The Diocese of

St Edmundsbury and Ipswich

Annual Report

and

Financial Statement

of the

Parochial Church Council of St Mary's Church

Withersfield

Suffolk

For the year ending 31 December 2024

Prepared under the Receipts and Payments Accounting Basis

General Information

Address:	St Mary's Church Church Street Withersfield Suffolk CB9 7SG
Incumbent:	The Revd Max Drinkwater 10 Hopton Rise Haverhill CB9 7FS
Bankers:	Lloyds Bank Plc 8 High Street Haverhill CB9 8BA
Independent Examiner:	Anne Marie Bruyns 2 Boyton Woods Anne Sucklings Lane Haverhill CB9 7TA

ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2024

Aims and Purposes

St Mary's PCC, Withersfield, has the responsibility of co-operating with the incumbent, the Reverend Max Drinkwater in promoting the ecclesiastical parish, the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical.

St Mary's PCC also has the maintenance responsibilities for the Parish Church of St Mary's Withersfield and for the upkeep of the churchyard, which is open for burials although not regularly used.

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 community at St Mary's. The PCC maintains an overview of worship throughout the parish and makes suggestions on how our services can involve the many groups that live within our parish. Our services and worship put faith into practice through prayer and scripture, music and sacrament.

When planning our activities for the year, we have considered the Commissions guidance on public benefit and, in particular, the supplementary guidance on charities for the advancement of religion. In particular, we try to enable ordinary people to live out their faith as part of our parish community through:

- Worship and prayer; learning about the Gospel; and developing their knowledge and trust in Jesus.
- Provision of pastoral care for people living in the parish.
- Missionary and outreach work.

To facilitate this work, it is important that we maintain the fabric of the Church of St Mary's Withersfield.

Review of the Year

During the year, the PCC met four times – 3 full meetings in February, July, and October. The APCM was held in May followed by the first meeting of the newly elected PCC.

A regular eucharist service was held at 11.15 am on the second Sunday of the month and evensong on the third Sunday of each month, with the time differing between Winter and Summer for evensong. This evensong service is a benefice service and is well supported by Haverhill choir and church members. Many thanks to members of the choir from Haverhill who attended services providing singing and or music at services.

On Easter day, a eucharistic service was held and was supported by the usual worshippers.

The Withersfield Village Fete was run in June, organised by Jackie Wareham. Including donations and net of costs this event raised £6,097 towards the Withersfield Church Preservation Fund. The traditional fete games were back on the village green. With wider social media advertising it was welcome to see an increased number of families enjoying themselves in the sunshine. Our thanks go to all the many helpers that supported Jackie and especially Jackie in making this once again a truly memorable event.

The Withersfield Garden Bowls Tournament took place throughout August and early September. The final was held at Turnpike House hosted by Felicity Slinger. Funds raised from this tournament were £548 and go to the Church Tower Repairs of the Withersfield Church Preservation Fund. Our thanks go to all those that host, play and are generally part of this annual social event.

The Harvest Festival Service was held in September with donations of food being sent onto the REACH.

The church was "manned" for the Historic Churches Bicycle ride in September but unfortunately this year there were no cyclists from Withersfield.

The Withersfield 50:50 Lottery continued to be drawn quarterly during 2024. Ticket cost remained at £10 for a year's entry with the quarterly draws in January, April, July and October. 50% of the ticket purchases is retained for the lottery cash prizes whilst the other 50% less any costs go towards the running costs of the church. By the October draw, 98 tickets had been sold raising £490 towards the church running costs.

An Act of Remembrance was held on 10th November at the village war memorial and then in church.

The Christmas Bazaar was held on the 23rd November at the village hall, with a mixture of stalls run by the church and commercial stallholders. Including donations and net of costs this event raised £1,235 for the general running costs of the church.

During 2024 the Book club run by Angela Kinloch continued. Four meetings have been held raising £140.

The Carol Service was held on the 21st December. After the service parishioners were treated to homemade mince pies and mulled wine or sherry.

