, charity number 1153844

Trustees

The following served as members of the Parochial Church Council (PCC) during 2023, or part thereof.

Incumbent	Revd Keith Dunnett	Inducted as Vicar on 3 July 2018
Clergy	Revd Kath Cooke	Inducted as Associate Vicar on 3 July 2018
	Revd Phil Cooke	Inducted as Associate Vicar on 3 July 2018
	Revd Andrew Gilmour	Ordained as Curate on 03 July 2022
	Revd Ros Steel	Ordained as Curate on 03 July 2022
	LLM Representatives	Miss Anne Taylor
Wardens	Mr Andrew Lowe	Elected as Warden Jan 2021
	Dr Cherry Tweed	Elected as Warden April 2022
Deanery Synod	Mr Martin Steel	From April 2017, re-elected Treasurer April 2023
	Mr Ben Jeapes	From Oct 2020, re-elected Secretary April 2023
	Dr Sue Robbins	From Oct 2020
	Dr Jeremy Fry	From Oct 2020
	Dr Penelope Smith	From Oct 2020
	Mr Eric Graham	From April 2023
	Mr Roland Knight	From April 2023
	Col Emil Jeevaratnam	From April 2023, Lay Member from Oct 2020
ted Lay Members	Mrs Val Challis	From April 2017
	Mr Philip Bingham	From April 2018, re-elected Vice-Chair and Deputy Warden April 2023
	Mrs Hilary Beale	From April 2019, re-elected Deputy Warden April 2023
	Mr Andy Voyce	From Oct 2020 to April 2023
	Mr Andrew Kitchener	From Oct 2020 to April 2023
	Mr James Ross	From April 2022
	Mr Nalin Kadodwala	From April 2022
	Dr David Hancock	From April 2022
	Mrs Lesley Chapman	From April 2022
	Mrs Sandra Pell	From April 2022
	Mrs Sarah Smith (nee Bromley)	From April 2022
	Mrs Maureen Weston	From April 2023

raise awareness of the world-wide church and to encourage every member of the church to participate through prayer, giving or direct involvement

- The *Health and Safety Group* monitors all matters relating to health and safety and ensures that relevant policies are kept up to date and risk assessments carried out
- The *Social Justice Group* was established to focus on ensuring that Christ Church delivers on its vision of being “compelled by love, gospel centered, kingdom focused, welcoming to all and passionate about justice”
- The *Eco Church Group* was established in 2017 to guide the church in ways of living that care for creation
- The *Buildings Group* is currently led by the Operations Manager, supported by the the rest of the Standing Committee and the Buildings Adviser
- The *Foodbank Working Group/Foodbank Steering Group* is responsible for the operational and financial activities of the Foodbank and operates using guidance from the Trussell Trust with whom we established a relationship in 2020. Periodic reports are made back to the wider PCC for the purposes of transparency and governance
- The *Kingsgate Missional Community* was established to seek God's ongoing leading for the new estates, beyond the Dunmore Road. House-to-house visiting has been taking place throughout the year and several social events have been held
- The *Long Furlong Leadership team* supports the Associate Vicar in leadership of the Long Furlong congregation

The Barns Cafe is established as a separate company with its own board of Directors. The Vicar and churchwardens act as Directors of the cafe.

The day-to-day operations of the church are delegated to the staff team employed by the PCC under the direction of the Incumbent or, in his absence, by the Associate Vicars. The Operations Manager continues to provide capacity to manage the site, other church properties and to undertake maintenance and capital projects. It has also provided additional capacity to deliver central support functions in areas such as administration, HR, ICT and Health and Safety (see above).

The PCC is exposed to risks associated with buildings, finance, legislative compliance and health and safety.

