



# Annual Report for 2022

**Encountering** God

**Growing** as Followers of Jesus

**Participating** in the Life of His Spirit

*Prepared by the PCC and the Coordinators*

*Fabian Wuyts*

*Vicar*

*17 April 2023*

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*Registered Charity No:* 1130757.

*Full name of the charity:* The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of St. James, Taunton.

*Short names:* St James Church PCC; St James Church Taunton.

*Address:* St James Church Office, St James Street, Taunton, TA1 1JS.

*This report covers calendar year 2022 and has been written to meet the requirements of the Charity Commission's Statement of Recommended Practices (SORP FRS102).*

## Foreword by the Vicar

### A Hopeful People

One of the most loved chapters in all of Scriptures is 1 Corinthians 13 (a favourite reading at weddings!). The chapter ends with the famous phrase “And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.” While the themes of love and faith are ever-present in Christian talks and teachings, the concept of hope is often side-lined.

The Cambridge dictionary defines the noun hope as “something good that you want to happen in the future, or a confident feeling about what will happen in the future.” In this sense, the word hope expresses what we dream of or wish for in the future. For many today, there is a general hope that the current energy crisis will soon be alleviated, that the war in Ukraine will end and that the cost of living will stop rising. People dream of solutions to tackle global warming or have hopes for advances in medical sciences to combat cancer, Alzheimer’s and dementia, to name just a few.

But what about our Christian hope? For too long, the Christian hope has been reduced to the idea of going to heaven when you die. However, close attention to the whole movement in Scriptures should have informed us that the Christian hope is not so much us going up to heaven in the future (although it includes that) as heaven coming down in the present. It is about God interacting with his creation through a nation (Israel) and ultimately through his Son (Emmanuel, God with us) who sets in motion the coming reign of God on earth (the kingdom of God) with his life, death and resurrection. The Christian hope is therefore a present reality and we should be able to draw attention to the signs of that reality in our individual lives and our communal gatherings.

Our church annual report is an opportunity to look back with gratitude, celebrate the signs of the Christian hope at work in us and through us and look forward in faith, love and hope.

So be encouraged as you read the signs of God’s hope through the pages of this report and continue to pray that God’s kingdom will expand as we respond in faith and obedience to the promptings of God’s Holy Spirit

### Prayer for Growth

*Heavenly Father, increase in number your Church at St James as you deepen us as followers and learners of Christ.*

*Help us to show uninhibited reliance on your grace and power as we seek renewal of our lives, our church, our community and our world.*

*Give us courage, imagination and generosity in order that your kingdom may come and your abundant life be known by all.*

*We make this prayer in the name and to the glory of Jesus Christ our Lord.*

*Amen.*

Rev Fabian Wuyts

## Introduction

St James Church, Taunton, is a parish church within the Diocese of Bath and Wells in the Church of England. Its parish includes the Roughmoor, North Town, Priory and Firepool areas of Taunton. The church's membership is drawn partly from within the parish, partly from across the rest of the town, and from nearby villages. Its services and activities are open to all, and the church works with other churches and local inter-church organisations in proclaiming and applying the good news of Jesus Christ.

Attendance at services, surveyed during October 2022, was 158 adults and 20 children attending at least once in the course of the month. For comparison, the count for October 2021 registered 111 adults and 15 children, in a period where many were still isolating due to the continuing pandemic. At the 2022 Annual Meeting, there were 167 people on the Church Electoral Roll.

## Objectives

The governing document is The Parochial Church Councils (Powers) Measure 1956. In common with other Anglican (Church of England) churches, this gives the objects of the church as to:

*Promote in the ecclesiastical parish, the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical.*

The PCC's registration with the Charity Commission (using headings provided by Church of England Guidance at the time of initial registration) expands the statement of objects as covering:

- *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.*
- *The provision of a youth club with a Christian ethos.*
- *Promotion of Christianity through the staging of events and meetings, and the distribution of literature.*
- *Promoting the whole mission of the Church through provision of activities for senior citizens, parents and toddlers and other special need groups.*
- *Supporting other charities in the UK and overseas.*

## Public Benefit

The PCC has noted the Charity Commission guidance on public benefit, including publication PB4 *The Advancement of Religion for the Public Benefit.*

Worship services are all open to the public. The church building is open as many days as possible for private prayer, and is available for weddings and funerals of parishioners as required. Baptisms of parishioners are normally conducted during Sunday morning services.

Pastoral support is available to anyone who requests it. Church members also receive support through home groups.