During the year there were two weddings, three funerals, two reading of banns and one baptism.

Thanks are recorded here to Felicity Slinger for all her hard work in organising meetings and paperwork associated with the Withersfield Church preservation Fund. The fund now stands at £40,473 including £7,354 restricted for repairs specifically for the church Tower. It is intended to build up a strategic amount for future major repairs, as required for the church building and especially the tower as detailed in the quinquennial report. After

receiving approval of several grants in 2024 it is planned that work will start the most urgent repairs of the Church tower in 2025.

At Christmas time, many parishioners got together to decorate the church – thanks to all those who helped and those who removed the tree afterwards.

The PCC wishes to record its thanks to Elaine McInnes-Rich for editing the magazine, which is published bi-monthly and is delivered to the homes in the Arboretum as well as the main village. Thanks also to all those who deliver the magazine.

The grass cutting and hedge trimming contract was awarded to Simon Ratford and the PCC is very pleased that he continues to keep the churchyard to a very high standard.

Gratitude also goes to those who clean the church, do the flower arranging and act as readers and sides-persons.

Financial Review

In 2024 Collections at Services decreased by £389 to £1,900 (2023 - £2,289). Regular giving slightly increased to £2,830 (2023 - £2,730). Donations reduced from the previous year due to a large one-off donation received in 2023 of £5,000. However, even adjusting for this, overall donations were down with £1,640 being received in year (2023 - £8,226).

Gift Aid reported in 2024 related to the last 9 months of 2023 (£1,479) and the first 3 months of 2024 (£306), with the last 9 months of 2024 gift aid being received in 2025 (£1,115).

A grant of £3,250 was received from the Benefact Trust towards the costs of repairs for the church tower. The Listed Places of Worship Grants Scheme provided a grant of £646 towards the VAT costs of Repairs and maintenance of the Church building incurred during 2023. A further grant of £1,000 was received in January 2025 to cover VAT incurred in 2024.

Activities for generating funds total £8,775 with £1,122 being for the unrestricted fund. This was a small increase on 2023.

Church activities relating to fees was slightly up in 2024 with £2,646 being received (2023 - £2,599). The final payment to the Diocese from 2024 church activities was made in January 2025 of £17.

The parish magazine advertising raised £1,399 during 2024 and after costs of publishing was able to contribute £492 towards the running costs of the Church.

In total the income on unrestricted funds was £8,228 and £17,380 being received within restricted funds.

Total expenditure was £24,402 a decrease of £1,768 on 2023. This was mainly due to the costs spent on the refurbishment of the tower clock which were undertaken in 2023.

The Parish Share for 2024 was set at £4,500 being the agreed allocation for Withersfield as part of the Haverhill and Withersfield Benefice. The Parish Share was met in full.

The upkeep of the churchyard was higher than the previous year by £1,325, totalling £2,840. This was due to the need to remove/reduce the height of some trees that had become dangerous if left.

Repairs, maintenance, and equipment were mainly funded from the unrestricted fund and totalled £4,905. This also included £3,540 for the repair to the choir pew flooring which had rotted. The Fabric fund also contributed £574 towards the cost of the choir pew flooring.

The Withersfield News fund transferred £492 to the unrestricted fund at the end of the year, retaining the agreed restricted balance of £2,000.

The Withersfield lottery also transferred £491 to the unrestricted fund, keeping the balance of £450 for future lottery prizes.

The net result for the year was a deficit of £4,708 for the unrestricted funds, an increase in restricted funds of £5,510 and an increase on the Endowment Fund of £404. This brings the total reserve balances to £1,861 for unrestricted, £54,029 for restricted funds and £3,264 for the endowment fund.

It is the PCC's reserve policy to maintain a balance on unrestricted funds equating to approximately 3 months running costs to cover emergency situations which may arise from time to time. This level is currently set at £3,250 and the value of the general fund at the end of 2024 was £1,861 which would provide cover of just over 7 weeks' worth of running costs.