- Buildings are insured and regularly inspected. The PCC continues to budget for and carry out a rolling programme of repairs and maintenance. The Long Furlong congregation meet weekly in Long Furlong Primary School (under a formal Transfer of Control Agreement entered into by the School and the PCC) with the children’s work taking place in the nearby Long Furlong Community Centre. These arrangements have worked well for many years and continue to be of mutual benefit
- Finances are managed by the parish treasurer within a budget approved by the PCC and performance is regularly reported to the PCC. Appropriate financial controls are in place. The majority of our income comes, under God, from the regular giving of our current members, so the importance of prayer and also communication with donors is recognised. Traditionally, early each financial year, the church designates a Sunday to support church members to consider how they can steward the financial resources available to them. As part of this, the congregation is asked to review their financial support for the work of the church and use of the Parish Giving Scheme is strongly encouraged. This Giving Sunday was suspended

during the COVID pandemic. However, information on financial performance is reported to the congregation at the autumn meeting and at the APCM

- Legislative compliance. The PCC is committed to fully meeting its responsibilities relating to Health and Safety, Data Protection, Safeguarding, employment law and other pertinent legislation
- Policies are in place for Safeguarding of Children and Vulnerable adults, use of Social Media and Video Conferencing in Children and Youth Work, Mentoring for Youth Work, Data Protection and Health and Safety. These policies are available at [Safeguarding and other policies at Christ Church Abingdon \(cca.uk.net\)](http://cca.uk.net)
- The Barns Café Ltd follows the *Safer Food, Better Business* food management system. The operations, systems and procedures of the Barns Café have maintained a 5 star rating since 2013 with the most recent inspection in September 2021: standards are also monitored between inspection visits by local authority environmental health. All staff and volunteers are appropriately trained in food safety and preparation, and receive training in health and safety procedures. Staff and supervisors are also trained in first aid. To mitigate risks to the PCC, the Barns Café Ltd is incorporated as a Private Limited Company (Company No. 08794014), with the PCC of the Parish of North Abingdon as the sole shareholder. The Vicar and wardens are *ex-officio* directors with up to three others appointed by the shareholder at PCC meetings

The charity trustees have considered the major risks to which the charity is exposed and have reviewed those risks and established systems and procedures to manage those risks.

Objectives and Activities

The main objective of the PCC is (in accordance with the Parochial Church Council (Powers) Measure 1956 as amended) to cooperate with the incumbent in promoting the whole mission of the Church; pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical.

The main areas of activity are:

- Regular public worship, open to all
- The provision of sacred space for personal prayer and contemplation
- Pastoral work, including visiting the sick and the bereaved
- Teaching of Christianity through sermons, courses and small groups
- Taking of religious assemblies in schools
- Promotion of Christianity through the staging of events and meetings and the distribution of literature
- The provision of Christian youth activities
- Promoting the whole mission of the Church through provision of activities for senior citizens, parents and toddlers and other groups
- Supporting other Christian charities in the UK and overseas
- To provide a service to the community by allowing local groups to hire rooms on the site for their legitimate activities

God has called the church to face outwards, engaging with and serving the local community. As well as our Sunday Services to which we welcome all, in person and through live streaming services, our primary outreach ministries are the Foodbank, run in partnership with The Vineyard Church in South Abingdon, and part of the Trussell Trust, and the Barns Cafe.

We are committed to seeing God's Kingdom extended beyond Abingdon through our Mission Partners. Throughout the 63 years since Christ Church was founded there has been a steady stream of members of our congregations called to various forms of mission service. We have an active Mission Support Group. In 2023 the budget for support for our mission partners and gap-year mission volunteers was £89,000, around 15% of the total church budget.

Volunteers

Since its inception, Christ Church has had a strong tradition of lay involvement and leadership in all areas of ministry. Church members are actively encouraged and equipped to grow as disciples of Jesus: to develop and use their gifts, skills and passions, spending time with Him, and being sent out by Him. The PCC recognises and greatly appreciates the essential contributions made by a large number of volunteers in giving time, money, skills and other resources to the life of the church, for example leading services, preaching, worship, children's work, youth work, Foodbank, the Barns Cafe, Prime Time, pastoral ministry, setting up Long Furlong School each week, hospitality, welcome and many other areas of church life: as noted above, the church has identified around 100 such areas. Volunteer numbers have started to increase again, but it is worthy of note that volunteers in day time ministry areas is an area of concern.

