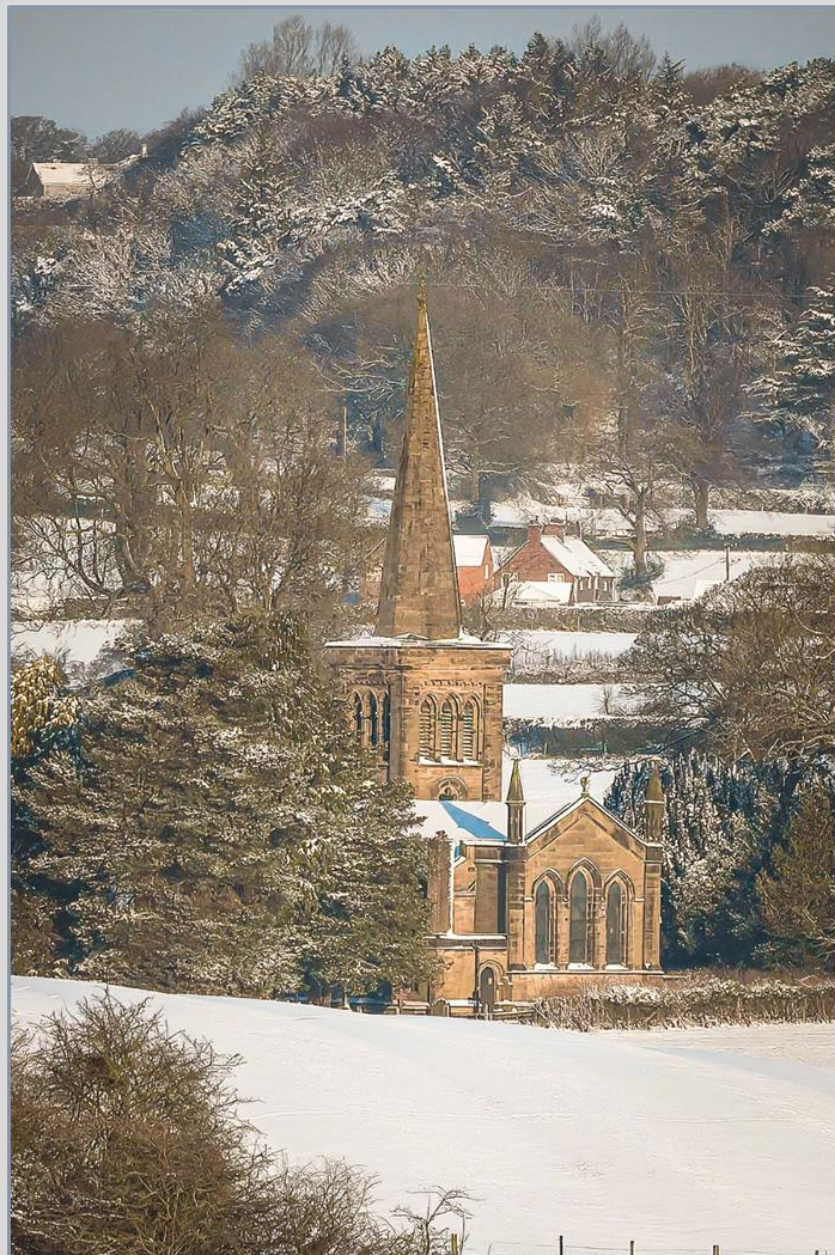


CHRIST CHURCH HILDERSTONE

Annual Church Report 2023



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Vicar's Reflections:



It is only six months since my licensing as the Assistant Vicar in the Benefice of Fulford-in-Stone with Hilderstone and, yet, within this relatively short period of time I have witnessed so much love, care and compassion which our church members have for each other and for Christ Church itself. It is a joy to see the love of Christ being shared, not just with all who come to worship but with all who live and work within the parish.

I have been made to feel very welcome indeed and rejoice at the enthusiasm with which the community embraces new ways of doing things. Christmas was a joyous occasion with our Crib Service and early Midnight Mass, both of which were very well attended. Lent and Easter followed hot on the heels of Christmas, being particularly early this year.

