

St Edmund's Church Crickhowell

In the Diocese of Swansea & Brecon

Annual Report for 2023



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Rector's Report

As we pause to reflect on the past year and look forward with hope to the future, I find myself filled with profound gratitude for the remarkable dedication shown by every member of our church. This annual report, the first created by St Edmund's Church Committee rather than the Parochial Church Council, marks a significant transition in our church's life. We have moved from being a parish to embracing a new model of ministry, working as part of St Catwg Ministry Area. While this transition presents certain challenges and complexities, it also opens doors to opportunities as we venture forward together.

I extend my deepest thanks to the Church Committee, its officers, and all the church members, whose commitment forms the basis of our church's strength.

We have dedicated groups like the worship team, hospitality crew, greeters, prayer team, and online ministry working hard to make sure our services and activities help us grow as “a family, rooted in Christ, committed to transforming lives by gathering as God’s people, growing more like Jesus, going out in the power of the spirit.”

Our commitment to offering a space for hospitality, spiritual growth, and leadership has seen members from various churches come together, further strengthening our bonds with other churches in the ministry area. The commissioning service, the lent study concluded with the Lent Lecture, and Palm Sunday attracted many non-churchgoers.

We are thankful to our partner organisations and charities, which are immensely helpful for us as a church here. I would like to mention the Crickhowell Parish Hall and the Friends of St. Edmund's. Our partnership in mission with local, regional, and overseas mission organisations helps us be more active and sensitive about Missio Dei, the Mission of God.

Despite the challenges posed by an ageing congregation, we have embarked on many creative endeavours that have enriched our community. We are delighted to welcome new members to our congregation who bring fresh energy and perspectives. Despite our limited resources, we are able to continue our engagement with young people and families with young children.

We have faced the departure of our MA administrator; however, we are currently seeking a suitable candidate who can provide essential administrative support.

As we continue to maintain our church building and churchyard, we will also focus on how best they can serve our church's mission and ministry to the world today. These cherished structures stand as testaments to our community's faith and heritage. As we are committed to maintaining them, we must investigate ways to adapt them to enhance our mission in the present and future.

I am immensely grateful to everyone who supports the church financially and through various forms of ministry. Your contributions to St. Edmunds' life and work are invaluable.

This report, although emphasising both successes and challenges, ultimately demonstrates a church that is constantly seeking to become a family of God's people, "To worship God and express the love of Jesus in the World".

Older People's Ministry / Lay Pastoral Visiting

Revd Sally Rees stepped down from her pioneering Anna Chaplaincy ministry at Easter 2023 and Mairwen was fortunate to have her guidance after her ordination to the Ministry Area in June. She had been licensed as part of Sally's pastoral team for a number of years.

Training for Anna Chaplains

Sally has since become a trainer for the Bible Reading Fellowship Anna Chaplaincy team. Funding had been secured for an Anna Chaplain to focus on pastoral ministry in Crickhowell (including Greenhill and Maes y Ffynnon) and Llangynidr (with Oaklands) Mrs Nell Cawley was appointed to the post.

Mairwen was able to attend a 4-day training course covering ministry to the elderly and to those living with dementia through St Padarn's Institute. Nell has undergone the same training through BRF and has qualified as an Anna Chaplain. She was licensed in St Catwg's church on 17th September and is supported by Mairwen and two teams of pastoral visitors, one in Crickhowell and one in Llangynidr.

Bereavement Ministry

A team was set up and led by Sally and Mrs Cathy Richards, to lead a series of the Bereavement Journey (The Bereavement Journey) sessions in St Edmund's in late Autumn 2023. We shared a meal at Cathy's kind invitation before attending the annual Star Service in St Edmund's. This year again the feedback has been encouraging and positive. It is hoped that at least one course will run in 2024.

Mairwen also attended Bereavement friendly church awareness training which is a good general introduction in raising awareness for wardens and congregations. (www.lossandhope.org)

Greenhill

The Shaw healthcare team at Greenhill give us a wonderful welcome. Nell and the pastoral team take a service on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of the month and Mairwen takes communion in to the residents once a month. There are a significant number of Christian residents and service are usually well attended. Visitors and staff often join the services.

We are grateful to Chris, Frances, Jilly, Sophie and Sue who regularly join us at Greenhill.

Maes y Ffynnon

Revd Rana and Moseena lead a homegroup at Maes y Ffynnon and are grateful for the witness of members of the congregation living there.

Nell and Mairwen regularly support Caffi Croeso there, the monthly dementia friendly café which is a thriving community and very much in demand as carers and those living with dementia gather to socialise and encourage each other.

Home Communion

Mairwen takes communion to a number of homes where attending church in person is not possible; if you know of anybody who would appreciate a home visit, please contact her.

Evangelism

The TELUSK team has continued to meet fortnightly on Sunday evenings for worship and prayer at the Parish Centre in Gilwern. The topics for discussion in recent weeks have been based on how we can respond to the Leading your Church into Growth course, with a particular emphasis on Prayer and Presence ministries.

Many of our members have supported Nicci Bevan in leading and praying for the very successful sharing of "The Chosen" video series in Gilwern.