Grant-making

The PCC believes that it is right to use part of our income to support people and projects engaged in Christian mission outside the parish. Through the Church in Abingdon, an organisation consisting of multi-denominational Churches across the Abingdon area, we contribute to mission and social action projects around Abingdon. Through the Mission Support Group, we use approximately 15% of our income to support ten long-term mission partners.

Public Benefit

The PCC is aware of the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit in "The Advancement of Religion for the Public Benefit" and has regard to it in their administration of the Parish. Examples of this public benefit can be found in the activities reported above and other parts of this report.

Achievements and Performance

Review of the Year

Sunday service patterns have operated normally in 2023, with a continuation of merging morning services at Northcourt Road during term end holidays (Christmas, Easter, Summer). Attendance has continued to increase and numbers attending the 9.30 service are now back to pre-covid levels.

Our online livestream services have continued to attract a smaller, but consistent number of views, and are particularly valued by those with health or mobility challenges. It has also enabled regular worshippers to catch up during the week and live streaming has now become a conscious and purposeful method of outreach. The Long Furlong congregation has continued to stream its services over Zoom. This has enabled the vulnerable members

of the congregation to continue to participate in church life, including reading the lesson and occasionally even preaching via Zoom.

Life groups are at the heart of Church life - meeting both in homes and on the church site during the week. There are currently 21 groups at NCR and 6 at Long Furlong, plus two missional communities and a Local Houses of Prayer group. These groups are co-ordinated by Maureen Weston at Northcourt Road and Andrew and Gill Turner at Long Furlong. These continue to flourish and are a key part of our individual journeys in faith and a great way to deepen friendships and pray for one another.

Volunteer numbers have increased, but are still not at a level that allows all our ministries to flourish. On a Sunday, Worship and Tech Team rotas have been tight, and day time ministry areas have access to only a small pool of available volunteers due to work and family commitments.

Children and Youth have had another busy year. Numbers of children and youth have not recovered since covid, and indeed mirror the downward trend seen across the diocese and nationally. In both Children and Youth teams there continues to be opportunities for outreach - prayer spaces and assemblies in primary schools reach up to 420 and 950 children respectively. In the Youth team, a new relationship with Abingdon & Witney College has enabled us to engage with chaplaincy there and we look forward to how God works in this new area.

A big thank you goes to Katrina Hancock who provided significant cover for Youth work during the 8 month gap following Bea's departure. Alongside the rest of the Youth volunteer team, Katrina provided support and teaching and fellowship for our Youth which we are very grateful for.

We welcomed Abi Pike as our Youth Pastor in August - she has made an excellent start, building strong relationships with the staff and volunteer team, parents and the youth alike.

The Children's ministry, led by Heather, has had another busy year, with Prayer Spaces at local schools being a key success enabling us to make connections with children and their families outside of CCA. Heather has conducted a vision process in the later stages of 2023 to help form what we'd like to do in 2024.

At the end of the year, Anne Taylor stood down as coordinator of the children's work at Long Furlong, after ten years in the role. We are grateful to Anne for her dedicated service.

The Barns Cafe turned a corner in 2023. The vision of being a welcoming place that demonstrates the love of Jesus, and runs successfully as a business, has come to fruition again following the pandemic. The Barns Café increased its trading days in 2023, including opening on Saturdays, enabled by a team of dedicated staff and volunteers for whom we are truly grateful and blessed to have. The cafe is now open for more hours each week than it has in its 10 year history. Mid year Phil Adams, Cafe Manager, moved to a new role as Operations Manager at CCA. Annie Brooke, one of our supervisors, successfully interviewed for, and replaced Phil as Cafe Manager. Annie has taken the opportunity to reshape the menu and focus on gross margins. Alongside a general increase in footfall and average transaction value, we have seen daily takings increase and we are pleased with the resulting modest financial surplus for the year. The cafe remains a key community outreach ministry, and provides a welcoming 'front door' to Christ Church in general. The cafe's vision remains to be a welcoming place that is a pleasure to come to; which demonstrates the love and values of Jesus; and which succeeds as a business. We continue to see the Cafe providing a gateway to Christ Church for us; it is a great place where our ministries come together and connections are made, across Foodbank, midweek onsite groups and so on. After much prayer we have been blessed with an increase in volunteers and income enabling us to continue to operate sustainably.