The church is gradually rebuilding its outward-facing activities following the Covid lockdowns. While the former parent and toddler group and after-school club have yet to be restarted, volunteers staff a school mentoring scheme. It also supports local Christian organisations including Street Pastors, Taunton Team Chaplaincy, Besom, Open Door and Taunton Area Debt Advice.

A church does not exist in isolation, but is part of one world-wide church of all denominations. St James supports the work of WEC (church planting), TEAR Fund and Samaritans Purse (emergency and relief work), and Barnabas Fund (support for the persecuted church worldwide).

The PCC also has maintenance responsibilities for St James' Church building (Grade 2\* listed) and the church halls. The halls are available for hire by community groups. The church building is also used for concerts and by some other groups, such as the NHS Blood Donor service.

## Operating

The vicar and the churchwardens manage the day-to-day business of the church, assisted by a Church Administrator. In particular, the church administrator handles bookings for the church halls. A caretaker works alongside the administrator and together they look after the needs of hirers of

church premises. All financial matters are handled by the Treasurer, assisted by the Planned Giving and Payroll Officer.

Various church members manage other church activities on a day-to-day basis, and there are rotas and teams in place to manage all activities which occur on a regular weekly or monthly basis.

The vicar and PCC have appointed coordinators to whom authority has been delegated to manage certain aspects of church life: Worship, Pastoral Care, Discipleship, Children & Young People's work, Administration, and Facilities (premises and technical). The aim is to avoid overloading the vicar with too many decisions in a church which is steadily growing, and also to free his time so he can focus on where he can be most effective. The scope of the previous post of Outreach Coordinator post proved to be too wide for one person to oversee, and has been partly succeeded by a Mission Review Group and a Welcoming Team, with other areas of interest yet to be staffed.

The PCC meets monthly, except in May (Annual Church Meeting) and August (summer holidays). It approves all major non-recurring financial expenditure and decides proposals to undertake any major new activity.

The Standing Committee is empowered by law to conduct PCC business in between meetings of the council. Its members are the church officers plus one ordinary member of the PCC. In practice, the Standing Committee operates primarily through email discussions.

Various provisions decided by legislation (enacted by General Synod) or decisions made by Diocesan Synod govern, for example, the type of formal public worship services that can be provided but allow a church to develop its own style. The appointment of clergy and readers is managed by the diocese, in consultation with the parish. Payment of clergy is carried out via the diocesan Common Fund, which scheme decouples clergy pay from a parish's financial circumstances. Maintenance work and alteration of the church building is overseen by a Diocesan Advisory Committee, through faculties granted by the diocesan chancellor; this process is in lieu of civil planning procedures. The parish is required to appoint an architect approved by the diocese to advise on and specify all works required.

## Activities

### Worship

*Contributed by Richard Lucas, Worship Coordinator.*

There is one service on a Sunday at 10.30 am which is live streamed on Facebook and available later on the church YouTube channel. This service is Communion on the first and third Sundays and Morning Worship/ All Age Worship on the second, fourth and fifth Sundays. These services are planned by Fabian and are each part of a themed series. Fabian works in collaboration with Ray Crooks (the Musical Director) and Worship Coordinator as well as the range of church members who contribute to, lead and preach within the services. Fabian organises these rotas and Sara Bright oversees the rotas for those who lead the prayers and deliver the Bible readings. Church Suite is now being used to support this.

The Musical Director and Worship Leader select the songs and hymns in consultation with the vicar and those leading the service.

The style is based around the leading of a contemporary style of corporate worship with a range of songs and instrumentation that complement this. Worship is corporate, it is not just the people who are seen at the front each week. The music team are instrumentalists and singers with the Music Director providing settings to match the available skills. New music is introduced in collaboration with the Musical Director, Worship Coordinator, and the Vicar and open meetings take place as required to practice new worship songs.

There are also meetings when required with the Vicar and Curate to look at the praise and worship within the morning service.

Although we now have fewer musicians and singers, there is a good commitment and engagement from the team with different members leading the praise section of each service.

Sue Doyle leads the dance ministry which enhances our worship and adds dimension to our prayers during each service. Members of the church are encouraged to use the flags express the lyrics of the songs we sing or words we say.

St James Players have contributed dramatic interpretations of Bible passages to our services to help our understanding.

Alongside Morning Worship there is young people and children's worship in the hall planned and led by the CYP team and that is engaging the youngsters, well received with excellent feedback.