Worship and Music

Sunday Worship arrangements

Thanks to Simon, Vicky and Phillip for continuing to live-stream and record our Sunday services and other meetings. Mairwen Large's return as a Curate has greatly enhanced our resources for preaching and co-ordinating. We can give thanks for our worship leaders who have continued to co-ordinate many of our services and to the church members who have ably led the Intercessions and read Scripture.

Music Group

The Music Group continues to support Worship at St Edmunds weekly and on other occasions. We meet for an hour before the Service to practice the songs and hymns we are leading with that day. We may be up to 8 in number as for the Service with Dr Rowan Williams recently when we led the Congregation along with the St Catwg's choir. More often we are 5 or 6.

We are grateful for the help and support of Claire and Phillip and Beverley when she was here. If anyone is interested in joining our number, please see Vaughan. Keyboard players especially welcome.

Children's Work

Our commitment to nurturing young minds in the faith continues to thrive through the dedicated efforts of our volunteers and clergy within our Messy Church and Open the Book initiatives.

Messy Church

Messy Church at St. Edmund's has grown into a vibrant community event that brings together families and children once a month for an informal worship experience focused on creativity, fellowship, and learning. Our aim is to provide a welcoming and engaging environment for all families, helping them to explore their faith in a fun and interactive setting.

This past year, we have seen encouraging growth in attendance, thanks in part to our strengthened ties with the local school. The school's decision to distribute our monthly flyer via Scoop, their digital communication platform with parents, has proven exceptionally fruitful. This initiative not only emphasizes our community outreach but has also sparked new inquiries about Messy Church, showing an increasing interest among local families.

Additionally, our monthly messy church flyer posting on the Crickhowell Notice Board group on Facebook has significantly extended our reach out, allowing us to connect with many families who might not otherwise be aware of our activities. While new families have joined us—though not all have been regular—the overall response has been very positive.

Our team of volunteers remains the heartbeat of Messy Church. Their dedication and capabilities ensure that each gathering is meaningful and smoothly run. We are especially blessed to have two clergy members (Revd. Sarah and Revd. Richard) who are passionately involved and bring a depth of spiritual insight to our sessions.

Open the Book

Open the Book continues to be a wonderful part of our ministry, allowing us to engage directly with children in a narrative form that brings Bible stories to life. I personally love Open the Book and it is a highlight of my week. This program not only enriches the children's understanding of biblical principles but also enhances their appreciation for spiritual truths in a format that is accessible and relatable. A group of six people from St Edmunds and Christ Church go into Crickhowell Primary school every week during term time and tell a Bible story with accompanying drama, and sometimes invite the children to participate.

The Bible Society introduced a big change in 2023. Bob Hartman wrote 90 new stories, from Creation in Genesis to the end of the New Testament, replacing the previously used Lion Storyteller Bible. We have been using the new materials for almost a year now and like the emphasis on the actual storytelling. We are amazed at how intently the children listen and remember the stories and love to take part. We reward them with an attractive sticker to say they have helped in Open the Book.

The Bible Society is very supportive of Open the Book teams, and provides training opportunities, regular newsletters, suggestions and tips. Occasionally we have a meeting with other storytellers in our area to exchange ideas.

If you would like to join us in dramatising Bible stories in school, please speak to Carl, Kerry, Moseena or Alison. If you have child-sized soldier's outfits, or rustic plates/bowls or Pharaoh's outfits that might be suitable for our dressing up collection, we'd love to hear from you.

As we move forward, our goals include further increasing family engagement through both Messy Church and Open the Book. We aim to enhance our program offerings to ensure that we are meeting the spiritual and social needs of our young participants and their families. Continued collaboration with the local school and more dynamic use of social media and other communication tools will be key in these efforts.

Lastly, I wish to express my heartfelt thanks to all volunteers, clergy, and church members who support our children's work. Your commitment, enthusiasm, and love are the pillars on which our success rests. Let us continue to work together to make St. Edmund's a place where children and families can grow in faith and community.

Youth Reports

"Only Bells Aloud" – Bell-ringing team

During 2023, Faith, Emily, and Quinn, faithfully continued to chime the bells for the Sunday services. Emily and Quinn have been so keen to increase their skills that we now practice weekly during a lunch hour! Our 3 young ringers have learnt all the carols we have found which are suitable for our set of bells - a scale

of 8 bells in the key of A Major as well as some hymns and modern worship songs. We were also delighted to ring for 3 weddings as well as the celebration of King Charles' Coronation on 6th May.

I was really pleased when 3 boys from youth club, Justin, Tighe and Cristian (a Bulgarian) asked if they could learn to chime the bells. Alison Shearman is also keen to learn, so she is now my helper for practice sessions with the boys on Wednesdays after school. They are all making great progress.

All 6 ringers also learnt to ring some Christmas carols on hand bells and played beautifully at the late-night Christmas shopping market in town.

Ringling and chiming bells is part of the worship of churches, in that they call people to the services and mark celebrations and national events. It is also an interesting hobby. If you are interested, please do get in touch with me.