The Foodbank continues to provide a lifeline to those individuals and families impacted by high energy prices and high inflation. We continue to see an increase in both referrals and 'walk up' attendance driven by this. At Easter, Hilary Beale stood down as Foodbank Manager after many years of volunteering in this role. Following a recruitment process, Ruth Atkins joined the Staff Team, replacing Hilary. Alongside the Abingdon Foodbank team, she has continued to manage the operational aspects of the role and has increased engagement with local organisations to encourage further giving. God continues to work in this area, bringing very generous donations from individuals and organisations, and volunteers to help.

During 2023 the Foodbank prepared and distributed 6,973 parcels (4,162 adults and 2,811 children) this is a 187% per cent increase from 2022. People served include single people (some homeless); many adults, single or couples with poorly paid or intermittent work; many families, where health issues leave one member caring for another, often across three generations; young, single parent families, and those escaping domestic violence; individuals with poor mental health. This year, refugees and asylum seekers continued to be noticeable.

In the year we had opportunities for community engagement and this included attendance at:

- Charity event to mark the centenary of MG cars
- Waitrose
- Church services
- Brownies and cubs
- Job Centre Plus
- Pets At Home store
- Women's Institute meetings
- Frilford Golf Club
- BBC Radio Oxford Cost of living clinic in Abingdon market place
- The I, Daniel Blake show at the Playhouse in Oxford
- The Diversity dance show at the New Theatre in Oxford

Layla Moran, MP visited the foodbank in September and she met with volunteers and spoke to two clients. We were able to provide her with data about foodbank usage and raise the profile of the work of the Trussell Trust.

We secured a winter grant of £2,500 from the Vale of White Horse District Council and £3,000 from the Pye's Charitable Settlement. We used this to buy winter warmer items for our clients: gloves, hats, blankets, Snoodies, flasks, air fryers and slow cookers.

We have appreciated the many financial and food donations which were made to the Foodbank during the year – it makes a real difference to what we can provide to our clients. The commitment from the volunteers has been amazing and we would not be able to run without them.

The Kings Gate missional community, established to support the building of community in the New Housing Estates, has continued to grow with door to door activities to invite residents to events, including coffee and cake events in the summer and caroling at Christmas. We look forward to seeing how this may grow as the new housing estates across the North of Abingdon continue to be built and populated.

The wide range of ministries offered by the church has continued, including

- **Link and Singing Circle** for parents and carers of pre-school young children

- Several groups offering **Coffee** and Fellowship on church premises or in homes
- **Roots**, our gathering for those in their 20s-30s, led by one of our curates
- **60+**, an umbrella ministry gathering together a range of groups aimed at this age groups, including a fortnightly midweek older people's service called Thursday Fellowship, termly socials, an annual Christmas meal
- **Footprints**, a group for those who have been bereaved, which meets monthly drawing in people from across the community
- **Men@CCA** and **Women@CCA** which offer several gatherings a year for men and women, such as Saturday Breakfast with a speaker, an annual quiz, BBQ, Middle Eastern food with a visiting speaker, and prayer triplets
- a **mentoring** scheme, with trained mentors offering to walk alongside church members on a 1:1 basis during particular seasons in their life
- a monthly **Cake and Create** group, a fortnightly **Board Games** group, a monthly **Church Walks** group
- **Revival**, which organises prayer evenings and holds worship events in the market place
- the weekly welcome for Ukrainian refugees, which has now evolved into a **weekly International Café**, run in partnership with a local charity called Host Abingdon

There have also been several special events during the year. Highlights included

- A 24/7 prayer week in May, providing lots of opportunities for everyone to engage in praise and prayer
- A baptism/confirmation service in June when Bishop Gavin Collins joined us in the church at NCR to celebrate the baptism/confirmation of a variety of folk who are new to faith, returning to faith or developing their faith
- a (not very far) AwayDay in July, for our Long Furlong congregation, with the theme 'Roots Down, Branches Out', attended by more than 100 people
- the reintroduction of Church-wide termly prayer evenings in September
- a very successful Alpha course from September to Christmas, which has since seen the creation of a new home group for those attendees who want to continue to explore their new or emerging faith
- a review of our prayer life by the PCC as part of a specific focus on the prayer elements of our vision, signposting all the prayer opportunities that already exist across the Church
- successful key events for our children and youth with the Youth Weekend Away and the Holiday Club continuing to be well attended and reaching out beyond the boundaries of our own Church family

