

Charity number: 1132172

St Mark's Church Annual Report 2024

or,

The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Saint Mark Kensal Rise; Trustees' report and financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2024

Version Control:

V1.0 Draft for Acceptance by PCC

(note to readers: this is our formal submission to the charity commission but also a great introduction to who we are and what we do. Please do bring any questions to our Annual Meeting (APCM) on 18th May)

Legal and Administrative Information

Charity Number 1132172
 Working Name St Mark's Kensal Rise
 Address Bathurst Gardens, NW10 5HX

St. Mark's Church is based at the Church and Hall on the corner of Bathurst Gardens, Kensal Rise, and All Souls Avenue, Harlesden. It is part of the Brent Deanery, in the Willesden Area, in the Diocese of London within the Church of England.

Trustees at time of writing	Katie Barringer		
	Sue Bush		
	Angie Hansel	Deanery Synod Rep	Appointed July 2024
	Rosabel Johnston		Appointed May 2024
	Paul Kidner	Deanery Synod Rep Church Warden	
	Maria Mak		
	Vivienne McKoy-Salt	Church Warden	
	Alan Meakin	Treasurer & Deanery Synod Rep	
	Michael Mclean		
	Douglas Morton		Appointed May 2024
	Latham Noble		
	John Palmer		Appointed May 2024
	Michelle Percharde	Secretary	
Rev Dave Roberts	Vicar & Chair		
Siobahn Scott			
Caroline Winterburn		Appointed May 2024	

Trustees who stood down in 2024
 Shantel Earl - May 2024
 Gillian Thompson - May 2024
 Flora Dugbarty - December 2024

Safeguarding Lead
 Kellie Jarret

Independent Examiner
 Stewardship Services (UKET) Limited

Executive Summary - The Vicar's view

by Revd. Dave Roberts

In 2024, we introduced a new phrase to describe what we are trying to do as a church: '**encouraging everyone to go deeper**'! The point of this phrase was not to change direction, but rather to name what God has been doing among us for generations and to help each of us to consider how we can go deeper in our personal discipleship and encourage others through our gifts, testimony, and generosity.

Encouragement is something I see in the culture of everything we do here. It shows itself in a joyful culture of invitation and welcome. It also allows Jesus' radical teaching to hit home without leaving us feeling overwhelmed. Following Jesus is not a task to be completed, nor is it 'done' at baptism. Rather, we are pilgrimages together and all in need of encouragement.

We don't, however, all have the same spiritual needs. That's why we offer different ways for **everyone** to go deeper! This is part of our history as a Parish Church, but also reflects the incredible diversity. We encourage the young through school visits and outstanding children's groups, seeing up to 75 under 18s each week; we encourage our seniors through Wednesday fellowship and the team of home-visitors; we encourage new faith at Alpha, growing faith through Lent courses, and we develop spiritual maturity through leadership within different ministries. Encouraging *everyone* also informs our approach to All Age worship. In February, for example, our Christingle services had baptisms, dramatic readings, craft, teaching, and an orchestra of 15 people of all ages. This is not always neat and tidy, but we believe it brings God honour and joy!

But what are we primarily invited to? We believe that we are called to more than community, self-knowledge, a moral framework, or even the healing of your body and soul. The invitation is to **go deeper** into the love shown in the Gospel of Jesus - personal encounters of Divine love and grace. Jesus loves you: He died for you; He asks you to trust and follow Him. A memory from this year illustrates this: at our Good Friday service, this story of God's love was told by our kids, then meditated on in worship, silence, Bible readings, liturgy and reflections. In the last half an hour we shared the Sacrament, began to worship and then a wave of intense gratitude and love swelled and broke out all over the church as we worshipped God in the Holy Spirit. We went deeper together and it was beautiful.

The fruit of this love grows over a lifetime. This year we mourned the passing of 10 members of our parish or church, among them June Edwards and Norman Mitchell, both incredible examples of the rich, deep lives our church stands for. Mr Mitchell maintained a curiosity and depth of service that never diminished through his 104 years. June's depth of wisdom, love, and leadership in the church is sorely missed. In heaven they now have what they sought in life - not just *deep* knowledge, but *full* knowledge of the depth of God's love, just as they are fully known..