The crèche area for younger children continues to be well used and the right-hand side of the church is arranged to encourage family groups and participation.

This side of the church is also used by members of a nearby residential home. Their support workers comment that they respond well to the music and suggested that signing to a song or two would be helpful for their participation.

A great deal of planning, preparation and set up go into each service. The hard working and dedicated team of volunteers involved work on the various elements of the technical set up, sound, live stream, visuals on screen, flowers and banners as the visual expression of the season or theme, refreshments/hospitality, welcome team.

Online Morning Prayer continues on Mondays and Wednesdays at 9.15AM on Zoom, streamed on Facebook. The monthly Church Prayer meeting prayer space occurs each Friday at 5pm in Church.

Our online and digital channels are:

- **Facebook** – the livestream recording remains there after the service is over. We are currently reviewing how long various items should remain on Facebook.
- **Website - Bible Bytes Podcast** – an audio-only track of just the readings and the talk, posted a day or so after the service on the website.
- **YouTube** – A tidied-up version of the live recording is posted one or two days after the service and remains accessible for several months. If you subscribe to our YouTube channel you will be informed as soon as there is a new recording.
- **DVD** – we produce a small number of DVDs for church members who do not have the internet.

We will continue to consider how we reach out to those outside the church and those without a church background and endeavour to make worship accessible and relevant within a changing landscape. Finally, I would like it noted that there is a great commitment required both online and face to face and in ensuring that the technical side functions and my thanks go to all those who give their time to this ministry.

## **Pastoral Care**

*Contributed by Annie Reid, Pastoral Coordinator.*

As Covid restrictions have been lifted, it is encouraging to see many returning to St James services in person. The establishment of a Welcome Group at the 10.30 service is helping to integrate former and new members. Occasional welcome lunches after services have helped newcomers to settle into our fellowship. More such lunches are planned.

The email prayer chain is overseen by Anne Tuckley - and the congregation is being encouraged to join members of the Prayer Team after the 10.30 morning service.

The 10.30 service is still being made available on-line and this is much appreciated by those still unable to attend church in person.

Several new members have joined the Flower Rota which is ably co-ordinated by Lyn Jones; the team are especially looking forward to decorating the church for the Coronation!

Under the guidance of Vicky Dykes and her team, Thursday Fellowship is flourishing with members meeting once a month.

“Hymns and Tea” happens once a month in church and has a steady following; those attending enjoy listening to the organ followed by a time of fellowship accompanied by tea, sandwiches and cake.

## **Discipleship**

*Contributed by Roger Fenton, Discipleship Coordinator.*

The impact of compliance with Covid restrictions have dominated my annual reports over the previous 2 years, and to some extent, echoes continue to impact our church and home group meetings during 2022. It is difficult to assess something as amorphous as ‘discipleship’ when face to face meetings remain a challenge to some church members and an unknown number of potentially interested enquirers.

An Alpha Course was delivered ‘on-line’ in the first few months of 2022, which was well received and certainly delivered a refreshing of faith for some, and an introduction and challenge for others. Plans are in place to offer another Alpha Course in 2023, this time meeting ‘face to face’.

It has been a pleasure to work with home group leaders and their group members these past twelve months. The number of home groups has reduced by one during 2022; there are now 10 home groups, a reduction of one, when the group led by both Jane McCallum and Richard Sainsbury merged with Andy Hall’s group. I wish to sincerely thank both Jane and Richard for their faithful leading for many years. Home group leaders continue to meet together four times a year, for fellowship, for prayer, the sharing of experience, and to learn from one another. Leading a group is not easy and we are blessed to have the current leaders and in 2023 the intention is to invest further in this valuable resource to fully support the leaders as they develop their ministry to the group and look for growth in fellowship, discipleship, and commitment.

God continues to bless our church with new families joining and growing our children and family activities and worship in addition to individuals and couples of all ages. I look forward to getting to know them better. I am excited by the discipleship possibilities God is challenging me and us all with in the year ahead, and beyond.

## **Children's & Youth Work**

*Contributed by David Wilkie, our curate.*

### **Children's Church**

Children's church has continued to run term time throughout 2022 seeing a consistent number of children of 10-15 but usually not the same ones. It has continued with a consistent creative program in the same style as messy church and has a great team of dedicated volunteers. It was with sadness that we had to say goodbye to a lead volunteer Gavin at the start of 2023 who moved to attend a Coptic church with his family in Bristol. He brought a lot of energy, ideas and led fortnightly. Recently we have seen a significant growth in weekly numbers of 20-25 children and we are currently in contact with 45 children. A few new families have joined, one in particular coming nearly every week. We are recruiting a few more volunteer to help but still need another person willing to take a lead some weeks. To help it to remain volunteer led I purchased a resource from the ‘Little Worship Company’ which provides us with ideas for the rest of the year. There is a weekly advert put out on social media which may be helping the growth.