Staffing

The PCC greatly appreciates the dedication of the church's staff team, paid staff, self-funding staff members and those working for the church on placements. Several changes in the year are noted here:

Hilary Beale stood down from the role of Foodbank Manager and has been replaced by Ruth Atkins.

We welcomed Abi Pike in September, who joined us as Youth Pastor.

Stephanie Addenbrooke took maternity leave from her role as Associate Youth Pastor, with Shannon McCairns extending her hours to provide administrative support as Associate Youth Coordinator. Subsequently Stephanie resigned from her role.

Clint McVea left the role of Operations Manager in June. Phil Adams successfully applied for the role and moved into the position in July. Annie Brooke was promoted from Supervisor to Cafe Manager and Mo Croasdale joined us to replace Annie as a supervisor in October.

Jo Walker has expanded her duties by taking on the role of Assistant Administrator, in addition to her Barns Cafe Administrator role.

In November, we were sorry to say farewell to Kath and Phil Cooke who were moving on after 7 years as Associate Vicar. Their loss is felt particularly keenly by the Long Furlong congregation.

Jan Hayward stepped down from the voluntary role of Worship Pastor after 3 years.

We give the deepest thanks and gratitude to all those who have provided so many years of service to God and to our Church.

Workloads of our staff and volunteer leaders remain under scrutiny with plans in 2024 to conduct a deeper review of our structures and culture to enable us all to flourish in our roles and responsibilities.

Membership and Attendance

As of April 2023, the Electoral Roll (formal membership) of Christ Church was 448 adults with a further 17 Anglican adult members based at the Peachcroft Christian Centre, giving a total of 465 adults for the Parish of North Abingdon. This is 8 adults down on the last roll count in April 2022, 7 of which were from Peachcroft Christian Centre.

Physical attendance on both sites has now returned to normal, although it is noticeable that the mix of adults and young people has shifted, with fewer young people attending services. This reflects the national picture. At Northcourt Road, typically the 9.30 Sunday morning service attracted around 120 physical attendees (plus Children and youth), and around 50 live streaming devices on YouTube (a number which can get to 200 during the week as people catch up). The 11.20 service had a typical attendance of 50-60. Attendance at the 6:30 service has averaged about 60.

Sunday attendance at Long Furlong is still slightly below pre- Coronavirus levels , with numbers of around 120 each week, including those joining the service via Zoom.

PCC and Standing Committee Meetings

The day-to-day leadership and management of the church is largely delegated to the staff team, wardens, ministry and activity leaders, enabling the PCC to focus on matters of policy and strategic direction. PCC meetings also include time for reflecting on God's word and prayer for the life of the church. Full PCC meetings take place 6 times a year. The Standing Committee also meets 6 times a year, with meetings taking place in between PCC meetings. The AGM (APCM) takes place annually around Easter-time.

Financial Review

Unrestricted income and expenditure

The majority of our income comes from the generous giving of members, and whilst some had to reduce their giving because of the continuing cost of living crisis, others were able to increase theirs resulting in an increase in voluntary income to £537,000 (2022: £532,000). Income from investments increased to £48,000 (2022: £22,000) reflecting higher interest rates paid on short term deposits and rent now received on a house previously used by the youth pastor, and income from church activities increased to £56,000 (2022: £42,000) largely due to a continued recovery in Church Hall lettings. Expenditure was higher than the previous year at £627,000 (2022: £602,000) reflecting an increase in church heating costs and additional depreciation offset by reduced salaries due to staff team vacancies. The unrestricted surplus for the year before gains (losses) on investments was £13,000 (2022: deficit of £6,000), and the net movement in funds was an increase of £40,000 (2022: decrease of £30,000) due to a gain on investments this year of £13,000 (2022: a loss of £8,000), a transfer from the restricted fund this year of £14,000 (2022: £Nil) and no impairment or write back of share capital or loans to subsidiary undertakings this year (2022: a net impairment loss of £15,000).