In the lead-up to Easter we enjoyed a lively Lent Course with members from both Christ Church and Fulford, and others, coming together to watch and discuss the film "Les Misérables", and based on "Another Story Must Begin" by Jonathan Meyers, in which we explored the grace of God and redemption through the lives of the principal characters.

Holy Week began with our Palm Sunday services followed by a joint Maundy Thursday service at Christ Church, a joint Good Friday service at St Nicholas, and our traditional Easter Day Services at each. In addition, we have celebrated Plough Sunday and Mother's Day, posies for which were beautifully produced by our Churchwarden and Youth Club.

As mentioned in the Lay Chairman's Report, Christ Church remains without toilet facilities which, in this day and age, is unusual. If we are to maintain, and build on, the wonderful work that is already being done at Christ Church and out in the community, including with Hilderstone Hall, we need to resolve this situation sooner rather than later.

My thanks go to our Lay Chair, Roy Clark, to our Churchwarden, Audrey Stringer, to our Secretary, Eleanor Bane, to our Treasurer, Philip Davies, and to all members of the PCC and church community who work tirelessly to ensure Christ Church remains very much part of our community, a calm and welcoming presence within the everydayness of our lives, helping to bring us into an ever closer relationship with God.



*Revd Lucinda Wray-Wear
Associate Vicar*

Aims & Purpose of our PCC

- a. In keeping with the PCC (Powers) Measure 1956, Christ Church remains committed to co-operating with our Minister, Rev'd Lucinda Wray-Wear 'in the parish the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical'.
- b. As stated in our Mission Action Plan, we continue to work to the achieve our agreed goals, namely to:
 - I. Bring the facilities at Christ Church into the 21st Century in order to expand the range of activities to the wider community. Much has been achieved over the past four years with our Access for All Project: we have relocated the Font and Roll of Honour and installed a permanent Disabled Access ramp and new entrance point to the church. We are currently seeking funding for our plans for a Disabled Toilet and plan to include a Tea Bar at a future date.
 - II. Review services and consider fresh approaches. Under the guidance of Rev'd Lucinda Wray-Wear, we are keen to explore new and (sometimes) challenging ways to reach out to our community and those we seek to encourage to participate in our worship from the local area.
 - III. Explore opportunities to include a wider range of music in services. We have expanded our range of hymns in our church services over recent years, with great success and have enjoyed children playing at the Crib Service. We look to host more musical events, linked to Worship, when we have improved facilities. This is very much a work in progress.
 - IV. Increase the participation of the congregation in services through intercessions/readings. We are blessed with an active congregation at Christ Church: many participate in the Reading Rota for services and have participated in Intercessions and acted as Servers to the Incumbent.
 - V. Look at ways of communicating PCC information to the congregations and encourage proactive support and valuable feedback. We have re-vamped the Parish Magazine to make it more accessible to the wider community and this is produced four times a year. This includes a section on 'Church Matters' filled with information and articles pertaining to Christ Church. We also use the village information network and invite participation in key events. Finally, we have a presence on the Parish Council website. We aim to inform and encourage feedback from our community.
 - VI. Establish a maintenance programme for the church fabric. We have a maintenance programme, managed by Roy Clark and Phil Davies. A brief report is given at each PCC meeting and recorded. The church is maintained to a good standard as a result.
 - VII. Continue the Open Church policy from April to September. We open the church for the Flower Festival, Christmas Tree Festival, and other key events in addition to Open Church to welcome and encourage visitors from the community.
 - VIII. Identify two charities a year to support through fund raising.
 - IX. Look for opportunities to engage with the wider community in participating in joint events. Christ Church is very much at the heart of this small rural community and is actively engaged in many village events: the Big Village Party to Celebrate Community, which culminated in a Service of Celebration at Christ Church; the Harvest Festival & Supper; the Scarecrow Weekend, with events in throughout the village, and a special

Scarecrow Service; the Churchyard Tidy Up Team, which comprises of members of the village who are not regular churchgoers; and the church maintains close links with Hilderstone Hall, the local residential care home. Members of the PCC are also committee members on the Parish Council, Village Hall and Women’s Institute. This commitment to be involved with, and work alongside, other village groups remains at the heart of our MAP strategy moving forward.