I hope that, whoever you are, you have been encouraged to go deeper and you know 'what's next' in your walk of faith. Thank you. It is your love, time, giving, and service which makes this church happen. We look forward to going deeper in 2025 and beyond.

Revd. Dave Roberts,



1. Our Vision (Aims & Purposes)

St Mark's Kensal Rise is a local church family and the parish church of Kensal Rise and East Harlesden.

We exist to KNOW and to SHOW the depths of God's love.

We do this by encouraging EVERYONE to go deeper. This is reflected in our values:

- Deeper Encounter in prayer and worship
- Deeper Wisdom from God's word
- Deeper Friendships
- Deeper Generosity
- Deeper Service in our community
- Deeper Diversity
- Deeper Witness

The Church Council has the responsibility of working with the incumbent, Revd. Dave Roberts, and the staff team in promoting the mission of the Church - pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. The PCC, through prayer and discussion, seeks to discover how best to encourage the church to fulfil its mission to encourage everyone to go deeper.

Public Benefit:

When planning its activities for the year the PCC gave consideration to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit. As a church, we exist for the benefit of the whole community and look to love our neighbours as ourselves and be of service. This is what it looks like to go deeper in our community.

Practically, our projects and partnerships include:

- a worshipping community gathering on Sundays and meeting throughout the week for personal encouragement, fellowship, and learning to be more like Jesus
- partnering with local schools to offer learning and pastoral support, including at Princess Frederica Primary School, and Kenmont School
- running weekly social groups including
 - two drop-ins for teenagers
 - two Parents and toddlers groups
 - a seniors fellowship group
 - Gardening and recreation in our community garden
- providing premises for the activities of:
 - Brent Dementia Cafe
 - 'Young Roots' Refugee Youth Club
 - 'Wildfires' Kids community Group
- supporting partner community projects including
 - Kensal Warm Spaces
 - Interfaith Night-shelter for the homeless
 - Christmas Food packages (Love Christmas)
- providing pastoral care and connection to the housebound
- conducting Parish services of baptism, marriage and funerals with relevant pastoral care

2. The Ministry of St. Mark's (Objectives & Activities)

The general functions of the PCC are stated within section 2 of the Parochial Church Councils (Powers) Measure 1956. In 2024, these activities manifest in the following ways:

2.1 Ministry Activities

Services:

- Sunday Worship, weekly, 10:30am
 - Our main weekly celebration includes singing, prayers, reading and teaching on the Bible, and serving Holy Communion.
 - We are especially blessed in the musical gifting of our congregation and children. In 2024 we held four Sunday services in which an orchestra of children played in our worship service. We also hosted the Harlesden Community Gospel Choir for our Christmas Carol Service and Easter Sunday service. We are really grateful to the whole worship team, but especially Tim who leads the Choir and Ruth, Sophie and Ann-Katrin for gathering our orchestra, the St. Mark's Ensemble.
 - Our first Sunday each month is 'All Age' and we thank Caroline, Vanessa, and Becky for taking a lead in these fun and energetic services. On all the other Sundays there are 4 age-appropriate groups for under 18s, led by a fantastic team of more than 30 volunteers. We would like to see this ministry better resourced as there is a big opportunity to support our children's discipleship in these groups (see report below).
 - Our October average attendance figures show that we have approximately 100 adults and 55 children each Sunday.
 - Each week, approximately 20 people have a formal volunteer role in our Sunday services.

- Morning Prayer, weekly, 9am
 - Our Tuesday, in person prayer meeting gathers at 9am and has an average attendance of 4. We are able to pray specifically for needs of the world, the church and then for each other and this has been a great encouragement and support to everyone attending.

- Prayer and worship night, monthly, 7pm
 - On the last Sunday of each month we gather in the evening for more informal worship and prayer. This is especially enjoyed by those with a more charismatic spirituality and those with a deep love of prayer and worship. Gathering about 8-12 people we have focussed on prayer ministry and testimony. This service has struggled to gain consistency in service and attendance but has also provided some of the most beautiful moments of free worship this year.

- Seasonal Services
 - This Easter we enjoyed a full Holy Week including daily prayer, a 'bring and share' Maundy Thursday supper, Good Friday reflective service and Sunday Holy Communion. This was a precious time and has set a good pattern for future years.