Incumbent's Report

It has been a pleasure and privilege to minister in Withersfield once again this year, and I am hugely grateful to all those who have supported our mission and ministry together in many and various ways. St Mary's continues to be a place of welcome and prayer, worship and witness for the local community, which is very encouraging.

Our traditional patterns of worship continue to sustain us and glorify God, including the Eucharist now on Second Sundays and Evensong on Third Sundays, supported by the choir from Haverhill for which we are very grateful. We also held services for special occasions, including Easter, Harvest, Remembrance and Christmas. There was also an opportunity for prayer and reflection over Holy Week and Easter with a prayer station and display of Algenerated images of Christ's journey.

The fabric of the church continues to be well looked after, with smaller and larger works to conserve elements of the internal fabric and furnishings, much of which is done by those

offering their time, skills and money for which again we are very grateful. There are larger works to the tower planned for next year which will enable the church to minister to the local community now and in generations to come.

We welcome our collaboration with local partners from the community, including Withersfield Parish Council; the Withersfield Church Preservation Fund and other local fundraisers; and Colourbox Montessori Nursery who held their graduation ceremony at St Mary's again this summer.

Thank you again to all those who enable the life of the church in Withersfield to flourish, including the PCC and officers of the church. It was an honour to be made rector of Haverhill and Withersfield in May this year, with a service of celebration in Haverhill with the Archdeacon of Sudbury, having previously been priest-in-charge.

I look forward to continuing to minister with you in the time ahead and pray that we continue to see the fruits of our work in all that we do.

The Revd Max Drinkwater Rector

Safeguarding Report

St Mary's, Withersfield is committed to safeguarding the welfare of all people, including children and vulnerable adults. The safeguarding policy has been reviewed and is available via the website and a poster is displayed in church, with relevant contact details of Parish and Diocesan Safeguarding Officers. Safeguarding is a regular PCC agenda item and the three levels of training have been widely offered online and face-to face. The more recent training in Raising Awareness of Domestic Abuse has been completed online by myself and other key members of the PCC.

Jane Eccleston Safeguarding Officer

Church Warden's Report

The church has been busy raising funds for our building projects, including the fete, quiz night, bazaar and book club. Thank you to everyone who has worked so hard putting all these events together.

This past year, we are thankful for the continued commitment of our dedicated volunteers who have diligently maintained our church building, ensuring its beauty and functionality for our congregation. We successfully completed pew restoration in the choir stalls and remain focused on preserving this sacred space for future generations. We extend our gratitude to all who contribute to the ongoing care of our church.

We have provided services for the village, plus weddings, baptisms and funerals.

Our thanks go to all those who ensure the church is ready for our services and to those who clean and provide the flowers.

Towards the end of February 2025 work starts on the refurbishment of the church tower. This will continue into late May.

Thank you to everyone in the village who has donated and fund raised over the last decade to make this possible.

Our thanks to the PCC and our Priest Max Drinkwater for their continued support.

Karen Williams & Angela Kinloch Church Wardens

Director of Music's Report

We have managed to maintain two sung services a month, one now the second Sunday of the month at 11.15 and sung evensong on the third Sunday of the month 4.00 during winter months and 6.00 pm during summer months.

We are indebted to members of the choir from Haverhill church for coming to support us especially for Evensong song and also for Harvest Festival and Christmas services.

Sung Evensong is not only for Withersfield Church but for the Benefice, so we are pleased to see people from other churches supporting us. We often have 14/15 people at these services.

I have been pleased to have been supported at the morning services by Alison McRobb who plays her clarinet along with the organ which is appreciated by all. Thank you, Alison,

Richard Hart Director of Music

Church Flowers and Cleaning Officer

Saint Mary's Church has a team of 14 flower arrangers/cleaners. We work on a voluntary basis decorating the church for worship. We work on a fortnightly rota, except during lent and advent, when there are no flowers in Church.