The Hilderstone W.I. produced a wonderful display for our Remembrance Service



Structure, Governance & Management

1. The **Parochial Church Council of Christ Church Hilderstone** (PCC) is a corporate body established by the Church of England. The PCC operates under the Parochial Church Council Powers Measure. The PCC is a Registered Charity (or where the PCC has gross income under £100,000 and is not a registered charity – ‘The PCC is exempted by order from registering with the Charity Commission.

All members of the PCC are elected to the post in accordance with the rules set out in the Church Representation Rules. All candidates for the PCC must complete a Nomination form, and sign both the HMRC declaration and that they are a fit & proper person to hold the post. These are presented at each APCM, where members of the PCC are formally elected to the post.

Christ Church currently has six members of the PCC, listed below, along with the responsibilities they hold within the PCC:

Mr Roy Clark	Lay Chairman, Planning & Finance Committee, Health & Safety
Mrs Audrey Stringer	Churchwarden, Planning & Finance Committee, Safeguarding Officer
Mr Phil Davies	Treasurer, Planning & Finance Committee, Health & Safety
Mrs Eleanor Bane	Secretary, Planning & Finance Committee, Health & Safety, Gift Aid, Social & Fundraising, Electoral Roll Officer, GDPR Officer
Mrs Christine Clark	Churchyard Tidy-up Coordinator
Mr Simon Shaw	Social & Fundraising Committee

In addition to the PCC, Christ Church also has two sub-committees:

- **Finance & Planning Committee**, which oversees the management of the budget, approval of expenditure and financial planning (including major projects, such as the Access for All). Sitting on this sub-committee are: the Vicar, Lay-Chairman, Treasurer, Churchwarden & Secretary.

- **Social & Fundraising Committee**, which is tasked with planning and reviewing all church activities within the community, from key festivals, to community-centred events, such as the Christmas Tree Festival. This sub-committee is made up of Simon Shaw & Eleanor Bane. The Social & Fundraising Committee has met twice over the year to discuss forthcoming fundraising events, most especially the Scarecrow Weekend, Harvest events and the Christmas Tree Festival. Fundraising activities have been limited, however, due to the lack of toilet facilities within the church.

Both sub-committees have full Minutes taken at each meeting, which are then presented to the full PCC. Over this past year, there has been no requirement to hold a specific Finance & Planning Committee meeting, as all matters have been fully discussed at the general PCC meeting.

The current PCC combines a strong skill set, ensuring it continues to facilitate a sound maintenance programme for Christ Church, and builds on its commitment to the community it serves, as set out in its Mission Action Plan. Through careful planning, the PCC, with the support of the congregation, remains an important, and active part, of the village and works alongside village groups to encourage attendance amongst a wide spectrum of locals, but most especially the children.

Each PCC Agenda included the following:

- **Safeguarding.** Audrey Stringer continued as the appointed Safeguarding Co-ordinator and her role covers both Christ Church Hilderstone and St Nicholas Fulford. All necessary documentation has been displayed on the church noticeboard and Safeguarding was discussed at each of the PCC meetings shown above. (See report below).
- **GDPR.** Eleanor Bane has maintained all aspects of GDPR and ensured that Christ Church remains compliant. GDPR was discussed at each of the PCC meetings throughout the year, with no issues reported and no requests for information received.
- **Access for All.** Roy Clark is the Project Leader for the AfA (Access for All). Due to lack of funds, the church has been unable to progress with its planned AfA programme. It continues, however, to review possible grants and fundraising opportunities.
- **Common Fund.** Christ Church fulfilled its financial obligations to Lichfield Diocese through the full payment of the Common Fund in 2023. The Common Fund is an Agenda item for discussion at each PCC meeting.
- **Health & Safety.** A Health & Safety Policy was approved by the PCC at the APCM 2023 and is now on display in the church. Risk Assessments, covering the Bell Tower, Churchyard, church interior, Fire etc are reviewed at PCC meetings, where required, and all certificates, assessments etc are displayed and also kept in the Maintenance File in the church.
- **Parish Magazine.** The Hilderstone Parish Magazine is generally well-received within the community. With equal emphasis on the Church, village groups and general village news, activities and history, it aims to appeal to all those in the parish. Currently there are four issues per year, covering Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter.
- **Hilderstone School Trust (HST).** There has been no further developments during this past year.