- Remembrance season included traditional services for Remembrance Sunday, and All Souls where families from our funeral ministry were invited to remember loved ones who had passed.
- Christmas was a wonderful celebration with a full church for both our Carol Service and family Crib Service. Especially memorable was the Carols by Candlelight Service with the Harlesden Community Gospel Choir and St. Mark's Carol Choir.

Small Groups:

- We have 5 small groups in which members of the church help each other live out their faith and share the love of Jesus. Each group has between 8 and 14 members. They meet weekly, fortnightly or monthly. One group has formed from (and continues to lead our annual Alpha Course.
- The Seniors small group, 'Wednesday Fellowship' continues to have regular celebrations and events and we are thankful to Revds Anthea and Roy for their support of this important ministry.

Life Events

As the parish church for Kensal Rise and East Harlesden, we are privileged to officiate for Life Events (baptisms, weddings, and funerals). In 2024 there was almost a funeral every month and this has been a significant ministry in the life of the church.

In 2024, we held:

- Baptisms of children: 5
- Baptisms of adults: 2
- Reaffirmation of Baptism Vows in water: 1
- Funeral Services: 10
- Confirmations: 0
- Weddings: 0

Pastoral Care

- We continue to offer pastoral care to all members of our community. This comes largely through Small Groups, but there is also a core team of people who have experience in pastoral conversations. This team has a focus on home visiting to the 8 members of our congregation who are currently housebound. We also offer care for people preparing for Life Events listed above.

2.2 Children's Ministry

Caroline Winterburn

Sunday Kids' Church

St. Mark's is blessed with the number of children and young people we have within our church family. Over the course of each month we average 20 little ones in the creche, plus the babies that stay in church, 30-40 in the Explorer group which is Reception-year 2 (ages 4-7) and another 70-80 in our Adventurers group which is years 3-6 (ages 7-11.) This means we have up to 140 children coming through our doors and in our care over the course of a month. We are so thankful for the energy and vibrancy they bring to our church family, and it's our prayer that each one of these children, through attending Kids' Church, will come to know how deeply loved they are loved by God, how each of them are unique and how God has given each of them special gifts to be used for him. Our prayer is that they will each come to accept Jesus into their lives and go on to serve him as they grow up here and then through their lives wherever they may be.

It is such a responsibility and a privilege to be teaching and nurturing our children and to lay down these firm foundations in Jesus. We have an absolutely incredible team of 30 volunteers who selflessly give up their time to prepare and deliver exciting sessions in their various groups and who nurture and care for our children week by week. This is such an important and vital ministry and as a leadership team at St. Mark's we are so very grateful to every one of our wonderful volunteers.

During 2024, we started a new pattern where children go into church with their parents after they have signed in, rather than heading straight into their groups. This has meant that they can be part of the worship at the beginning of the service. This was partly prompted by some of the children saying how much they enjoyed the worship and were sorry not to be in church for it. It's been so lovely to see the children enjoying using the flags as they express themselves in worship. After the worship, usually during the Peace, they go out to their groups. On the Sundays that we have communion, the children return to church for this. Otherwise, the parents collect their children from the groups at the end of the service.

Seasonal Events

As well as our Sunday Kids' Church sessions we ran the Light Party again at the end of October last year. We had 50 children attending, many of whom are not part of our usual congregation. It was a wonderful opportunity to have lots of fun – with massive inflatable basketball hoops, light related crafts, bouncy castle, face painting and food, but the most important part was when Jenny Erber gave a fantastic talk about Jesus being the Light of the World and how he encourages us to shine his light in the darkness around us. It's a wonderful opportunity to share the truth of the gospel with many children and their families (many of whom stay during the party) that don't usually come to church. We were very grateful to our friends at Hope and Anchor Church, Hackney who built us a wonderful, huge lighthouse that stood centre stage!

Christmas and Easter have also been opportunities for the children to get involved more in our main services with Carols around the Crib on Christmas Eve and at the Family Hour on Good Friday when the children and young people were involved in acting out the events of

that first Good Friday. It was incredibly powerful and so encouraging to have all ages taking part.

During the All Age Sunday services we have endeavoured to encourage many of the children and young people to take an active part in the service, and it's been lovely to see many of them being keen to be part of it.