["TotesAmazeBells" \(TAB\) Youth Club Report](#)

On cold, windy or wet days, we meet in the Parish Hall or the church for indoor games and food. When the weather is nice enough to be outside, we meet in one of the parks in Crickhowell, or occasionally in Llangattock Wood for games and hot dogs cooked on a camping stove. Throughout the year we plan a variety of activities such as baking, crafts, setting challenges, quizzes, games, Escape Rooms. Occasionally we are invited to people's gardens for a BBQ. We try to share the love of Jesus, how the Bible can inform and help the way we can lead our best lives, and that God and we accept them as they are. We also try to support them as they negotiate the challenging years as teenagers. Many are dealing with difficult situations at home or school, and the successive lockdowns have left a legacy of mental health issues.

This year Linda Hicks has joined our Youth Team, and we continue to be supported by Jack Newbould, Scripture Union's Youth Clubs Mission Enabler for South and West Wales. He visits and runs a session each half term.

[Highlights of the year](#)

Spring Term. The young people enjoyed an evening with Ellie Heard, the youth representative from Tearfund, looking at the impact which rubbish from richer countries like ours has on the poorer communities in Africa and S America. They

were challenged to produce a craft project from collected rubbish, which was shown to the congregation during a recent service.

Summer Term. Some took part in the 'Churches Count on Nature' week in June, recording the variety of wildflowers in the churchyard.

At the end of the summer term, I visit year 6 pupils at Crickhowell Primary school to talk about their transition into their new school, addressing some of the fears they may have and encouraging them with the positives. We were able to give each pupil a fantastic book called 'It's Your Move' from Scripture Union which has information and ideas on how to cope with the transition.

In August, 10 young people and I had a great time at the summer camp at the Llanmadoc Christian Centre on the Gower, organised by Scripture Union. We enjoyed a great variety of activities including sports & games, crafts, drumming, woodland walks, campfires, and great food. There was also time for prayer and reflection, and just to chill out! The team shared stories from the Bible and the way that Jesus and God have helped them in their lives.

Autumn Term. Each year we write to a group of mainly orphans in a school in Rukungiri, Uganda and they write back to us. This time, our letters and gifts were hand-delivered by Youbab Khan, our Rector's son during his gap year when he worked at the school. He came to Club to tell us about his experiences there, and brought back information about the children, and their letters to us.

Two of the highlights at Club were our very messy and fun Pumpkin/Light Party and the 'Nativity Escape Room' – a set of challenges and keys to find to open the treasure chest! A couple of Club members and the 'Open the Book' Team put on a Nativity play for the Crib Service on Christmas Eve.

The Youth Team has made use of several training courses, online and in person, including a course on supporting children and families with additional needs, and one about neurodiversity. We are encountering more children/teenagers with such challenges, and it would be great if we could offer more support to such families.

Please continue to pray for the young people, our youth team and the schools as we all continue to adjust and 'recover' from the negative effects of the pandemic

on schooling, behaviour and mental health, and pray for progress with the Youth Leader role and for more helpers for this group with diverse needs and great potential.

Eco Church Group

2023 started off well with a Creation Service in January and the church was awarded the silver level of the Eco Church scheme. The silver plaque is next to the bronze award on the back of the pew on the right as you enter the church.

We made progress in each of the areas covered by the Eco Church survey:

Worship and Teaching. More services had an environmental or Climate Change theme and we held our third Climate Sunday service in December with Cynan Llwyd from Tearfund Wales as our preacher on the theme "Seeking Justice, Following Jesus and Finding Hope". Ellie Heard from Tearfund also came to lead a session with our youth group.

Buildings. We continue to work on ways to improve energy efficiency in our buildings and encourage recycling. We also installed a water butt to reduce mains water use for watering plants in the churchyard.

Land. Simon Harbutt, our gardener, works 2½ hours/week throughout the year, keeping the churchyard looking beautiful. This is supplemented by occasional working parties to clear ivy and brambles. We still collaborate with "Caring for God's Acre", using advice from their website and their manager Andrea Gilpin. Andrea gave an interesting talk to 'The Friends of St Edmund's Church' and supplies us with 'Nature Notes' every month for the MA magazine.

We took part in 'Churches Count on Nature Week' documenting wildflowers in the churchyard with the youth group, the 'National Garden Bird Watch' and the 'Butterfly Count'. Messy church also had an afternoon in the churchyard identifying flowers and looking for wildlife.

For the first time, we took part in Crickhowell's 'Open Gardens Scheme'. Members of the public were invited to visit to look at the many flowers and to see how we're managing the ancient grassland areas, allowing the wildflowers to

grow in the east end of the churchyard. A display board showed more details of plans and close-ups of flowers, and the hospitality team provided refreshments.

Community & Global Engagement. New connections were made with the 'Crickhowell Green Network', 'Living with the Climate Crisis' and 'Race to Zero'.

Some of our members attended 'Climate Leadership Training' in conjunction with Tearfund. One of our team was invited to share about our journey from setting up, to bronze and then silver award level, subsequently writing up our story for the national Eco Church and Tearfund websites.