PCC Meetings during 2023:

12th January – PCC Meeting

2nd March – PCC Meeting

30th March – Extraordinary Meeting

17th May – Extraordinary Meeting

2nd August – PCC meeting

22nd August – PCC Meeting with Archdeacon
Dr Megan Smith

30th August – Extraordinary Meeting

13th September – PCC Meeting

1st November – PCC Meeting

Lay Chairman's Report

The Benefice of Christ Church, Hilderstone and St Nicolas, Fulford have something to rejoice about this year. Thankfully, after a long search, we have a Vicar – Rev'd Lucinda Wray-Wear. Rev'd Lucinda joined in October 23 and has now settled in very well to the life of the church in Hilderstone and Fulford. We now look forward to once again growing our Christian presents in this village.

The growth of Christ Church will require one single Project to be resolved – a Toilet. Without a toilet we cannot go forward unless this issue is resolved. This is a constant problem and was highlighted by visiting clergy during the vacancy, at special celebration services, at funerals and weddings and any attempts at fund raising.

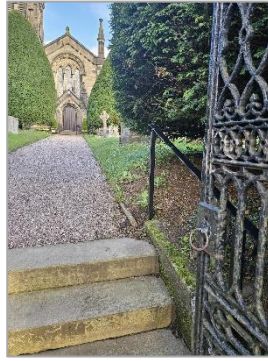
As reported last year we require in the order of £60k to install the toilet. The PCC has the Faculty but insufficient funds to proceed.

Throughout the Vacancy we have to thank Audrey Stringer, our Churchwarden, for her sterling work in keeping the church open and gaining visiting clergy each Sunday, including Bishops on some occasions - this was an enormous task to undertake over the last two and a half years.

Special thanks goes to Eleanor Bane, our Secretary, who has throughout this year not only kept the essential Minutes of the PCC, but pursued the various reports on Faculties, plus instituting procedures for the running of the church.

Philip Davies, our Treasurer, has ensured that our finances are kept in order and in a sound state so much so that this year we have cleared the Common Fund debt – previously known as the Parish Share. We moved into 2024 with no arrears. However, in recent weeks, the church has been hit with additional cost resulting from thieves attempting to remove lead from the roof - this we hope will be covered by the insurance.

As reported last year Simon Shaw had just joined the PCC and was very successful in organising the Christmas Tree festival again and now looking forward to the bi-annual Scarecrow weekend in June. However, Simon has asked to stand down from the PCC due to other pressing engagements. We now have to find another church member to join the PCC.



I am pleased to report that we are beginning to move away from the Covid restrictions and are now singing once again the responses in the services. Things are nearly back to normal and now doubt Rev'd Lucinda will want to institute other changes in the services in future months. Our thanks again to Robert Hancock and Audrey – our

Organists - who without their input of music this could not happen.

'Access for All' is still our Project to improve the access and facilities within the church for the whole community, young and old alike. In the last year the Church was left a bequest which we put towards installing handrails at the Main Gate and entrance into the church - all completed with a Faculty (*See Left & Above*). We still have

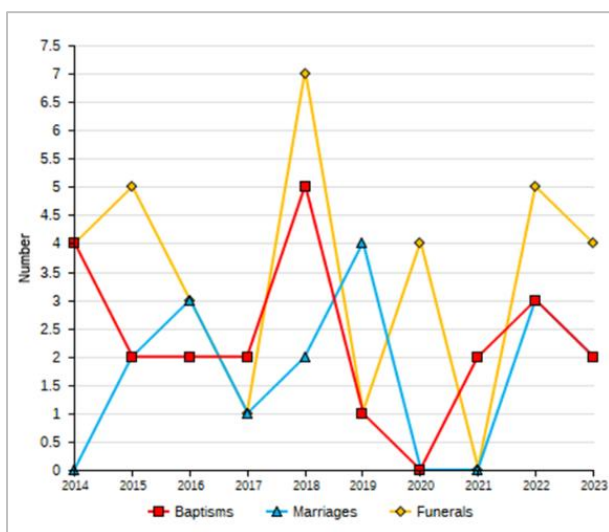
an outstanding issue with safety and access for the Readers going to the reading desk. The steps up to the alter rail need, in the PCC's opinion, to have hand support. Still looking for solutions.