## **Youth**

The youth group has not restarted and there is still no provision for them on a Sunday morning. This weighs heavily on my heart as the message it sends to them is that they are not important. A space to encourage discussion on a Sunday would be good and a weekly small group dedicated to them. A Christian youth festival called Satellites has moved to Bath & West show ground and it would be good to take a group in August 2023.

## **Schools**

Fabian and I have continued to lead a weekly assembly at St James School. It is a wonderful opportunity to speak to over 100 students and teachers for 25 minutes. This year we settled on teaching them a different song every half term and are now well known by the children and staff. This year St James have included the church in its curriculum throughout the year with classes either attending the church to learn about things like baptism or Fabian going into classrooms to teach. Annual events such as the school Christingle, carols, nativity, leavers continued for St James and were very well attended.

We were invited to a couple of assemblies for North Town School again such as harvest. While they had to cancel their Christmas events at the church due to viruses, they did visit the church for their leavers service.

## **Toddlers**

The weekly Toddler Group has not yet restarted. While we have all the equipment needed, we are lacking lead volunteers. It is a provision needed in Taunton and an effective way to reach those in our parish. Existing ones are well attended and often at capacity.

## **Other Events**

Christmas events: the church Christingle wasn't as well attended as previous years as memory serves but is a wonderful time to host families mostly connected with St James School. The crib service was a delight but again seemed lower in numbers. Perhaps the traditional attenders that always came to events like this were lost during the pandemic, and other people started new traditions. It would be good to have specific advertisement next year explaining what each service is.

Diamond Jubilee fun day: an amazing fun day in June where we hosted over 400 people to an incredibly popular day. I was so impressed by all our volunteers who served their socks off for hours! People queued hours for a face-paint, the clergy got soaked, hundreds of burgers were served and rockets got stuck up trees. Amazing outreach event - well done St James!

Future Events: An Easter banquet for families connected to the church and various charities is planned for April 2023 and we hope to soon have a 'Spring of Hope' reflection installed in the church yard this spring.

## **Outreach**

*Contributed by Jenny Wakefield, Mission Review Group*

Within our overall Church Vision of Encountering, Growing and Participating, we seek to share the Good News of Jesus with our wider community.

We continue to encourage each church member to share that gospel in their everyday lives, using the "Life on the Frontline" and "Living the Story Telling the story" approach to share the life changing message of Jesus.

## **The Church in the week**

- Church members have continued to volunteer in a host of different community organisations activities including Besom, Foodbank, Street Pastors, schools, chaplaincy, as well as in their own neighbourhoods.
- The Queen's Jubilee was celebrated with a fun day which was attended by large numbers of people from the community and provided a rich mix of food, fun and celebration as well as opportunity to reflect on the

remarkable life and example of service of Queen Elizabeth, our longest serving sovereign.

- The death of the Queen at the end of the year, gave opportunities for people to seek a quiet space to reflect on the Queen's life of Service and pray for our nation and new monarch.
- *Hymns and Tea* has been started on a Sunday afternoon at the initiative of Carol Sweeting. It has proved popular for those who enjoy hearing the organ, singing hymns together and enjoying tea, cake and chat afterwards in the church. Thanks to Carol, Dave on the organ and the refreshment providers for this fortnightly event.
- Thursday Fellowship is back and active once a month. Vicky and the committee provide a varied programme for church members and nonchurch members, but also the ongoing care and prayer for the members.
- The Eco group have continued to advocate for a positive response to our responsibilities in God's Created world.
- St. James Players have been able to return to live performances with a Murder mystery play in March and then the creation of *Stable Manners*, written by Chris Doyle, which presented the Christmas and Epiphany story in a fresh and accessible way culminating in sell out performances in January 2023. This also raised money for the Foodbank and ACTs Uganda.
- The Art Group continues to meet in the Hall offering an opportunity for those who enjoy creativity through different art mediums.
- The Flower Team continues to produce wonderful displays that add to the worship experience but also are frequently commented on by visitors. More importantly the fact that the team are often working in the church on a Friday gives them an opportunity to talk with visitors to the church.
- Caretaker, Administrator and others: in the same vein we should not underestimate the fact that there are opportunities to talk with visitors and enquirers to our church, when a chance word, the handing out of a booklet or leaflet provides an opportunity to share God's love.