Restricted income and expenditure

The continuing cost of living crisis resulted in the Abingdon Foodbank experiencing its greatest number of referrals during the year, but support from both the community and Church members remained strong with gifts of not only food but also financial donations which, together with Gift Aid where appropriate, totaled £164,000 (2022: £122,000). This enabled the Foodbank to not only continue to employ a part time coordinator but also employ a part time manager this year following the retirement of Hilary Beale who was instrumental in setting up and running the Foodbank since its inception. The surplus for all restricted funds for the year after transfers was £68,000 (2022: £80,000).

The Barns Café Limited

The PCC is the sole shareholder of The Barns Café Limited whose results are filed with Companies House and are not included in these Financial Statements. The share capital remains at £25,000 (it was increased to this in 2022 and it was able to repay a £10,000 loan in 2022). The share capital is fully impaired at the balance sheet date (as it was at the previous balance sheet date).

Reserves

The PCC is required to operate on a going concern basis and hold reserves equivalent to at least 2 months' general running costs plus an additional month's payroll costs. The accounts show that reserves remain above this minimum.

Future Plans

We will

- Conduct a full structural review of Christ Church, covering leadership, management and culture, using external consultancy to facilitate this process

- Recruit a new Associate Vicar, replacing Kath Cooke, taking the opportunity to review the key responsibilities and person specification to ensure it meets the needs of the parish
- Continue to discern what Living in Love and Faith means for Christ Church, opening up the conversation beyond the PCC
- Review the Worship Pastor role and discern the best approach to fulfilling the responsibilities this post holds
- Establish a dedicated trustee body for Abingdon Foodbank and work towards Charitable Incorporated Organisation status
- Continue to develop emerging missional communities and how we can best serve newcomers to the North Abingdon housing development
- Continue to manage our estate in a way that honors the historic nature of our buildings, improves accessibility and reduces our impact on the environment

We are also very mindful of the breadth and depth of work being done across our staff and volunteer teams. We need always to reflect and pray about our ambitions for the year ahead and seek God's wisdom on priorities for His Church and Kingdom.

Statement of Trustees' Responsibility

The trustees are responsible for preparing the Annual Report and the Financial Statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Principles).

The law applicable to charities in England & Wales requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources of the charity for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- make judgments and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operation.

The trustees are responsible for keeping accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, the Charity (Accounts and Reports) Regulations and trust deed.

The trustees are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other risks to the charity.

This report was approved by the Trustees on 4th March 2024 and signed on their behalf by

Philip Bingham
Vice-Chair of Trustees

Revd Keith Dunnett
Incumbent

Independent Examiner's Report

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees and Members of North Abingdon PCC, Christ Church on the accounts for the year ending 31 December 2023, Charity No 1153844

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the company for the year ended 31st December 2023 which are set out on pages 14 to 30.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity's trustees you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

I report in respect of my examination of the charity's accounts carried out under section 145 of the Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

Since the charity's gross income exceeded £250,000 your examiner must be a member of a body listed in section 145 of the Act. I confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of England and Wales, which is one of the listed bodies.

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

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the charity as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair view' which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

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

Stuart Bates FCA
Wenn Townsend
10 Broad Street
Abingdon
OX14 3LH

..... March 2024

APPENDIX TO THE ANNUAL REPORT

Reports Required for the APCM under the Church Rep Rules Part 9 M(5)

(these are NOT included in Annual Report and Financial Statements filed with the Charity Commission)

Electoral Roll Report April 2024

Below are the updated records of the electoral roll numbers for Christ Church Abingdon, Peachcroft Christian Centre and the parish total over the last six years.

