

**The Parish of St Martin of Tours, Exminster**  
**Annual Report and Financial Statement of the Parochial Church Council**  
**for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023**

**Rector**

**The Reverend John D A Williams**  
**The Rectory, Milbury Lane, Exminster EX6 8AD**

**Bank**

**National Westminster Bank**  
**59 High Street**  
**EXETER EX4 3DL**

**Investment Funds**

**CCLA Investment Management Ltd**  
**The CBF Church of England Funds**  
**ONE Angel Lane**  
**LONDON EC4R 3AB**

**Independent Examiner**

**Dr Adrian Wood**

**28 Pridhams Way**  
**EXMINSTER EX6 8TA**

The Parochial Church Council is an Excepted Charity



**The Parochial Church Council of St Martin of Tours, Exminster**  
**Annual Report and Financial Statement for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> December**  
**2023**

### **Aim and Purpose**

The Parish Council of St Martin of Tours (the PCC) has the responsibility of cooperating with the incumbent, the Reverend John Williams, in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish, the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. The PCC is responsible for maintaining the Church, which is a Grade I Listed Building. St Martin's belongs to the "Five Red Churches" Mission Community comprising St Andrew's Kenn, All Saints' Kenton, St Thomas' Mamhead, St Clement's Powderham, and St Martin's Exminster. The church is part of the Deanery of Kenn and the Diocese of Exeter. At the end of February 2023, Revd Patrick Parkes resigned from his Stipendiary Post as Interim Minister of Kenton with Mamhead and Starcross, and the care of Kenton with Mamhead reverted to the Incumbent of the Five Red Churches.

### **Objectives and Activities**

The PCC is committed to enabling as many people as possible to worship at our Church, and to become part of our parish family. Our services and worship put faith into practice through prayer and scripture, music and sacrament. We try to enable people to live out their faith as part of our parish family through:

- worship and prayer,
- provision of pastoral care and mission and outreach work. learning about the Gospel, and developing their knowledge and trust in Jesus, provision of pastoral care for people living in the parish and
- mission and outreach work.

To facilitate this work, it is vital we maintain the fabric of the church.

### **Public Benefit**

When planning our activities, the PCC has considered the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit, and in particular the specific guidance on charities, for the advancement of our religion.

## **Performance and Achievement**

### **Prayer and Worship**

St Martin's Church has continued to hold services of worship on Sundays at 10 am, with two Eucharistic Services and two services of Morning Worship each month. These services have attracted an average of thirty worshippers. The Eucharist is also celebrated each Wednesday morning, attracting a congregation of about a dozen.

Whilst the severity of Covid has diminished, the PCC are aware of the risk to Church members and, following consultation with the congregation, continue to offer Holy Communion by 'simultaneous administration', with the wafer being intincted in the chalice by the Celebrant, before being placed into the hands of the communicant.

St Martin's is particularly fortunate to enjoy the ministry of so many 'retired' Clergy and Readers, and we have benefitted greatly from the willingness of Richard Jeffery, who has also served us so well as organist in the absence of a full-time appointment, together with David Robinson, John Trickett and Faith Wood who have given generously of their time and talents in leading services when required.

We are also very grateful to all those who have contributed to our worship over the year, including organists, welcomers, coffee makers and servers, cleaners, flower arrangers, intercession leaders and lesson readers, together with all who co-ordinate these tasks.

Life Events have also continued, with nine Baptisms, three Funerals and one Wedding in Church in 2023.

Following further consultation with Exminster Parish Council, it was agreed that we explore a change in format of the Remembrance Sunday ceremony, with the Church Party observing the two minutes silence in the Victory Hall (which was also observed in Church for those who preferred to do so) before proceeding to the Church for the remainder of the service, including the laying of wreaths.

Outside of Church worship, the Ladies' lunches and Men's Breakfasts have continued to provide space for food and fellowship.

The Parochial Church Council has also worked closely with Exminster Green Spaces Group in their work of promoting bio-diversity, creating and preserving natural spaces for wildlife in the Churchyard. Permission was granted for the positioning of an Interpretation Board giving information about the range of species found in the Churchyard, and for a swift box to be installed in the Tower.

In November, St Martin's took part in the Diocese's 'Come and See' Mission week-end, during which we hosted a Church Open Day entitled 'Come and Celebrate', incorporating a Church Tour including Prayer Stations for peace, and display of testimonies from Church

members; with coffees and an afternoon cream teas. Bellringing displays and a popular Churchyard Trail completed what was a very enjoyable day.