We also continue to foster good relationships with hirers of church premises. The many concerts held in the church during the year help to make residents aware of us as a church, as do the frequent blood doning sessions run by the NHS.

### **Communications**

How we communicate is an essential part of our outreach. New ways of communicating continue to be experimented with as we get to grips with the medium of social media and its possibilities. However we continue to use a mixture of communication tools to cater for the range of people we meet.

The *Stable Manners* production provided an opportunity to look at the way people heard about the play, and showed that word of mouth is the most powerful means of communication, with posters and flyers also playing a part.

Facebook and the website are now increasingly becoming our front window and while many are still grappling with how to use it, it has been an important tool in helping us worship, communicate, encourage and keep in touch.

The Church Suite database continues to enable us to send out the weekly bulletin, vicar's letter, and now rotas etc, by email.

The Parish Magazine continues to be produced quarterly thanks to Chris Doyle for his hard work in putting this together and for the quality of the presentation. It is produced in hard copy and an online format. The quality of the articles is excellent and thanks must also go to the contributors.

## Local and International Mission

With the ending of pandemic restrictions it has been possible to return to live opportunities for Mission representatives to update the church in the main morning services. There is now a regular morning slot once a month for our mission partners to share news in turn.

As a church we have links with the following, and in almost all we have church members volunteering:

- **Street Pastors** (ministry to young people visiting the town's night clubs and local community areas during the day time) and School Pastors.
- **Taunton Team Chaplaincy:** Chaplaincy team members and Rail Responders are operating as before the pandemic and the Courts Chaplaincy led by Michael Hayes is now well established at the magistrates court.
- **Besom:** remains very busy having recommenced all their activities and are receiving referrals from keyworkers for gardening, decorating, furniture and crisis food packs.
- **Open Door** continue their work with the homeless.
- **Taunton Youth for Christ** have continued to work with schools and detached youth where possible and their work with young people has developed a greater urgency. They now have a bus which provides a mobile meeting point. Kelly Jones has joined the team as coordinator, while Ant Stevens continues as youth worker.
- **Taunton Area Debt Advice** have adapted to using more technology to assist their work.
- **Home for Good** is an agency that encourages churches to support the work of adoption and fostering.
- **Transforming Lives for Good** – mentoring at our church school: Initially 4 mentors now reduced to 3 mentors when one member moved away from Taunton.
- **Watch** – local mental health organisation for peer group support

The church continues to support the following overseas missions, financially and in prayer:

- **WEC:** David and Margie Whitehorn, the leaders for WEC's church planting work in Africa; they have been able to make visits in the past year but will be retiring in August 2023.
- **TEAR Fund** (emergency and relief work).
- **Samaritans Purse** (international relief organization); and
- **Barnabas Fund** (which supports the persecuted church worldwide).

We continue to make financial grants to the above charities and have maintained our commitment to give 10% of our income to mission. However with a reduction in giving during the pandemic period it has been necessary to review the grants that we give and make reductions to three of the organisations we support.

## Facilities

*Contributed by Martin Wakefield, Facilities Coordinator.*

A record 56 jobs were completed during the year, comprising a mixture of immediate repairs, routine maintenance and small improvements. As well as jobs arising in-year, a number of backlog items were tackled, reducing the outstanding jobs list to the smallest it has been for many years.

The prize for the most annoying job of the year goes to the water boiler in the kitchen, which, after the repair of four leaks, finally suffered a major failure and had to be replaced. Two long-standing matters were completed, one being the clearance of moss from the last section of the hall roof, and the other being the replacement of the last incandescent lightbulb (that we know of) with an LED lamp. The most unusual job was identifying why the servery circuit breaker kept tripping during the annual Fun Day – spilt coffee had managed to

find its way into a 13A socket! A special mention needs to be made of the repair to the frame of the painting in the chancel, carried out for no charge by Tim Everett Fine Art; he also cleaned the painting so we can see it at last.

Limited progress was made on major projects due to the lack of effort available. The project to replace the main church lights (mercury discharge) with dimmable LEDs passed through PCC and has since been given "List B" approval by the archdeacon. The draft specification for the replacement of the electrical distribution boards in the church is nearing completion. A draft specification was prepared in support of a possible automatic barrier for the car park. Clearance of the outer vestry (prior to replacement of the floor) continues slowly, with a large cupboard being removed.