Lifestyle. We encourage walking and car-sharing, and for food we encourage LOAF (Locally grown, Organic, Animal-friendly, Fairtrade). Lifestyle tips are available on our Eco Church website, in newsletters and in the MA magazine.

The Eco Church group meets 3-4 times/year. We regularly review the survey to see what needs to be done, put suggestions to the PCC, let others know what is planned and encourage members of the congregation and sometimes people in the community to get involved. Currently, we have 7 regular members and would welcome anyone with an interest to join us. If you have any ideas or suggestions, or want any further information, please contact Kerry.

Men's Prayer Breakfast

We meet in the Parish Hall twice a month on the 1st and 3rd Saturdays of the month at 8.00am. We enjoy exchanging news etc. while eating hot croissants and rolls with fruit juice and hot tea. One of us then leads a discussion on bible readings or associated readings. This is then followed by requests for prayer and prayer itself. We usually finish at about 10.00am. We always come away refreshed and encouraged. All men are welcome from any parish or denomination.

Mother's Union

The year was a difficult one for the branch, which is the only one in the MA, our nearest branches being Llyswen and Cefn Coed. There were thoughts of closure and possibly becoming diocesan members but things gradually improved, we had several generous donations enabling us to continue to support our projects, Faith

in Families, the refuges, and AFIA (Away from it all) holidays and we also had several new members bringing us up to 16. Several members attended the annual retreat at Llangasty and a Festival at Brecon Cathedral. We look forward with a sense of optimism.

Home Groups

Alternative Home-Group

During the year 2023 we continued to study “The Miracles of Jesus”. Taking a short break for the Lent Course we came back together after Easter, to start the Book of “1 Corinthians”. We have found this book challenging as well as thought provoking. Some of the subjects we have looked at are “Divisions in the Church, Words of wisdom, Leadership, Sexual relationships, Marriage, Liberty, Idols” and many more.

As the name of the group “The Alternative Home Group” suggests, we alternated our meetings around each other’s homes allowing us to sample each other’s various goodies such as tea, coffee and biscuits before we started our study. However, since the summer we have been meeting in one place, Liz James home.

Our plan for 2024 is to complete the book of “1 Corinthians” and then choose a new subject.

Bryn Nant Home Group

Whilst called Bryn Nant Homegroup, we haven’t met very often in Bryn Nant. The parking can sometimes be difficult, so we have been a bit nomadic this year.

We meet every Wednesday to share faith and fellowship and have fun. Two of our members have been unwell recently so it’s been lovely just to spend time together and we are blessed that we have managed to share time together and have been working through some devotions based on a Celtic tradition. We have also discovered songs on YouTube with subtitles, so we now add some worship to the evening.

Glan y Dwr Home Group

We have had a very stimulating series of Home Group studies in the past year. We have met in hybrid form, with a Zoom alternative to encourage those who

are housebound to have fellowship on a regular basis. During this period, the numbers have continued to grow, and we have had over twenty join us on some Wednesday evenings – far more than could be accommodated comfortably in anyone's living room. Highlights included the Bible Society's course exploring the epistle to the Romans and Pete Greig's short video series on "Lectio Divina".

Mission Group

In March St Edmunds hosted a mission meeting to hear about the work of Richard and Alison Stunt amongst unreached people groups in the Caucasus. We were reminded that the Great Commission calls us to *Go and make disciples of all nations* and that, as a global church, we are 'facing a task unfinished' with 40% of the World's population having never heard the good news of the Gospel.

As a church family we are involved in global mission through financial giving, praying, being informed and, for some, going 'on mission' in the UK or overseas.

A proportion of the church general giving is allocated to mission activity. This year we sent £2,250 to overseas organisations, £1,450 to UK organisations and £250 to two local organisations Dial a Ride and CriC volunteer bureau. There are also special collections as well as specific fund-raising activities.

In 2023, funds were raised for Christian Aid through the hard work of the hospitality team in selling of tea, coffee and cake during the Open Studios weekend. The Tear Fund representative for Wales spoke on Climate Sunday when a special collection for Tear Fund was taken. A special collection for St David's Hospice was taken at the Star Service in December. In addition, the church generously supports the Brecon Food Bank through special collections co-ordinated four times a year by Ed and Suzanne Walker.

The St Edmunds church family is actively involved in the work of Messy Church, Open the Book, Anna Chaplaincy and Mother's Union, not only through the financial support allocated to them, but through active involvement in the work of these organisation within the Crickhowell community. Funding is also allocated to Scripture Union which has supported the youth work at St Edmunds through resources, training, visits to youth meetings and the work of youth camps.

St Edmunds supports the work of United Beach Missions (UBM) which is an interdenominational UK charity focused on sharing the good news of Jesus with holiday makers, tourists and international students in the UK and Europe. Carl and Sally Venn spend a week in Newquay, West Wales every year running a Beach Team and are always blessed by the opportunity to spend time sharing the Gospel with many who do not normally attend church.

Involvement in worldwide mission beyond the UK has always been an important part of church life at St Edmunds with several in our church family either returned from overseas work or still regularly visiting. We support work in Africa, India, Pakistan, Chile, Papua New Guinea, and the Middle East.