St Martin's has enjoyed a busy year but needs to continue the good work that been done in 2023 to promote the Gospel and build up the Body of Christ in Exminster.

### **Little Treasures**

'Little Treasures' has continued to meet throughout the year on Tuesdays during term-time. We have faithful core of members who value the time and space in the week to come into Church for this time of singing, story-time, play and refreshments plus, of course, the opportunity to meet with other parents and grandparents of young children.

We are very grateful to all who give their time to 'Little Treasures' as welcomers, befrienders and servers of refreshments . Our thanks go to Caroline, Kaye, Sue, Val and John, and especially to Anne for organising the rota of volunteer helpers. Well done and thank you!

### **Deanery Synod**

Two members of the Church elected to sit on the Kenn Deanery Synod. This provides the PCC with a link with the churches around us, and also with the diocese as a whole. The Kenn Deanery Synod met three times during the year in April, July and October.

### **Safeguarding**

The PCC recognises the importance of ensuring that the church and church activities are a safe environment for vulnerable people and has complied with the duty under Section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 to have regard to House of Bishops guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults. The PCC reviewed its safeguarding policy and procedure in June 2023. Also in June, Dr Adrian Wood kindly agreed to take on the role of Parish Safeguarding Representative on behalf of the PCC.

### **Financial Review 2023**

The financial statement for the year ended 31st December 2023 together with accompanying notes is contained in pages 11-13 of this Annual Report. This return has been checked and agreed with Adrian Wood, our independent examiner and the PCC is very grateful to Adrian for examining the accounts this year. His certificate appears on pages 9-10. The PCC's unrestricted accounts, where resources can be used for any legitimate church purposes are principally made up of its Natwest Current Account and a Deposit Account held with CCLA. The current account showed an excess of payments (£39057.24) over receipts (£35497.64) a shortfall of over £3500 but this was to some extent compensated by an increased sum in the deposit account as the PCC continued to transfer

£100 per month from the current account into the deposit account during the year. The end of year balance in the deposit account stood at £11662.19, which amounts to between 3 and 4 months of normal payments, a useful safeguard in case of unexpected expenses. Nonetheless the underlying trend is for a decline in unrestricted resources and the balance in the current account had fallen to £5583.71 (from £10227.31) by the end of the year.

The balance would have been much lower had it not been for the receipt of a legacy of £2000 from the estate of Mr Wilf Milsom and a bumper gift day in September which raised £4695.50 (compared with £2841.11 in 2022). However, while the full common fund request was met in 2022, the PCC only felt able to pay £24000 in 2023 compared with the request of £25655. Regular free will offerings (the backbone of PCC finances) declined once again in 2023 and it is expected that they will decline still further in 2024. This is a worrying trend. In consequence, meeting the 2024 Common Fund request in full seems unlikely.

The statement also shows details of the PCC's restricted funds : the Choir Fund, the Junior Church Account and the PCC's Development Account. The Junior Church Current Account funds the activities of Connect Church and during the year £1000 was taken from this account to help fund community charitable work carried out through Connect's independent community interest charity. The Development Account funds works to maintain and improve St Martins from which resources can be taken as necessary. No withdrawals were made from the Development Account during the year and the balance stood at £17922.66 at year end.

Finally, the financial statement contains a statement of assets and liabilities at December 2023, which showed total assets of £77859.01. This is a slight increase compared with 2022 and the increase is largely due to the increase in value over the year of Investment and Trust Funds held by the Crediton Church Corporation and the Diocese of Exeter for the benefit of Exminster.

## **Church Fabric**

Work on the fabric of the church itself in 2023 was limited to the reinstatement of a large piece of masonry that had fallen from the church porch before Christmas 2022, luckily when no-one was around. However, recent gales have led to slates slipping on the roof and exposure of the inadequacies of the door to the church tower roof which had led to some ingress of water into the tower itself. Emergency weatherproofing work has been undertaken by Exminster Bellringers to make the door watertight but both the roof of the tower and the door to the tower roof will need more substantial repairs in 2024. These works together with remedying deficiencies in the lightning straps attached to the church will be likely to cost the PCC in the order of £4000.

Discussions on the feasibility of installing a toilet at St Martins have continued and the PCC is very grateful for the help of Jane Green, one of the St Martins Bellringers, for her invaluable help in progressing this matter. Jane has also assisted in progressing the remedial works on the church tower roof by developing a schedule of works to overcome

the problems there and applying on the PCC's behalf for the necessary faculty. Hopefully there will be more to report on these projects next year.