Progress continues on work identified by the 2020 Quinquennial Inspection. It is hoped that our contractor can complete the repointing and other jobs in 2023.

The gardening team continues to enhance the conservation area in the churchyard, and the annual Drains and Gutters Working Party carried out its essential tasks.

The technical team has taken over the operation of the livestream camera and has been progressively adapting the balance of operations to be sustainable with the number and skills of the volunteers available. Work continues on the church website to improve its look and feel, following last year's rationalisation of the two domain names. The church YouTube page was brought back into use with tidied-up versions of the weekly livestreamed Sunday service, and a podcast series was started on the website using the Sunday talk and also the reflections from the twice-weekly online Morning Prayer sessions.

**Administration** Administrative matters are covered in various places elsewhere in this report, so a separate report has not been prepared.

*Our Administrator is Rachel Knowlman.*

## Financial Review

*Contributed by Richard Sainsbury, Treasurer*

The majority of the PCC's income is from direct giving by church members (including tax reclaimed under Gift Aid), with a smaller proportion deriving from hire of premises. No funds are raised from the general public.

**2022 Significant events.** The Covid-19 Pandemic continued to have an effect on 2022's finances, though there was a noticeable return to pre-pandemic levels of giving and Hall hire. Stewardship giving remained strong throughout the year' and despite some donors leaving, over 80% continued to support the ministry faithfully during 2022, and with the addition of new members, stewardship was considerably increased from 2021. Hall hire also increased throughout the year, and despite still not reaching 2019 levels, was well up on 2021. Increases in Stewardship and Hall hire meant that the predicted deficit for the year was a lot less than expected.

Expenditure, other than expenditure on maintenance and repairs and extra activities, was slightly down compared to 2021.

The General Fund ended the year with a balance of £187,518, of which £3,527 were restricted funds. This was £15,560 less than at the end of 2021.

There were no major repair expenses during 2022.

**Investment Policy:** it is our strategy to invest our funds balances in the Church of England's Central Board of Finance deposit funds.

No funds are held as custodian trustee on behalf of others.

**Reserves policy:** within the General Fund, the PCC has designated the following reserve funds:

**Projects Fund** – for capital projects being planned by the church and as a place to hold legacies when first received. There is no set level for this fund, monies being assigned to it as

needs arise and funding allows. Although designated for projects, this fund will need to be used for day to day running expenses should a further shortfall arise.

**Fabric Fund** – for major fabric repairs that will occur from time to time but cannot be met out of annual income (for example, gas boiler replacement, re-roofing, repairs to stonework). The intention is to maintain this fund at £30,000, but that level will fluctuate according to demand.

**Risks Fund** - for maintaining essential church activities for a period of up to around one year should there be a loss of income for any reason. This fund is set at 10% of Stewardship giving (and Gift-aid), which allows, for example, for members moving away; plus 30% of non-giving income (i.e. hall hire and car park charges, over which church members do not have control).

The former Opportunity Fund, which was reported last year as being wiped out by the deficit situation, has been discontinued.

The Reserves Policy is reviewed annually.

At the end of 2022, the designated reserve funds stood as follows:

Projects Fund:	£139,317 (£157,782 at the end of 2021.)
Fabric Fund:	£30,000
Risks Fund:	£18,191 (10% of giving = £11,301, plus 30% of other income = £6,890)
Total:	£187,533

The total exceeds the £89,005 needed to cover the recommended accounting practice of holding in reserve 6 months' budgeted expenditure.

The £139,317 held at the end of the year in the designated Projects Fund was not assigned to specific projects. This figure has been drawn upon at the end of the year, leaving the Fabric Fund at its full amount. The church maintains a Capital Expenditure Plan detailing future projects which may in due course draw on this Fund. The PCC has decided that some of the funds can be used to pay for the proposed Children and Families Worker, but the exact amount has not been determined, pending a further appeal. Unlike previous years there is no surplus on the General Fund (after allowing for designated reserves and restricted funds).

**Grant-making policy:** the PCC has a policy of donating a minimum of 10% of stewardship giving (including cash collections and income tax recovered) to other Christian organisations. This is because an individual church such as St James is part of the one worldwide Christian church, with different parts of the church undertaking different responsibilities, and also being dependent on each other. Local organisations supported have aims which overlap with those of St James church. Organisations outside the local area are largely ones with which the church has had a relationship for some time. From time to time, the PCC also supports church members undergoing Christian training, and undertaking full-time work with Christian organisations.