The arrangements are usually displayed on the Altar window sill and the pillar table. In addition the flower team all come together to decorate the whole church for the churchs' major festivals, when there are more arrangements around the church.

We also hold an annual spring clean gathering for refreshments and a catch up.

We are an enthusiastic friendly supportive team who enjoy flower arranging as part of our ministry and we are always pleased to welcome new members.

Thank you for your support this year.

Karen Williams.

Withersfield Church Preservation Fund (WCPF)

During the year the WCPF met 5 times including the AGM. The Committee thanked Sheila Horton for being Chairman of the WCPF who stepped down at the end of 2023 and also acknowledged the considerable work and input that Sheila has provided not just as Chairman but also facilitating the grant applications with a large degree of success. At the moment I have agreed to act as Chairman until an alternative member is found.

Committee membership remains challenging for Village representatives, although we welcomed Rosie Wenham who joined the committee in April 2024 as a short term representative due to her plans to move from the village over the next year.

Discussions at the meetings focused on new ways to raise funds for the considerable repair costs for the church. Although not yet up and running the Committee is looking into Online donations through vehicles such as GoFundMe. Coin Collection boxes have also been purchased to place in the local community.

The Annual Garden Bowls competition took place during the summer raising £548 for the repairs to the Church tower and this year the WCPF also received the money raised by the Withersfield Village Fete of £6,097 net of costs and including Fete donations. Our thanks go to Jackie Wareham who organises these events.

The Annual Letter from the WCPF was not sent out this year but is being considered for 2025 once the repairs to the tower have been completed in the late spring of 2025.

Repairs to the Church Tower are commencing in the spring of 2025 and the WCPF have funded some preliminary costs of £5,284 during the 2024 year.

We are pleased to report that at the end of the year the WCPF held funds of $\pm 33,119$ for general repairs to the church and $\pm 7,354$ specifically for the Church Tower repairs.

Felicity Slinger Chairman WCPF

Structure, Governance and Management

Membership of the Parochial Church Council

Members of the PCC are either ex officio or elected by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) in accordance with the Church Representational Rules.

The PCC members are responsible for making decisions on all matters of general concern and importance to the parish including how funds of the PCC are to be spent. The activities planned by the PCC complied with the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit and were open to (and often were intended for) residents of the parish and the wider area.

During the year, the following served as members of the PCC:

Members ex-officio

Revd Max Drinkwater (*Priest-in-Charge*) Revd Wendy Norris (*Assistant Curate*) Karen Williams (*Churchwarden*) Angela Kinloch (*Churchwarden*)

Elected members

Siân Gilligan (*Secretary*) Stephanie Watson (*Treasurer*) Felicity Slinger

In attendance

Jane Eccleston (Safeguarding Officer)

2024	2023
14	(14)
4	(4)
10	(22)
	14

DECLARATION

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees
Signature: Maro Quitto
Full Name: THE REVE MAK DRINKL SATER
Position: RECTOR
Date: 12-05-2025

Independent Examiner's Report To the trustees of St Mary the Virgin, Withersfield, Parochial Church Council

I report on the accounts for the year ended 31 December 2024, which are set out on pages 1 to 5.

Respective responsibilities of Trustees and Independent Examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act;
- to follow the procedure laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act; and
- to state whether any particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in a full audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent Examiner's Statement

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

- (1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:
 - to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act; and
 - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act have not been met; or
- (2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts be reached.