Parent & Toddler Group

Our Parent and Toddler Groups run in term time on Tuesday afternoons and Wednesday mornings. We average about 40 children per session per week – so just under 200 under 3s and their parents and carers each week and the hall and church are both buzzing with the sounds of chatting and playing. There are different areas set out with different types of toys. This enables different skills to be used – fine motor skills, sharing, listening quietly to a story and joining in with the singing. “It’s not just a toddler group” is the name of research that has shown that children who attend parent and toddler groups are so much more ready for school because of what they have learnt through being in a toddler group. Also many of the adults have said that coming to toddlers has been their ‘lifeline’ so it’s not just about providing a safe space for children to play, but a safe space for the adults where they can be encouraged, supported and if necessary signposted to other agencies that might be able to help further with a specific issue. This is a place where people are finding a community that cares about them. Parents and Toddlers is an incredible opportunity for us to “Show the love of Jesus to our community” – the heart of our values and mission statement. There are 3 of us that volunteer on Tuesdays, and 3 on Wednesdays, and a big shout out to Pete who comes every Tuesday to help us set up and who then returns on Wednesdays to help put everything away. This is such an important part of our mission and ministry, but we desperately need more help! If you feel you can help out – even on a rota and not every week – then please speak to Sue or Caroline.

2.3 Youth Ministry:

by Vanessa Richards

Grounded Youth Group

The values of the youth ministry, 'Grounded Youth', are guided by **Ephesians 3:16- 19**, which means we want our young people to 'be strengthened by the Holy Spirit, to enable God to dwell in their hearts through faith, that they may be rooted and grounded in love.'

Our focus is for our youth to have a personal relationship with God, whilst supporting each other to know the breadth, length, height and depth of God's love. We support them to encounter a personal relationship with Jesus, through God's love.

What do we do and how?

Grounded Youth Group is split into Pathfinders (Year 7-9) and Older Youth (OY, year 10+).

Pathfinders meet in the upper room every Sunday morning during the service, except on All Age service weeks. This year they have stayed in the main service until after the first worship segment and then returned to the main service during the Peace for communion. This change in the format has contributed to the growth in youth participating in worship but also in other areas like sound and projection.

Pathfinders also meet every Friday from 4:30 to 6:30pm. The Older Youth meet every other Friday at 7 to 9pm, however we are seeing less of these youths once they become 18. The format of all the Friday night sessions consists of outings (for example, attending events hosted by Holy Trinity Brompton church (HTB)), various activities, games and bitesize teachings and discussions with refreshments (pizza and drinks)

Average attendance on Sunday has increased compared to 2023, with 8 to 15 young people each week. Fridays can be from 10 to 23 young people in total across both groups. We saw a rise in consistent attendance from September 2024 onwards, when our new Year 7s joined Pathfinders for the first time..

More than 10 young people who attended on Fridays and 2 who attended on Sundays are not members of our church. The majority who attend on both Fridays and Sundays are boys.

The bi-monthly boys only and girls only groups have enjoyed trips to the park, Nando's, discussions and creative arts sessions. There is a need to rethink, if and how to continue both groups due to volunteers' availability and youth lack of participation.

In August 2024, we were able to take 6 youths to the Satellites Christian Youth Camp for 5 days. Accompanying the young people were 4 youth leaders with the help of a volunteer who drove a minibus with equipment and passengers. Satellites provided the opportunity for our youth to be around peers who love God and learn more about the faith whilst camping.

We are very grateful to our regular volunteers, for all their work with their young people, and for their commitment to safeguarding, including undertaking DBS checks and safeguarding training: :

- Sunday Pathfinders – **Justin, Michael, Sharon and Peggy**
- Friday Pathfinders - **Paul, Simon, Olu and Charlene**
- Friday OY - **Caroline, Ruby and Olu**

We have also had ad hoc support from: Vicar (support), Wayne (DJ), Rosa, Carroll and Mernell (hospitality), Mary (support) and Sinitta (support).

Unfortunately, 3 of the previous 10 volunteers we had in 2023 were no longer in the position to continue supporting due to health, work and family commitments. Now we have 3 new ones.

Special thanks to our Vicar, Dave, for leading by example, Caroline and everyone who puts the time and effort into making the youth group a pleasurable and thriving experience for all. I also want to also take this time to thank our church family for their support and love in caring for our young people.