Finally, as a PCC, we have many items to pursue in the forthcoming year ranging from finding another member for the PCC, to fund raising, maintenance of the church yard and fabric of the building, these will be highlighted later.

We are pleased that after two and half years of the vacancy to have our own Vicar, Rev'd Lucinda, and now look forward in faith to the future of Christ Church and the whole village of Hilderstone.

Roy Clark, Lay-Chair

Services

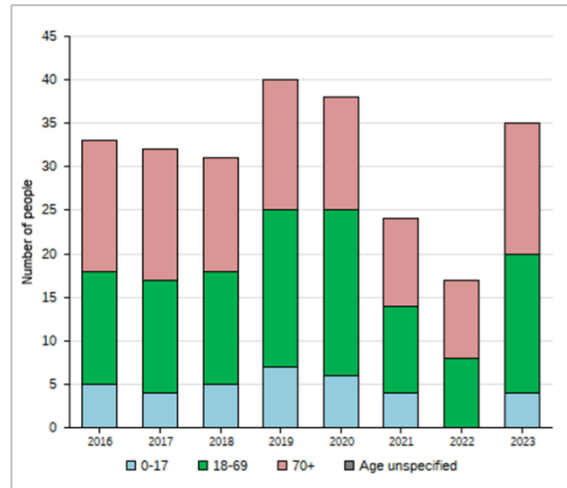
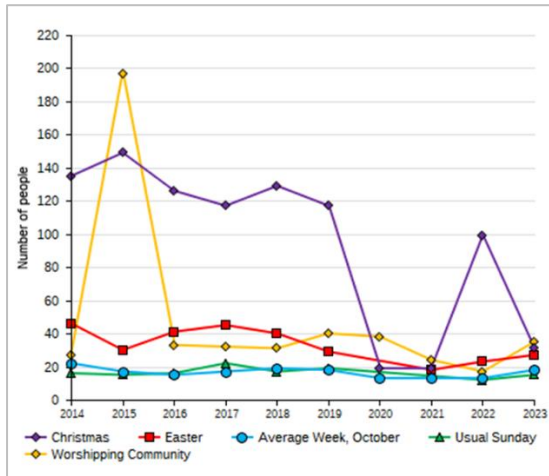


The Benefice of Fulford in Stone and Hilderstone welcomed the institution and licensing of Rev.d Lucinda Wray-Wear in October 2023.

The regular Sunday services, interspersed with seasonal celebrations and observations, have been warmly received by the congregation.

We have seen less Life Events being held this year.

Audrey Stringer, Churchwarden



Fabric Report

Church Building: An annual inspection of the roof was completed in March 2024 by Trent Roofing & Buildings. This was done following the occurrence of thieves attempting to remove lead from the roof at the Southwest corner near the boiler house. Our resident roofing contractor responded to our urgent request as rainwater was pouring into the church damaging the roof lining, paintwork etc. A number of new roof slates had to be purchased as much damage was caused by the thieves. At the same time two lead drain hoppers were stolen and had to be replaced with plastic ones, at a total cost of £1,122. Police were informed and a Faculty completed, and insurance claim submitted.

The 'Access for All' (AfA) Project is ongoing as the PCC want to provide facilities for all people coming to Christ Church, young and old alike. Again, as mentioned earlier, the toilet is an essential part of our requirement in moving forward in faith.

The electronic organ is still working but is in need of attention. Robert Hancock and Audrey Stringer are involved with an engineer to seek improvement. The old pipe organ has recently been serviced as a contingency.