	CCA Total	PCC Total	Parish Total	Additions	Removals
April 2019	436	18	454	New Electoral Roll	
October 2020	445	24	469	CCA: +19 PCC: +6	CCA: -10 PCC: -0
April 2021	446	24	470	CCA: +13 PCC: +0	CCA: -12 PCC: -0
April 2022	449	24	473	CCA: +18 PCC: +0	CCA: -15 PCC: -0
April 2023	448	17	465	CCA: +23 PCC: +0	CCA: -24 PCC: -7
April 2024	461	16	477	CCA: +32 PCC: +0	CCA: -19 PCC: -1

Church Members on the Electoral Roll for North Abingdon Parish

Since April 2023 there have been no additions to the numbers for Peachcroft Christian Centre (PCC) hand only one person removed.

There have been 32 people added to the electoral roll for Christ Church Abingdon (CCA). There have also been 19 people removed from the CCA numbers for the following reasons:

- Moved/moving to new area: 5 Members
- Moved Church: 6 Members
- Deceased: 8 Members

As of April 7th April 2024, the current electoral roll total for North Abingdon Parish is 477. A report regarding the roll revision between April 2023 and April 2024 will be given by the wardens during the APCM.

Suzie Miles, Electoral Roll Officer, 9th April 2024

Fabric Report

The Estate Strategy paper continues to drive our prayerful decision making for estate development and maintenance. At the heart of this strategy is the desire to grow and evolve our ministries and develop our community engagement and outreach. The development of the Corner Suite has continued, with preliminary costings and quotes for several designs of significant upgrades. These have been paused until the Foodbank management structure is reviewed with the potential outcome of transitioning to become a charitable incorporated organisation.

Throughout the year, and number of projects have been completed:

- Revamped courtyard to eliminate the need for a ramp
- Removal of concrete ramp
- Refurbishment of 34 Geoffrey Barbour Road including carpeting and repainting
- Repointing of ancient walls.
- Repainting Barn 2, 3 and 4 cladding
- Installation of relay screens in Tithe Barn
- We continue to own, and therefore maintain 2 properties in Abingdon. 33 Mattock Way has been rented to Church members on a short term agreement following some minor maintenance works. 34 Geoffrey Barbour Road will undergo similar maintenance very early in 2023 in readiness for rental

A new buildings group has been established with initial work including grounds maintenance, installation of raised planters, and internal and external painting preparations made in readiness for further works in Spring 2024.

Investment continues in replacing lighting with LED equivalents to help meet our environmental policy requirements. 2024 will see further investment in heating and windows for the Lounge and Upper Room.

Health & Safety Report

It is essential that we provide and maintain safe and healthy working conditions, equipment and systems of work for all our employees, casual labour and voluntary helpers. We need to ensure the health, safety and welfare of those who may visit the church, site and buildings.

Over previous years we have established a number of policies, plans and procedures which we review on a regular basis.

Phil is our new site administrator this year and continues to ensure the site is safe, with regular site inspections. There have been a number of building improvements over the year that are also health and safety related. Alterations to the courtyard are now complete with the ramp replaced by an inclined walkway, which has both enhanced the appearance of the entrance to the church and improved safety.

Accident Reporting – There have been 6 incidents, none reported to RIDDOR. A medical incident at the youth weekend away has led to a review of procedures in this area.

Penny Smith (Chair – Health & Safety subgroup)

Safeguarding

Annual Report from the Parish Safeguarding officer – 2023/24

The safeguarding team has continued its activities throughout the past year, attempting to ensure that we follow Diocesan and Church of England National Safeguarding guidelines in order that our church can be as safe for children, youth, vulnerable adults and all members as we can possibly make it.

This is done by following the Parish Safeguarding Policy which states that all volunteers working with vulnerable groups should be safely recruited and trained, and that all groups should aim to build a safe environment, with any concerns being followed up promptly and compassionately.

Safeguarding Team

The team has been enhanced this year by the inclusion of Sheila Furlong, who will enable people in Long Furlong to have easier access to the Safeguarding Team. With many thanks to Anne Taylor who has performed this role (alongside her many other roles) for many years.

Growth of the team has allowed for more reflection and learning, and we are able to communicate frequently and rapidly by both email and in face-to-face meetings.