Priorities for 2025 (Our Focus):

1. Increase faith and leadership of young people
2. Increase the capabilities and capacity of volunteers
3. Safeguarding to be up to date and a priority for all
4. Support and encourage youth by providing creative platforms to encourage a deeper faith
5. Motivate and inspire youths to experience God through serving their church and community.
6. Transition the new older members from Pathfinders into Older Youth
7. Encourage the current older youth to support with leading
8. Work alongside other churches and organisations
9. Have a fundraising event
10. Encourage youth to take ownership of their faith journey.

I am thanking the Lord for his grace, provisions, strength and guidance he has provided, which is very evident in the growth we are experiencing with our young people. I am very aware there is no growth without roots, so thank you Lord for the foundation that has been set. I pray we continue to pray, God will help us to keep him at the centre of everything we do. Amen

2.4 Partnership and Community Activities

Special Events:

- The 2024 Alpha course saw two groups discuss the foundations of the Christian faith and prompted three people to become baptised in the summer. It was a joyful reminder of the power of listening and accompanying people through the big questions of life and we are grateful to Carrol, Charlene, and Rohim for tireless work in the kitchen as well as to our table leaders, Rachel, Paul, Michelle, and Patrice.
- The Marriage Course supported 10 couples, both married and unmarried, by looking at the basics of Christian marriage and giving space for reflection and discussion within these couples. It was a great success and would be worth repeating. It is exciting that, from this course, one unmarried couple decided to get married!
- In October, a Women's breakfast event was a great encouragement to many. Over 60 women attended and heard a testimony of God's grace in the workplace. There was a willing team of men to serve a delicious breakfast. A big thank you to Kellie, Laura, and Nat for taking a lead in this initiative.
- December, 2024, we hold a large community event, focussing on hospitality, crafts and music. Our main aim was community participation and over 400 of our neighbours and friends came. We also made over £2,000 from the activities, stalls, and refreshments. We are especially grateful to Rachel, Karen, Janka, Anna, Kellie, Karen, and Tom for their contributions as everyone brought their different skills with a shared passion.

Night Shelter

On Friday nights January to March, the Brent interfaith Night shelter resumed but this time in a single location in Harlesden rather than at different locations around Brent each night. Alistair led an enthusiastic team, and despite a slow start with some logistical challenges from the shelter, our support was deeply appreciated by the organisers, who had lost some teams in the change, and the guests who value consistency.

Community - schools:

St Mark's continues to work with the parish primary school Princess Frederica, hosting services, assemblies and some RE lessons. Dave takes one assembly every two weeks, focussing on Biblical values and the gospel of Jesus. Children from Princess Frederica also came into church as a whole school 3 times and in classes for 2 lessons.

Progress supporting Kenmont school began strongly with an invitation to do a whole school assembly and host 2 year groups. However, the headteacher changed mid year and the communication has been slow since. We look forward to doing more with this relationship going forward.

Community - Audit and Food Poverty

After 2 years delivering Christmas Hampers, this year there was not the team available to build a successful Christmas food project. The PCC were sad about this, however it did allow us to ask questions about the needs in our community and how to meet these needs in a relational and sustaining way. Christmas can be a pinch point for many but it is also the focus of other charitable campaigns.

The PCC is interested in conducting a community audit to support fundraising efforts to meet the ongoing need for families. We hope that 2025 will be a year where we will see progress towards projects which will make a difference, and will likely include a Christmas campaign.

Mission Partners:

The PCC are continuing their commitment to supporting mission partners outside St. Mark's and maintain the aim to grow our external giving so that we reach a figure of at least 10% of congregational giving, to that end we supported the following partners financially:

- Fusion (Pippa Elmes)
- New Growth Ministries, Zimbabwe
- Operation Mobilization London Mission
- Scargill House (Phil & Di Stone)
- Operation Restoration, Bolivia (Roger & Isha Hulford)
- Youth With a Mission, London Urban Key (local to us)
- There is Hope Malawi
- The Children's Society (supported through our annual Christingle service)
- Daniel's Den
- The Brent Foodbank (through our harvest campaign)

We have also pledged to join a group of churches to set up a Brent *Christians Against Poverty* (CAP) debt centre run from St Gabriel's church, Cricklewood.. This will begin with a contribution of £1200 a year and provide a CAP service and opportunity for befriending in our parish.

'Project Stork' initiatives have continued to be well supported this year, collecting clothes and gifts – as well as Easter Eggs - for women and children escaping domestic violence.