We have a long-standing relationship with Rukungiri Orphan Partnership in SW Uganda. Judy Cave is a founding trustee of the charity and visits the school and orphanage in Uganda at least annually, and individual members of the St Edmund's church family sponsor children. This year the money from the mission fund went to buy some much needed textbooks for the top two classes in the school. In 2023, Youbab Khan spent two months living with John and Alice and working with the charity, teaching and football training mostly. In July Eluned Watkins raised support for his travel by doing a sponsored walk around the Church, mobilising many in the church family to be involved in Youbab's trip through prayer and financial support. Youbab was able to encourage us all through his report back to the church in February.

Our mission partners Joel and Fiona Kelling, with their two young children Aiden and Nora, are with the Church Mission Society in Jordan. Joel works with the Anglian Alliance and the Anglican Province of Jerusalem and the Middle East, working alongside local churches to care for vulnerable groups and to strengthen the mission of the church in the Middle East. Their recent prayer letter talks movingly about the situation in Israel and Gaza and the pain of close friends losing homes, family, income, and security. Following time in the UK over Christmas they're currently back in Jordan and ask for prayers as they make decisions for the year ahead, particularly their future in the Middle East.

The Metropolitan Mission (MM) is an indigenous church organisation working in the city of Vijayawada and surrounding districts, in Andhra Pradesh, South India.

Carl and Sally Venn have supported the work for over 30 years. They were able to visit the Mission in November 2023 and were encouraged to see ongoing church growth, children cared for in the Children's Home and a growing English Medium school.

Chile for Christ is a small charity with the aim of supporting the pastoral and evangelistic work of Christians in Chile and helping those who are poor. Simon Large and Brenda Gooding are both trustees of charity.

The Church has benefited from several speakers in Sunday services who have visited from overseas. We also had a visit from Judith Looser who was due to report back on her work in Pakistan which we supported for many years. Although she was not able to meet as many as she hoped she was able to share something of her journey since Covid and the process of handing her work on to local women on leaving Pakistan and returning to New Zealand.

The Sant family, serving with Mission Aviation Fellowship in Papua New Guinea, will be returning to the UK for a short trip over the summer and we are looking forward to hosting them for a meeting to report back on their life changing journey over the past two years.

The mission Group includes Sally Venn, Ed Walker, Sarah Powell, Eluned Watkins and Alison Stedman. Please contact us if you want to know more or get more involved in supporting the mission activity of the church.

Safeguarding

The Church in Wales safeguarding department have continued to support its volunteer safeguarding officers and Ministry Area Administrators by providing them with appropriate training and development tools to continue to embed safeguarding across the church.

Diane English (MA Administrator) and myself have attended an online training session provided by My Church People and Carol Elland, DBS Regional Outreach Advisor for Wales, on 26/10/2023. This was very detailed and informative as to the DBS system and its requirements for each level of DBS.

Then on 15/12/2023 Diane English (MA Administrator) and myself attended an online training session provided by Matthew Ankin from My Church People on the Data base Portal which collates everyone who has a current DBS and who has up-to-date safeguarding training and which level. This will be a large task for the Administrator to populate accurately but will be a useful tool to be used across the Ministry Area. In the future each Safeguarding Officer in each Church will have access to the portal.

I facilitated a Safeguarding training day on 24th January 2024 for St Catwg in the parish hall. Rebecca Jones Safeguarding Officer expertly delivered training on Module B- Understanding Safeguarding in the Church and Module C- Safeguarding and Leadership. This was attended by several members from across the Ministry Area and beyond.

We now have a new Diocesan Safeguarding Training Officer Meleri Cray who I am sure will continue with the Rebecca's good work.

More recently I have attended the first quarterly Ministry Area Safeguarding Officers at Llangasty Retreat on 19th March 2024 where a new induction pack for Ministry Area Safeguarding Officers was shared as well as other useful matters. In this pack was a starter audit tool entitled – where is my MA at with safeguarding? So, this will be the next target to demonstrate progress of safeguarding within our Ministry Area.

Sub Wardens' Report

We have had another busy year. Our numbers on a Sunday morning are increasing. We have some new regular worshippers and continue to welcome lots of visitors. We have had several joint services with other churches in the ministry area, welcomed a new vicar to the area, hosted the Lent Group and opened the church for the schools, Choral Society and The Arts Trail. We also took part in the Open Gardens weekend. We continue to have the church open all day every day and have some really lovely comments in the Visitors Book. Please have a look, it's a really encouraging read!

None of this could be possible without the help of everyone who works tirelessly in the background, The church doesn't have fairies that come and do the jobs

although it does have several angels! Thank you to everyone who cleans the building, empties the bins, turns on the heating, washes the towels, does all the stuff like checking fire extinguishers and emergency lighting, and all the other jobs that are done as if by magic! A really special 'Thank You' to those who open and close the church every day, whatever the weather. It's a really valuable ministry.

Looking forward to another successful and enjoyable year.

Fundraising

We had another successful year, providing social events for church members and the community.

We served refreshments at the Choral Society's Annual Music Festival. Despite problems with card payments, we still managed to raise £306.00.