## **Staff and Volunteer Support**

Approximately three full-time equivalent posts are paid. One of these is the vicar, and another is made up of two part time posts: the Church Administrator and the Caretaker. A curate has been with the church since mid-2021; this is a training post, funded by the diocese.

The majority of effort spent on preparing for and running church activities comes from volunteers: 76 members carry out various roles within the church on a voluntary basis. This is equivalent to at least 10 full-time posts.

The contributions of all volunteers are much appreciated and are essential for the running of services, children's and other groups, maintenance, pastoral care and every other aspect of church life. In particular, the churchwardens, treasurer, and Music Director all carry heavy loads.

**Appointment of volunteers:** where a post involves working with children or vulnerable adults, appointments are made using the Safer Recruitment process set out in the Church of England's safeguarding guidance. This includes having a formal job description, being interviewed with references taken up, and the completion of DBS checks. Other appointments do not usually warrant such a formal process.

**Supporting volunteers:** everyone who volunteers has a right to be able to discuss their roles with the relevant coordinator in order to agree expectations, receive support, be reasonably resourced, discuss training needs and, as far as practicable, have these met.

## Safeguarding

Contributed by Jenny Wakefield, Parish Safeguarding Officer.

As a church we adhere to the Church of England Policy – Promoting a Safer Church:  
<https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-11/cofe-policy-statement.pdf>.

The April 2021 guidance documents can be found in the e-manual on the Church of England website: <https://www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding/safeguarding-e-manual/safer-recruitment-and-people-management-guidance>.

The Church of England Safeguarding Handbook continues to provide practical information; a copy of this is kept in the office, on the safeguarding noticeboard or can be found online at: <https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2019-10/ParishSafeGuardingHandBookAugust2019Web.pdf>. Volunteers and those who lead teams within our church community need to be aware of the guidance with particular references to sections 11 and 12 which refer to how we conduct our activities and involvement in social media as safely as possible.

The aim of the Church's safeguarding policy is to encourage a safer culture within the church. We are *"called to share the good news of God's salvation through Jesus Christ. The life of our communities and institutions is integral to how we address this task. The good news speaks of welcome for all, with a particular regard for those who are most vulnerable, into a community where the value and dignity of every human being is affirmed and those in positions of responsibility and authority are truly trustworthy. Being faithful to our call to share the gospel therefore compels us to take with the utmost seriousness the challenge of preventing abuse from happening and responding well where it has"*; from Promoting a safer Church 2016.

The Parish Safeguarding Officer, working with the Vicar, Wardens and PCC, has a responsibility to:

- Carry out safer recruitment procedures
- Respond to any disclosures or concerns
- Work with the Diocesan Safeguarding Team on any matters connected with parish safeguarding
- Raise the profile of safeguarding in the parish and ensure PCC is kept up to date with developments
- Advise regarding training.

In November 2022 St. James took part in the National initiative of Safeguarding Sunday with a service aimed at helping the congregation understand more about keeping our church a safe place to be in.

Safer recruitment procedures are carried out for all appointments involving working with Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults, which all require DBS clearance.

For other voluntary posts there is a recruitment procedure in place operated by those in charge of different volunteers. There is a recommendation from the Church of England that anyone who acts as a volunteer should have safeguarding training, at least at basic awareness level (formerly C0) and for many roles working with children or vulnerable adults a higher level of training (Foundation or Leadership) is required. This training is available online but for people who are not comfortable with this technology the PSO will be offering to support their training with in-house sessions as agreed with the Diocesan Safeguarding Manager (DSM). Training should be renewed every three years and reminders have been sent out at the beginning of 2023 as a significant number of people will need to renew their training.

Safeguarding Training is obligatory for all clergy, PTO clergy and licensed readers, and this has been undertaken for those in these roles. The diocese has been working hard to increase the number of leadership courses available. The PCC members have all completed the Domestic Violence Awareness course, which is available online. Other key church officers are being encouraged to complete this too.

While many activities were in abeyance during the pandemic period, lessening the number of people requiring safer recruitment procedures, this has now changed. During the past year the Welcoming Team has been established and the Prayer Team has been reactivated. The safer recruitment process has been carried out for those involved. The PSO works closely with the Vicar,

PCC and with advice from the DSM with regard to ensuring the correct level of safer recruitment is carried out ensuring that Safeguarding is embedded in our church culture and we are aware of the universal responsibility.