Signed: Augus

Name: ANNE MARIE BRUYNS

Address: 2 BOYTON WOODS, ANNE SUCKLINGS LANE, HAVERHILL CB9 7TA

Date: 29 MAR 2025

Receipts and Payments Account

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Endowment Funds	Total 2024	Total 2023
	£	£	£	£	£
Receipts					
Regular giving	1,560	1,270	0	2,830	2,730
Collections at services	1,900	0	0	1,900	2,289
All other giving and voluntary receipts (note 5a)	, 442	1,203	0	1,645	8,226
Gift aid recovered	1,311	474	0	1,785	2,889
Grants	646	3,250	0	3,896	6,408
	5,859	6,197	0	12,056	22,542
Activities for generating funds (note 5b)	1,122	7,653	0	8,775	8,661
Income from investments (note 5c)	0	1,727	404	2,131	1,253
Church activities (note 5d)	1,247	1,399	0	2,646	2,599
	8,228	16,976	404	25,608	35,055
Payments					
Costs of generating funds (note 6a)	178	1,262	0	1,440	1,286
Church activities (note 6b)	5,165	0	0	5,165	5,225
Church expenses (note 6c)	8,576	3,937	0	12,513	16,123
Major capital expenditure	0	5,284	0	5,284	0
Other Expenditure	0	0	0	0	0
	13,919	10,483	0	24,402	22,634
Excess/(Shortfall) of Receipts over Payments	-5,691	6,493	404	1,206	10 401
Transfers between funds	983	-983	404	-	12,421
	-4,708			0 -	0
	-4,708	5,510	404	1,206	12,421
Funds b/f at 1 Jan	6,569	48,519	2,860	57,948	45,527
Funds at 31 Dec.	1,861	54,029	3,264	59,154	57,948

Signed Chairman

Signed Treasurer

Macana 12 May 2025 Aduatsa Date 12 May 2025

Statement of Assets and Liabilities

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Endowment Funds	Total 2024	Total 2023	
	£	£	£	£	£	
Cash Funds						
Bank current account	1 861	5 296	-500	6 657	10 068	
Withersfield Church Preservation Fund	0	14 464	0	14 464	11 979	
WCPF CCLA	0	26 009	0	26 009	24 698	
Fabric Fund	0	8 260	0	8 260	7 843	
Ullstein Trust	0	0	3 764	3 764	3 360	
	1 861	54 029	3 264	59 154	57 948	
Other Monetary Assets						
Gift aid recoverable	760	355	0	1 115	1 479	
VAT recoverable grant	119	881	0	1 000	646	
	879	1 236	0	2 115	2 125	
Investment assets (note 3) 357 CBF Church of England						
Investment Fund shares at market value	0	0	8 255	8 255	8 070	
Liabilities						
Withersfield 50:50 Lottery	0	450	0	450	0	
Diosese of St Edmondsbury and Ipswich	17	0	0	17	0	
	17	450	0	467	0	

The attached notes on page 3 to 5 form part of these financial statements

Notes

- 1. The financial statements of the PCC have been prepared in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations 2006 using the Receipts and Payments basis.
- 2. Assets recognized but not valued in the Statement of Assets and Liabilities include : Heritage Assets : Paten and Chalice
- 3. The endowment fund, a bequest by the Late Mr Frederick Ullstein, has to be retained as a capital fund, with the income being used specifically for the relief of children in need, hardship or distress and resident in the Parish of Withersfield. It is invested in CBF Church of England Investment Fund shares.
- 4. The movements in restricted funds during the year were:

	Bal B/fwd	Receipts	Payments	Transfers	Bal C/fwd
	£	£	£	£	£
Restricted:					
Fabric fund	8 426	4 696	-3 017	0	10 105
Withersfield Church Preservation Fund	29 872	9 352	-6 104	0	33 120
Withersfield Church Tower Fund	6 806	548	0	0	7 354
Water & Toilets Fund	1 000	0	0	0	1 000
Withersfield News	2 000	1 399	-907	-492	2 000
Withersfield 50:50 Lottery	415	981	-455	-491	450
	48 519	16 976	-10 483	-983	54 029
Endowment fund					
Ullstein Fund	2 860	404	0	0	3 264

The Fabric Fund represents accumulated donations and appeals for fabric maintenance, which can only be spent for that

The Ullstein Fund relates to the income earned on the endowment fund (see note 3) and is to be used specifically for the relief of children in need, hardship or distress and resident in the Parish of Withersfield.