We held an Afternoon Tea to celebrate the coronation. The Parish Hall was decked out in Union Jacks and most people dressed up for the occasion. This brought in over £530.

The Open Studios was another successful weekend. We served refreshments in the church and raised £639.

The highlight of the year for me was the Coach Trip to Stratford upon Avon. We had a lovely day out, and people said it was the best trip we had ever organised. This made £440.00.

We took part in Crickhowell Open Gardens, once again, serving refreshments. This time we were outside which was a "challenge". The wind nearly beat us, but not quite. We had lots of visitors who saw lots of butterflies, wildflowers, and the rare ants. We had an exhibition of photos showing the work of the Eco Church Group and raised £87.50

This brings us up to August and the Annual Open Church events. Once again, we had a really great time, welcoming visitors, and their dogs. There was the usual mix of holiday makers, locals and our regulars who come every year. Kerry was on hand to take people up the tower and Eric did his fantastic tours. This year we raised over £1600.

The Harvest Supper was held in the Parish Hall this year as some people find it more comfortable than the Church. The food was well received, and we had the usual puzzles on the tables, bringing in another £420.

We had our usual coach trip to Bath in November. This was as popular as ever and we had to hire a larger bus to accommodate everyone. Another great day out and we raised over £900.

This year, we took the decision not to hold a Coffee Morning at The Bear Hotel. This has been an annual tradition for longer than any of us can remember, but the venue isn't ideal for anyone with mobility problems and two of our team were unwell, so it really wasn't possible.

In place of the Coffee Morning, we asked Debbie from Petals if she would run one of her wonderful Flower Arranging Evenings. She was on her usual form, never ceasing to amaze us with her fantastic arrangements. She is so generous and always donated her creations as raffle prizes. This brought us £430.

It really was a successful and enjoyable year. The total raised for much needed church funds was just over £5400. Thank you to everyone who helped, poured tea, baked cakes and came along and supported us.

Treasurer's Report

I wish at the outset to thank all those who contributed financially to the ongoing ministry and fellowship of St Edmund's Church, whether in sums large or small, in the year 1 January to 31 December 2023. My particular thanks go to those who made committed giving through the year both by weekly giving envelopes and by standing order loyally maintained online, not least by those who could not attend church physically but followed our services and events streamed online.

Our largest ordinary outgoing by far is Ministry Share: it was £67,393 in the year ended 31 December 2023. (This is applying a split of 79% = £67,393 for St Edmund's, the balances of 10% and 11% being payable by St John's Tretower and St Michael's Cwmdru, for the whole benefice). The individual PCC for St Edmund's was of course abolished from June 2023. The new model from the Diocese levies a single sum on the whole of the Ministry Area. The Treasurers of the individual

churches in the MA were to be 'locked in a room' each year if necessary to agree how that total was to be shared out.

To date the St Catwg MA by its PCC has shown little enthusiasm for close control or monitoring of each individual church. Last year before the new regime I wrote to all the Treasurers to suggest that we adopted the percentage of the overall whole, which each church had been allocated before. At least for 2024, that is what the MA has done. The overall sum for 2024 for our MA is barely different from 2023. In 2023 I made a small overpayment to the Diocese, but I will credit this to our payments this year.

In 2020, 2021, and 2022 St Edmund's had considerable easing of the burden by rebates from the Diocese to churches who paid their full share. Likewise in early 2023 we received the bequest of £5,000 from Noel Price which was of great succour and were able to carry forward a modest surplus from 2022. Looking forward to 2024, in this year there is no relief or rebate from the Diocese. So, the pressure on current account will be back on.

By great individual generosity the Youth Account continued to grow and by year end in 2023 was over £21,000. The fabric accounts were diminished in particular by the architects' preliminary works on specification and budgets for the works which will be required for the churchyard west wall, also some lighting replacements and repairs, so as to be approaching some £13,000 (fabric) and £4,000 ('lighting fund'). The current account had some £13,000 but was about to sustain heavy payments for gas and electricity over Autumn and Winter. We now have contracts for gas and electricity fixing prices at much less than we had to pay in the peak following world shortage and then the invasion of Ukraine. However, it is still over twice what we enjoyed up to the explosion of prices at the end of 2021. Prices then seemed likely to cost us £3,000-£4,000; whereas in 2023 gas electricity and water cost us £7,495.

To give a snapshot in late April 2024, the heavy fuel payments have landed and our finances looking forward are extremely tight. We now pay for our gas and electricity monthly as used, not as before estimated and smoothed over the year by the gas or electricity company; so maybe in the warmer months we will now have some respite from the heavy drain of the autumn and winter months'

payments. The fund-raising team is remarkable, and the card reader now adds probably some £2,500 over the year. (We cannot be precise since some people who give via the reader might have put cash in the wall safe before). Also, we are still fairly early in the year. However, really we need to generate larger regular giving if we are to contemplate paying Ministry Share in full. On present giving I doubt that we will do so by year's end. This has caused me personally to further review and revise my regular giving, but I recognise many not be able to.

Anthony Seys Llewellyn April 2024.