Finally, following discussions in 2022 works have been carried out in the churchyard by the Exminster Green Spaces Group and its coordinator, Jeremy Pyne, to manage the churchyard more effectively as a natural space for wildlife. A noticeboard has been erected in the churchyard illustrating plants and animals that can be found there.

## **Other Activities**

### **Fundraising Activities**

In addition to the proceeds from the Gift Day referred to earlier in the Annual Report, during the year the Social and Fundraising Committee organised an afternoon of puzzles and boardgames in the Victory Hall in June, while a very successful quiz and an equally successful Christmas Fayre took place there later in the year. In particular, the appearance of Father Christmas was a high spot for local children at the Christmas Fayre. These and other smaller fundraising activities raised a total of £1370 for church funds but quite apart from the money raised, the events raised the profile of the church in the village and attracted a wide range of residents, both churchgoers and non-churchgoers. A programme for 2024 is being compiled and we look forward to welcoming the community to the events that St Martins provides during the year.

As ever, thanks to everyone who helps to make these events happen.

### **Connect**

Connect Church is affiliated to St Martins and offers a complementary church experience in Exminster for those who prefer a different way to traditional church services of expressing and exploring faith. Its activities are financed entirely from the contributions of participants but its financial affairs are managed through the St Martins Junior Church Account. In 2022, Connect set up a Community Interest Charity separate from St Martins to pursue its aims of relieving poverty and advancing education in the local community.

In 2023 Connect has run a wide variety of faith events for all age groups normally in the Emmanuel Chapel but has also hosted two larger community events, Love Christmas and Love Easter held elsewhere in Exminster for the wider community to gather for fun and learn about these Christian festivals. Connect has established a small pastoral fund to alleviate poverty in the locality while workshops have been held to provide free computer support advice and provide a space to develop crafts and chat. Connect has continued to be the lead organisation in Exminster coordinating support for the 30 Ukrainians living in the village and has also continued its eco refill scheme helping the community make environmentally friendly choices. Further details of Connect's programme of activities can be found on its website [www.connectexminster.co.uk](http://www.connectexminster.co.uk).

## **Exminster Bellringers**

Over the past twelve months ringing in Exminster has continued uninterrupted despite losses in the group. However, given the age of members of the core group, unless numbers increase, Sunday ringing could cease within the next 5 years. As part of the Come and See mission weekend at St Martin's, members of the public were invited to a demonstration on how the bells are rung and to have a go under supervision but although there were expressions of interest, no-one subsequently came along to learn. Nonetheless it was a valuable PR exercise.

After several years of discussion, the long-awaited rope guide was eventually made, delivered and fixed into position in November 2023. The project was wholly funded by the ringers and has been a great success. Thanks are due to Jane Green, bellringer and architect, for willingly using her expertise to guide and direct the project through to its conclusion.

## **Structure and Management of the Parochial Church Council**

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. The Council comprises the Incumbent, the Churchwardens, those elected to the Deanery Synod, and other members who are elected at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) by those on the Electoral Roll. Members of the congregation are always encouraged to join the Electoral Roll and to stand for election to the PCC. The PCC members are responsible for making decisions on all matters of general concern and importance in the parish, and for all financial matters. The PCC met six times during the year always attracting a majority of the membership. The PCC has a number of sub-Committees, each dealing with a particular aspect of Parish life and during the course of the year these met as necessary and reported to the subsequent PCC meeting.

### **PCC membership for the period 1st January – 31st December 2023 has been as follows:**

Rector and Chair: The Reverend John Williams

Vice-chairs: Mr Francis Jeffree and Mrs Barbara Edmund

Churchwardens: Mr Francis Jeffree and Mrs Barbara Edmund

Deanery Synod representatives: Mr Raymond Adams (*until May 2023*) and Mrs Faith Wood

Treasurer: Mr Philip Markham

Secretary: Mrs Joan Markham

Elected Members: Mr Rodney Battey (*until May 2023*), Mrs Patricia Doling, Mrs Caroline Jeffree, Mrs Sheila Laxton, Professor Jenny Harrow (*from May 2023*) and Mr John Trickett

Safeguarding Officer: Dr Adrian Wood (*from June 2023*)

Electoral Roll Officer: Mrs Faith Wood

Friends of St Martin's Co-Ordinators: Mr Francis Jeffree and Mrs Caroline Jeffree

Allotments Officer: Mr Francis Jeffree



**Approved by the PCC on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2024 and signed on its behalf by:**

**Revd. John Williams (Chair)**

**Mr Francis Jeffree (Churchwarden and Joint Vice Chair)**

**Mrs Barbara Edmund (Churchwarden and Joint Vice Chair)**