There are two areas of general fabric that need attention – the ceiling in the SE corner of the church where rainwater came in as a result of lead being removed. All external doors will need another coat of paint to preserve the work done previously.

The heating system pipework needs reviewing this summer together with resolving the radiator problem in the Baptistry and Vestry. There is specific damp and damaged plasterwork that needs attention.

Every 5 years the church has to have a Quinquennial inspection by a qualified architect. For many years we have used Woods Goldstone Yorath our architect, and they plan to do their visit in August 2024 and submit a report by the end of the year, cost £750. This was planned for December 2023, but delayed due to workload with the architects. Resulting from this inspection we shall have a Report on what are the essential items that need fixing in and around the church and items that need attention over the next 5 years.



Church yard: Unfortunately, from March to October 2023 was not a good year for the Church Yard tidy up sessions which are held every third Saturday from 10 to 12 noon. It was disappointing that we haven't been able to keep the church yard as tidy as we normally do during a good summer season. We have between 6 to 9 regular members each month.

During the Church Yard tidy sessions, an inspection is made of the general church yard for H&S issues.



Safety handrails have now been installed at the Main Gate and entrance to the North door. A new church yard notice board needs to be purchased and this has been recorded in the 2023 PCC Minutes as an action point.

Extensive tree and hedge work was performed in the car park area during February 2024 together with shaping the 4 yew trees bordering the path to the North Door.

The grass was cut, when weather permitted, with special care taken around the newer part of the church yard. We continue to preserve an area of long grass away from the grave sites, to encourage wildlife. We also ensure our grass cutting does not impact upon the rare fungi located in area of the churchyard.

Roy Clark, Lay-Chair

Secretary's Report

Christ Church currently has seven members on its PCC, including the Churchwarden:

Rev'd Lucinda Wray-Wear, Incumbent

Mrs Audrey Stringer, Churchwarden

Mr Roy Clark, Vice Chair

Mr Simon Shaw

Mrs Christine Clark

Mrs Eleanor Bane, Secretary

Mr Philip Davies, Treasurer

Christ Church welcomed its new Incumbent, Reverend Lucinda Wray-Wear, in October 2023 and has benefitted significantly from her presence within its spiritual community. In keeping with its Mission Action Plan, the church continues to work closely with other groups within the community, and ensures it plans a central role in village life. Christ Church is represented in the Women's Institute and also the Hilderstone Village Hall Committee and retains close links with the Hilderstone Youth Club.

Eleanor Bane, Secretary – Christ Church PCC

GDPR Report

GDPR remains a standard Agenda item at each PCC meeting. During the past year, there have been no GDPR issues reported at Christ Church. The Data Audit has been updated and will be approved by the PCC in advance of the APCM 2024.

Eleanor Bane, GDPR officer

Christ Church Hilderstone & St Nicholas Church Fulford - Deanery Synod report

Notes from the Stone Deanery Synod in 2023-24 have been circulated to Christ Church PCC members for inclusion in meetings.

Rowena and David Robinson (St Nicholas Fulford), Deanery Synod Representatives for the Benefice.

Audrey Stringer, Churchwarden

Safeguarding Report

Safeguarding. Audrey Stringer continued as the appointed Safeguarding Co-ordinator and her role covers both Christ Church Hilderstone and St Nicholas Fulford. All necessary documentation has been displayed on the church noticeboard and Safeguarding was discussed at each of the PCC meetings shown above. (See report below).

Audrey Stringer successfully completed the Safeguarding Leadership Training on Monday 5 June and Monday 12th June 2023.

Safeguarding is an Agenda item on the Christ Church PCC meetings, as directed by the Church of England.

The present PCC have all renewed their safeguarding training in 2024 as recorded in the Minutes.

As the minutes to the meetings held in 2023-24 reveal, there have been no concerns raised in this area.