Financial Statements

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL - ST EDMUNDS, CRICKHOWELL

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2023

	Note	2023	2022
CURRENT ASSETS			
Debtors & Prepayments		2,587	7,542
Income Tax Refunds Due		6,024	5,283
National Savings		24	1
Bank Balances		<u>57,909</u>	<u>61,906</u>
		£66,544	£74,732
Deduct: CURRENT LIABILITIES (creditors due within one year)			
Creditors		<u>9,043</u>	<u>4,847</u>
NET CURRENT ASSETS		57,501	69,885
LESS LONG-TERM LIABILITY			
Fabric Repair Fund	10	<u>(22,017)</u>	<u>(31,107)</u>
TOTAL NET ASSETS		<u><u>£35,484</u></u>	<u><u>£38,778</u></u>
REPRESENTED BY:			
Accumulated Resources (Unrestricted)	9	12,131	22,805
Restricted Fund: Youth Worker		<u>23,353</u>	<u>15,973</u>
		<u><u>£35,484</u></u>	<u><u>£38,778</u></u>

Anthony Seys Llewellyn

Hon. Treasurer

March 2024

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL - ST EDMUNDS, CRICKHOWELL

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

	Note	2023			2022
		Unrestricted	Restricted (Youth Worker)	Total	Total
INCOMING RESOURCES					
Incoming Resources from donors					
Direct Giving:planned		49,432		49,432	47,998
other		5,141		5,141	4,302
Indirect Giving - Income tax refunds		11,457		11,457	14,837
Special Appeals: for the Worldwide Church					
Exceptional & Donations	4	7,095	7,380	14,475	13,126
Income from Investments					
Bank interest & Investment income		386		386	52
Income from charitable & ancillary trading					
Fund Raising	2	6,291		6,291	7,769
Other Ordinary Incoming Resources					
Other Income	1	2,820		2,820	1,858
TOTAL INCOMING RESOURCES		£82,622	£7,380	£90,002	£89,942
RESOURCES USED					
Activities directly relating to the work of the church					
Giving outside the Parish(Special Appeals)	3	3,350		3,350	3,050
Mission in the Church	7	2,592		2,592	6,297
Social Concern	4	866		866	1,037
Church management & administration					
Maintenance of Ministry:Quota	11	67,393		67,393	62,740
Maintenance of Church	5	15,762		15,762	13,171
Maintenance of Services	6	1,510		1,510	1,538
Parochial Expenses		1,033		1,033	1,637
General Parish Expenses	8	790		790	802
Capital Expenditure		0		0	0
TOTAL EXPENDITURE		£93,296	£0	£93,296	£90,272
NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)		(10,674)	7,380	(3,294)	(330)
UNREALISED GAINS AND LOSSES ON INVESTMENTS			0	0	0
NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS	9	(10,674)	7,380	(3,294)	(330)
TOTAL FUNDS BROUGHT FORWARD		22,805	15,973	38,778	39,108
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD		£12,131	£23,353	£35,484	£38,778

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL - ST EDMUNDS, CRICKHOWELL

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS - 31 DECEMBER 2023

	2023	2022
1 Other Income		
Weddings & Funerals	2,820	1,858
	<u>£2,820</u>	<u>£1,858</u>
2 Fund Raising		
Church yard Maintenance Fund	1,300	1,488
Moseena Meals	344	291
Can Aderyn Concert	0	0
Quiz	0	0
Flower Festival	120	680
Arts Weekend	0	383
Bookish	0	809
Coronation Tea	425	442
Open Church Saturdays	1,590	1,138
Bath Coach Trip	930	810
Royal Welsh Show	(230)	0
Stratford on Avon Trip	420	0
Flower Arranging Evening	432	243
Book Stall	34	173
Harvest Supper	483	176
Coffee Mornings	0	506
Church Hire	443	630
	<u>£6,291</u>	<u>£7,769</u>
3 Special Appeals		
(Mission giving outside the Parish)	Received Paid	Balance
Anna Chaplaincy	300	300
Archdeaneries Charity	50	50
Awareness Foundation	0	0
Bishop's Lent Appeal	0	0
CMS	500	500
Chile for Christ	200	200
Embrace the Middle East	0	0
Messy Church	150	150
Metropolitan Mission	300	300
Mission Aviation Fellowship	200	200
Rakungiri Orphan & Vocational Project	500	500
Mothers Union	300	300
Scripture Union	250	250
United Beach Mission	200	200
Tear Fund	400	400
	<u>£3,350</u>	<u>£3,050</u>

Other Collections were taken during the year for e.g. Christian Aid etc. These funds were received by the charities directly and did not pass through the Church Accounts.