## Risks

**Finance:** the main risk to the operation of the church is financial support. Most funding comes from church members, supplemented by income from hiring the church hall and car park. The church is not in receipt of any regular funding from other sources, either from within the Church of England, or the government. Grants may be obtainable to cover partial costs of some projects, and legacies may occasionally be received, but such sources do not impact on routine planning.

The church's finances are thus vulnerable to:

- Fluctuations in income from hall hire;
- Church members moving away;
- Gradual changes from one generation to another of members' understanding of their financial responsibility;
- Unexpected large costs for repairing the church building;
- Increases in the Parish Share contribution to the diocese which can be well above inflation.

In 2020, one of these risks materialised, in that the majority of income from hall hire ceased. It then became apparent that some church members had drifted away while others decided to move churches, so stewardship income also decreased. Both membership and hall hire income have been recovering since then, but still have some way to go before regaining pre-pandemic levels.

The PCC keeps a proactive watch on these matters through reports from the Treasurer to alternate meetings of the council. An annual stewardship campaign, led by the Planned Giving Officer, aims to refresh church members' awareness of the principles of giving.

**Communications:** as the church grows in numbers, there is a risk of fragmentation due to the inability of all members to know every other member and what the various groups and teams are doing. Part of the PCC's strategy for growth is that the coordinators will facilitate communications within their respective functional areas.

**Disaster Recovery Planning:** The loss of the use of the church building is not considered to be a major risk. In 2001, the church moved its activities temporarily to the local church school, while the floor in the church building was replaced. It is considered that similar arrangements could be made again. The PCC does not consider that any disaster recovery plans need to be maintained for specific activities; the scale of operations is such that contingency plans are best drawn up in response to the nature of any issue that may occur.

**Health & Safety:** physical risks are managed through the church's *Health and Safety Policy*, which is reviewed annually by the PCC. The policy includes a schedule of risks using a checklist provided by the Ecclesiastical Insurance Company. The Schedule sets out the procedures for mitigating and managing each risk. Equipment safety checks (gas appliances, security alarms, lightning conductor, fire extinguishers and electrical PAT testing) are undertaken annually. A summary reminder is issued to all volunteers annually.

## Trustees

The members of the Parochial Church Council are the trustees of the charity. PCC members who have served from 1st January 2022 until the date this report was approved were:

Vicar:	Rev Fabian Wuyts	Chairman	*	
Curate:	Rev David Wilkie		*	
Churchwardens:	Mr Nigel Bright		*	
	Mrs Joyce Kirk		*	
Deanery Synod:	Mr Richard Carpenter	Vice chairman	*	
	Ms Chris Rickard		*	
Elected members:	Mr Martin Wakefield	Secretary	*	
	Mr Martin Bluemel			
	Mr Roger Fenton			
	Mrs Marilyn Gibson			
	Miss Lizzie Haddell			(until May 2022)

	Mrs Lyn Jones		
	Mr David Jordan		
	Mrs Julie Kimber		<i>(until July 2022)</i>
	Mrs Sue Lucas		
	Mrs Sheila Marlow		
	Mr Richard Sainsbury	Treasurer	* <i>(co-opted)</i>
	Mrs Jenny Wakefield		
	Mrs Vashti Wuyts Smit		
Ex-officio	Mr Nic Tall	Diocesan Synod	

\* Asterisks indicate members of the Standing Committee: the Church Officers plus one ordinary member of the PCC.

**Appointment of trustees:** The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church of England's *Church Representation Rules*. The number of elected members is 12, with a minimum of four places to come up for election each year.

Ex-officio members of the PCC are:

- Clergy licensed to the parish.
- Two churchwardens, separately elected annually.
- Three representatives of the parish to Deanery Synod, elected every three years.
- Any members of Diocesan Synod and General Synod who are members of the church.

**Recruitment of trustees:** all Church attendees are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and consider standing for election to the PCC. Active recruitment may occur when one sector of the church appears to be under-represented on the PCC.

**Training of trustees:** new members are provided with a copy of the *PCC Standing Orders*, which sets out how the PCC works, and a copy of the booklet *Trusteeship – an introduction for PCC members*. They are encouraged to obtain a copy of *A Handbook for Churchwardens and Parochial Church Councillors* and to attend any training events run by the diocese. PCC members also receive safeguarding awareness training.

**Custodian Trustees:** The Diocese of Bath and Wells is the custodian trustee for property owned by the church, i.e. the church hall and associated buildings and land.