Audrey Stringer, Church warden and Safeguarding Officer

Gift Aid Report

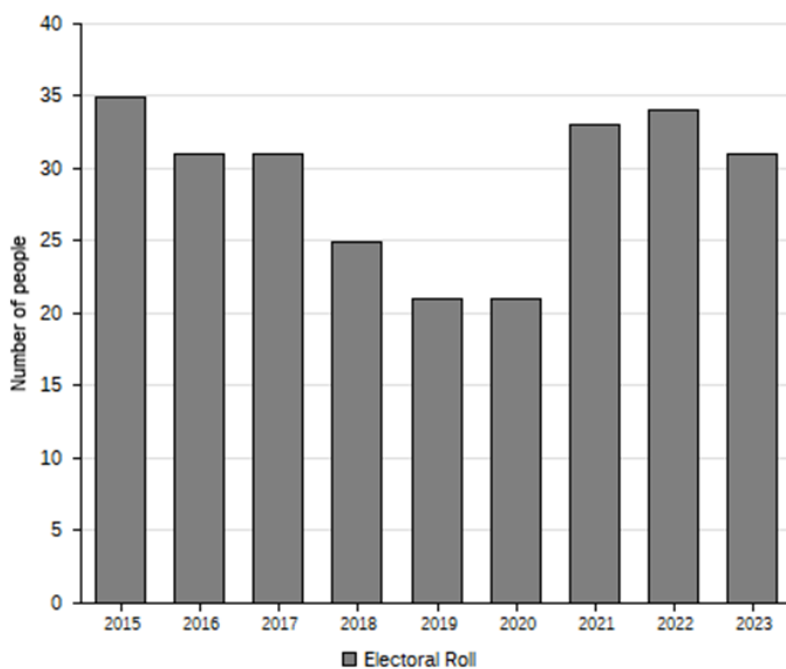
All Gift Aid was claimed back from HMRC for 2023. As with previous years, the Gift Aid Officer has written to all those who have donated through Gift Aid at the end of the financial year, to thank them for their generous donation and enclosing a Gift Aid Certificate.

Over the past 10 years, donations made through Gift Aid have remained reasonably steady; indeed, with the introduction of Standing Orders, the figure has risen slightly, and this ensured a steady income during the disruptive period of Covid, when church services were suspended, and funds were not being collection through Gift Aid envelope and the plate during services.

Eleanor Bane, Gift Aid Officer

Electoral Roll Report

The Electoral Roll was revised and published before the APCM 2023. A full Electoral Roll is to be completed in 2025.



The 2023 Revised Electoral Roll saw a reduction of 2: this was due to ill health by one member of the congregation and work commitments from another, who often now works weekends.

Christ Church continues to maintain a strong core of church attendees.

Eleanor Bane

Finance Report – Account Summary 2023

The Hilderstone School Trust (HST). The Trust operates independently of the PCC. Trustees of HST are:

Mrs Sue Stubbs

Mr Robert Hancock

Mrs Jean Jones

Mr Douglass Crump

HST provides a full set of accounts each year for the Combined Church Report and is an Agenda item at each PCC meeting.

Bourne Charity. This Trust, independent of Christ Church, incorporates the Bourne for the Organist Fund, the Bourne for the Poor Fund, the Bourne for Education Fund and Teresa Bagot’s Charity Fund. The Trust is managed by the following Trustees:

Mr Roy Clark, Lay-Chairman of Christ Church PCC

Mrs Audrey Stringer, Churchwarden of Christ Church PCC

Mr Robert Hancock

Mrs Audrey Stringer joined the Trustees in 2020 to strengthen the church’s representation on this Trust.

A financial statement is provided each year for inclusion in this Combined Church Report.