4 (a) Other Income- exceptional items

	Received	Paid	Balance	2022
Hospice in the Valleys			0	0
Food Bank		0	0	0
ThirtyOne Eight (Safeguarding)		145	(145)	(145)
Crickhowell Volunteer Bureau		150	(150)	(150)
Open the Book		0	0	(100)
Royal British Legion	471	471	0	0
Dial a Ride		100	(100)	(100)
Shelter Cymru		0	0	(20)
Miscellaneous Donations	6,624		6,624	3,692
	£7,095	£866	£6,229	£3,177

5 Maintenance of Church

	2023	2022
Gas, Electricity & Water	7,495	5,987
Insurance	3,053	2,293
Maintenance, Cleaning etc	5,214	4,891
	£15,762	£13,171

6 Maintenance of Services

Sacristy, Organ & Worship Group	1,366	1,394
Zoom Subscription	144	144
	£1,510	£1,538

7 Mission in the Church

	Income	Expense	Net	2022
Children & Youth	0	105	(105)	(120)
Parish Hall Hire	0	1,200	(1,200)	(1,200)
Eco Church Costs	0	219	(219)	50
Alpha Expenses	0	0	0	56
Ministry Area Magazine	553	610	(57)	(20)
Speakers	0	171	(171)	0
Easter Lilies	220	182	38	(33)
Telephone, Broadband & Website Mtce	0	600	(600)	(511)
Ministry Area Travel	0	0	0	(930)
New Card Reader	0	0	0	(312)
Gifts	0	198	(198)	(174)
Publications	0	80	(80)	(90)
	£773	£3,365	(£2,592)	(£3,284)

	2023	2022
8 General Parish Expenses		
Printing, Stationery & Postage	394	228
Photocopy Lease	396	574
	<u>£790</u>	<u>£802</u>

9 Accumulated Fund

Balance as at 31 December 2022	22,805	29,034
Deficiency/Surplus for the Year	<u>(10,674)</u>	<u>(6,229)</u>
Balance as at 31 December 2023	<u>£12,131</u>	<u>£22,805</u>

10 Fabric Repair Fund

Balance as at 31 December 2022	31,107	27,676
Donations Received - General	960	1,411
Friends	<u>(7,278) **</u>	<u>2,472</u>
	24,789	31,559
Expenditure:		
Church Yard Wall	(2,772)	0
Outside Lighting System	<u>0</u>	<u>(452)</u>
Balance as at 31 December 2023	<u>£22,017</u>	<u>£31,107</u>

** Reference to the Friends of St Edmunds Church has been removed as in recent years the Association has become completely separate from the Church and is currently applying for charitable status.

11 Parish Share (Quota)

Parish Share for 2023 £67,427 which is 3.27% less than that for 2022. Amongst rebates given in 2022 was a final 10% when 90% or more of the cost had been paid. Thus there was a saving of £6,976 on the total for 2022. This explains why it appears that the Parish Share has increased rather than reduced, year on year.

Independent Examiner's Report

to members of the Church Committee of St Edmund's Church, Crickhowell

I report on the accounts of the Parish for the year ended 31 December 2023, which are set out below.

Respective responsibilities of members of the Church Committee (CC) and examiner

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

It is my responsibility to:

- Examine the accounts (under section 145 of the Charities Act);
- To follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act); and
- To state whether 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 parish 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 the members of the PCC concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the view given by the accounts.

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
 - a. to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; and
 - b. to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and to comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities 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 to be reached.

Vaughan Ian Bennett

Accountant

47 Oakfield Drive, Crickhowell, POWYS NP8 1DR

April 2024

Minutes of AVM held on 23 April 2023

Revd Rana Khan opened the meeting with prayer.

Apologies: Richard & Jan Crole Rees, Vicky Crole Rees, Alan Foster, Dilys Gower, Robert Salmon, Julian & Alison Stedman

Minutes of the 2022 AVM: This was agreed and accepted by all present (proposed Sue Foster, seconded Helen Seys Llewellyn).

Annual Report for 2022: Circulated by email with a few copies available in church. The report was accepted (proposed Anthony Silwood, seconded Kathryn Bullon)

Electoral Roll: Ruth Griffiths said there had been very little change to the roll in the past year with a net gain of one person.

Financial Report 2022: Anthony Seys Llewellyn thanked Phil Reed for his work in processing the Gift Aid claim, and Vaughan Bennett for his work as auditor and advisor.

Ministry Area Changes: Anthony Seys Llewellyn outlined the forthcoming changes to the structure of the Ministry Area, which would see the Ministry Area Council become the legal body representing the 10 churches, and each church having a church committee to do the organisational work currently being done by the PCCs. The intention is to remove some of the administrative layers and make the job of running the parish easier. The official changeover should take place on 18 June at a special service with the bishop.

Anthony had prepared a constitution for the new church committee, which was accepted by the AVM. Those elected to the PCC between now and June 18 will then become members of the church committee instead. The church wardens will become sub-wardens.

Elections and Appointments

Sue Foster has been appointed as Rector's Warden and Kathryn Bullon has been appointed as People's Warden.

As there were fewer nominations for the PCC than there were spaces, no election was needed. The following were elected en-block to the PCC for 2023: Kerry Andrews, Simon Large, Ros Matty, Anthony Seys Llewellyn, Robert Salmon, Anthony Silwood.

Ros Matty agreed to continue as Ministry Area Representative for a further year, with Ed Walker acting as a deputy representative.

Appointment of Independent Examiner: Vaughan Bennett has accepted this responsibility for a further year, and Rana thanked him for taking this on again.