The current team is:

Roland Knight – Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) (overall leadership and liaison with Diocese; administration of DBS renewals and safe recruitment process; administration for training)

Val Challis – Deputy PSO (upkeep of Safeguarding Dashboard; liaison with groups; maintain lists of current volunteers in groups; risk assessments; training delivery)

Karen Brombley, Sarah Smith, Sheila Furlong – (safeguarding advisors with some mentoring; Sarah is also a trainer)

Contact details for the team are displayed in most large rooms on both sites, and in the safeguarding section of both church websites.

Safeguarding Incidents

There have been a few concerns during the year with individuals or situations which indicated safeguarding needs. In each case we have sought guidance from the Diocese and from statutory authorities, and none have required further action on our part. Two situations involved church officers - (a church “officer” can be either a

volunteer or staff member) – one individual was asked to step down from their role pending further safeguarding training and supervision; the other stepped down voluntarily but, following consultation, they are free to rejoin their team. As part of our ongoing supervision of church officers and activities we occasionally work with individuals with the aim of improving practice. These are discussed with the Diocese who have agreed our management plan.

Groups

In line with Diocesan recommendations, all groups run by the church have been evaluated to assess whether they should fall within the safeguarding remit, including an assessment of the vulnerabilities of individuals and church officers. This work is ongoing but has led to a few groups no longer being included in this remit. An outline proposal on this subject was submitted to the PCC in February 2024. The policy is still being refined.

Administration / Statistics

With about 225 individuals holding a valid DBS of some sort in the church, all of which need renewal every 3 years, the PSO has a continuing stream of administration for DBS renewals, safe recruitment processes for new volunteers and ensuring that all training requirements are met. Most safeguarding training needs to be refreshed every 3 years. Some training courses are provided online but, where possible, we encourage face-to-face training. The majority of new DBSs are now being registered with the new DBS Update Service which promises to reduce the workload in the future.

<u>Activity</u>	<u>2023</u>	<u>2024 (Jan-Mar)</u>
New DBSs and Safe Recruitment package	28	16
DBS renewals	66	15
Safeguarding Training (Basic)	28	12
Safeguarding Training (Foundation)	63	26
Safeguarding Training (Leadership)	7	0
Safeguarding Training (Domestic Abuse)	24	14

Transparency

An example of building a safeguarding culture in our church is a new scheme for staff members to report to the PSO any situation which, if observed from the outside, might appear to be contrary to safeguarding practices. Any member of the congregation is also welcome to discuss with the PSO any situation which they perceive may be creating a safeguarding risk because –

“Safeguarding is everyone’s concern”

Deanery Synod

What is it?

Abingdon Deanery is drawn from the 25 CofE churches in Abingdon and surrounding villages, and comprises lay members elected by each parish (CCA has 7 “Synod Reps” who are also PCC members) and all licensed clergy

What is it for?

- To encourage and support a caring, sustainable and growing Christian presence in every parish
- To develop and implement “mission action plans” to support parishes in their local mission and ministry
- To encourage generosity and genuine stewardship within the churches which honour and develop the gifts and ministry of all members
- To be a link between individual parishes and Oxford Diocese

What are Abingdon Deanery’s key missional priorities?

- Developing work with children and young people
- Engaging with people in new housing developments
- Offering ways for communities to experience the church
- Developing our work with elderly people and vulnerable adults
- Deepening our life with God

How is this carried out?

Deanery Synod (which means “assembly”) meets 4 times a year to encourage mission by inviting speakers who can share experience of one of our missional priorities, sharing ideas and best practice, and looking at how we can share resources and expertise

Highlights in 2022:

- Revd Rob Glenny appointed Area Dean after Revd Keith Dunnnett stepped down, with Revd Nick Weldon appointed Associate Area Dean
- Hybrid format of meetings maintained (summer in person, winter on Zoom)
- “Prayer and Praise” event based on our missional priorities
- Opportunity to meet the new Associate Archdeacon (Jane Haslam)
- Breakout groups to share ideas on reaching out to residents in new housing, and encouraging people who come to mid-week groups to become regular worshippers
- Parish Share allocation between parishes updated for 2024.

Martin Steel (Deanery Synod Member)