Financial Statement for the year ended 31st December 2023								
Receipts & Payments Account (Cash, Current and Deposit Accounts)								
			Unrestricted	Designated	Restricted	Total	Total	
			Funds	Funds	Funds	2023	2022	2022
Receipts								
Voluntary Income								
Planned Giving			5047				5496	
Collections & other giving			1380				886	
Income Tax Recovered			1410			7837	2102	8484
Other Voluntary Income Resources								
Special Efforts			864				1622	
Heating Grant			0				650	
Magazine Advertising & Donations			1022				1011	
Hilderstone Parish Council			469			2355	719	4002
Income from Investments								
Dale C/Yard Fund			700				700	
C/Yard fund in Deposit A/c			0				500	
Vacancy Support Fund			1526				3000	
						2226		4200
Income from charitable & ancillary Trading								
Parochial fees paid to PCC			3163				2577	
Donation			1910			5073	1059	3636
Total incoming resources						17491		20322
Payments								
Church Activities								
Parish Share			7297				7800	
Church Running Expenses			5938				6055	
Clergy Advert			0				500	
Grants			673				284	
Churchyard			600				1730	
Magazine			1007				950	
Visiting Clergy			1957				2154	
Total						17472		19473
Excess of receipts over payments						19		849
Bank Balances								
Bank Account as at 1st January						2412		1563
Bank account as at 31st December						2431		2412
Deposit Account as at 1st January						1577		2077
Income from Investments						57		20
Less transfer to Current a/c								520
Deposit account as at 31st December						1634		1577
Liabilities								
Parish Share						0		1148

Financial Statement for the year ended 31st December 2023					
Organ Fund (Restricted)					
		2023		2022	
		£	£	£	£
Receipts					
Interest				0	
Payments				0	
Excess of receipts over payments			0		0
Leek United Building Society					
As at 1st January			20		20
As at 31st December			20		20
Access for All Fund (Designated)					
Receipts		600		624	
Interest		72		9	
			672		633
Payments		0	0	0	0
Excess of Receipts over payments			672		633
Stafford Railway Building Society					
As at 1st January			3733		3100
As at 31st December			4405		3733
Churchyard Maintenance Fund (Restricted)					
Receipts (Opening Balance)			1702		1770
Dividend / Interest		701		632	
Payments		700		700	
Balance			1703		1702
Diocesan Trust Investment (Revalued 31/12/23)			23103		21116
Churchyard Fund in Deposit account					
			941		941
Statement of Assets					
Monetary Assets					
	Bank Current Account		2431		2412
	Bank Deposit Account		1634		1577
Endowment Funds					
	National Savings Bonds		3000		3000

Hilderstone School Trust - Report

Financial Statement to 31st December 2023

Bank balance 1st January 2023 £5,716.48

Income for the year:

M&G Charities 26th February 2023 £483.29

28th May £483.29

31st August £483.29

15th December £483.29

Total £1,933.16

Expenditure for the year £0.00

Balance as at 31st December 2023 £7,649.64

Asset value

As at 01/01/2023 48,329.242 shares @ £1.0831 per share £52,345.40

As at 31/12/2023 48,329.242 shares @ £1.1184 per share £54,051.42

Hilderstone Charities Report

Financial Statement as at 31st December, 2023

Current Account Bank Balance on 1st January 2023		£6,841.36
Income for the year:		
Bourne for the Organist	£126.16	
Bourne for the Poor	£ 79.68	
Bourne for Education	£ 40.24	
Teresa Bagot's Charity	£ 2.00	
	£248.08	
Less expenditure	(£73.54 Milwich 1/2/23)	
	(£73.54 Milwich 18/12/23)	
Net for the year	£101.00	£ 101.00
Current Account Bank balance		£6,945.36
Less Transferred to Deposit Account 14/12/2023		£6,500.00
Current Account Balance 31st December 2023		£ 445.36
Deposit Account Balance 29th December		£6,500.00
Interest received 29th December		£ 8.55
Deposit Account Balance 31st December, 2023		£6,508.55
(Deposit account is 31 day notice Account)		

Financial commitments.

Three Annual Instalments to Milwich with Fradswell of £73.54.

Balance outstanding £220.62.

£6,320.00 contribution to PCC, Access for All, when requested.

Value of Investments as at 31st December, 2023

Bourne Organist	£3,527.76	
Bourne Poor	£2,227.81	
Bourne Education	£1,125.11	
Teresa Bagot	£ 55.92	
Total	£6,936.60	(2022 £6,717.67)

This Combined Church Report 2023 was presented to, and approved by, Christ Church PCC at their meeting on Tuesday 16th April 2024, without sight of the financial statements for Hilderstone School Trust and the Hilderstone Charities.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Print Name: _____

Position: _____