Specific Donations relate to donations received with a restricted use. Where possible these are utilised in the year of receipt.

The Withersfield News represents accumulated donations and advertising income to cover the cost of producing *The Withersfield News*. Any surplus to go to general church funds.

A bequest was left by the late Joan Blackford for the general use and upkeep of St Mary's Church, Withersfield and was initially kept as a designated fund. It was agreed that the balance should be transferred to the Fabric fund in 2014, and the final transfer (interest) was completed in 2015.

The Withersfield Church Preservation Fund has been set up to encourage donations from the village to assist in the repairs and maintenance of the church building, which is a village asset.

The Withersfield Church Tower Fund holds specific donations and fund raising made to fund the restoration works of the Church tower.

The Withersfield 50:50 Lottery provides fundraising for the general running costs of the church. 50% of lottery sales are retained in the restricted fund to pay out as prizes to lottery winners. The balance in the fund relates to sales of lottery tickets for future lottery draws.

The Water and Toilet fund has been set up due to a specific grant received for the installation of running water and toilets within the church building/grounds

Notes

5.	<u>Receipts Analysis</u>	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds	Endowment Fund £	2024 £	2023 £
a.	All other giving voluntary receipts					
	Donations	437	1 203	0	1 640	8 226
	Church collection box	5	0	0	5	0
		442	1 203	0	1 645	8 226
b.	Activities for generating funds					
	Sponsored bike ride	0	0	0	0	109
	Book Club	0	140	0	140	110
	Withersfield 50:50 Lottery	0	980	0	980	1 170
	Harvest Festival Raffle	0	0	0	0	114
	Coffee Morning	0	0	0	0	215
	Church Open Day	0	0	0	0	569
	Coffee Sales after Services	0	0	0	0	6
	Fete	0	5 985	0	5 985	4 644
	Christmas Bazaar	1 122	0	0	1 122	1 034
	Garden Bowls	0	548	0	548	690
		1 122	7 653	0	8 775	8 661
c.	Income from investments					
	Bank and CBF Deposit fund interest	0	1 727	180	1 907	1 032
	Dividends on CBF Investment Fund	0	0	224	224	221
		0	1 727	404	2 131	1 253
d.	Church activities					
	Fees	1 247	0	0	1 247	-40
	Parish magazine - advertising	0	1 399	0	1 399	2 639
	- 0	1 247	1 399	0	2 646	2 599

Notes

6.	Payments Analysis	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Endowment Fund £	2024 £	2023 £
a.	Costs of generating funds					
	Joseph & Technicolour Dreamcoat	0	0	0	0	0
	Withersfield 50:50 Lottery	0	455	0	455	599
	Coffee Morning	0	0	0	0	17
	Church Open Day	0	0	0	0	0
	Fete	0	792	0	792	564
	Christmas Bazaar	158	0	0	158	58
	Advertising	0	0	0	0	0
	Garden Bowls	0	0	0	0	28
	Miscellaneous Costs	20	15	0	35	20
		178	1 262	0	1 440	1 286
b.	Church activities					
	Mission giving and donations	25	0	0	25	25
	Diocesan parish share	4 500	0	0	4 500	4 500
	Salaries, wages & honoraria	340	0	0	340	400
	Clergy & staff expenses	300	0	0	300	300
		5 165	0	0	5 165	5 225
c.	Church expenses Church running expenses					
	Insurance	0	2 443	0	2 443	2 410
	Cost of services	ů 0	0	Ő	0	27
	Upkeep of churchyard	2 840	0	0	2 840	1 515
	Repairs, maintenance & equipment	4 905	574	0	5 479	10 737
	Administration costs	22	13	0	35	17
		7 767	3 030	0	10 797	14 706
	Church utility bills	809	0	0	809	686
	Costs of trading	0	907	0	907	731
		8 576	3 937	0	12 513	16 123

7. The expenses paid to clergy may include a small immaterial proportion, which relates to their function as PCC members. No other payments were made to PCC members.