Hall Bookings:

We continue to host partners and create income from our hall bookings. Most notably, we have a permanent tenant, the charity IntoUniversity, in our second office and classroom, as well as regular bookings from local charities, including Young Roots - a refugee youth charity, Wildfires - a children's Christian weekly event, the dementia cafe, and two creative arts groups

IntoUniversity (IU) Brent based at St. Mark's continues to provide educational and mentoring support for local primary and secondary school children through Focus Weeks held in the Church and Classroom, school visits, homework clubs, and university and cultural trips.

3. Achievements and Performance

In this section we reflect on the data processed by the Church of England, known as 'Statistics for Mission' and 'environmental Audit- Financial performance is shown in section 4.

3.1 Parish Statistics

The Dashboard below shows that 2024 saw an increase in momentum in a few measures. In 2024 we saw a growth in membership of the church with many people joining the Electoral Roll and our mailing list (an excellent indicator of commitment). We also see a turnover of families leaving London and we have noticed that the growth in members is higher than the growth in attendance which implies a pattern of less frequent attendance within our members. It is also excellent to note that our growth in under 18s is faster than our adult attendance which implies our focus on All Age worship and family outreach is going well.

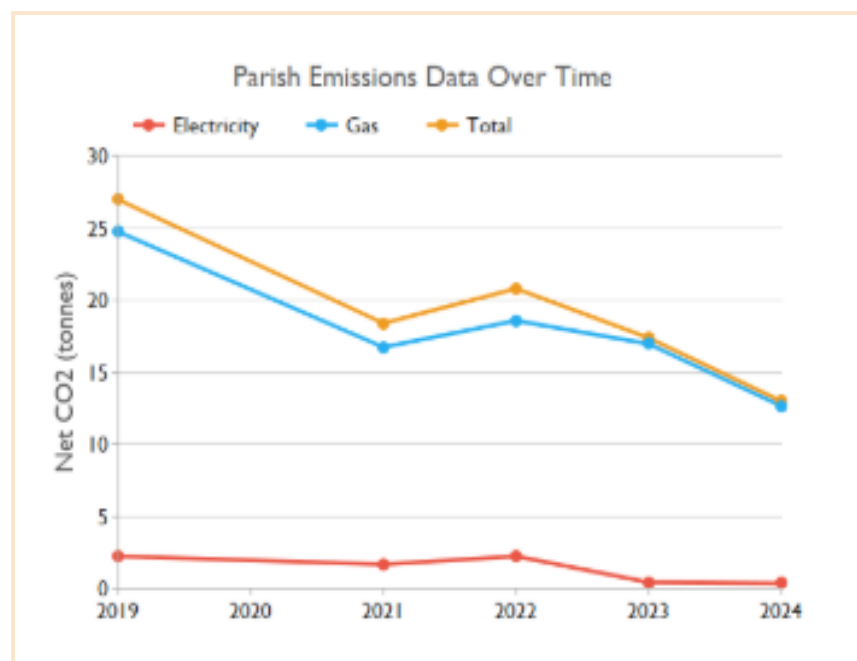
Figure 3.1: Church of England Parish Dashboard



It is important to note that numbers are not everything!! We would like to think about how we measure depth as well as attendance. However as the parish church, we are accountable for the souls of our parish and believe that sustained numerical growth is a good indicator of our effectiveness towards our vision of encouraging everyone to go deeper:

Measure	2023	2024	change
Electoral Roll	178	199	+12%
Church membership	286	313	+9%
Attendance	91 adults 53 kids	100 adults 60 kids	+10% +13%

3.2 Environmental Impact



As we modernise our buildings we are mindful of our environmental impact. In early 2024 we installed infra-red heating for our church building. This has seen a consequent reduction in our gas usage, and, combined with a green electricity tariff, our net CO2 emissions have fallen from 16 to 11.7 tonnes.

We are also seeking to improve the biodiversity of our open spaces. This has seen the removal of a large proportion of astroturf in the garden and a programme of planting, including a number of shrubs kindly donated from the Chelsea Flower Show. A beehive has also been introduced on the roof of the church hall. More recently, in early 2024, this has been supplemented with a sedum green roof together with a number of bird boxes.

4. Financial Review (draft numbers)

By Alan Meakin, Treasurer

We are pleased to report a surplus of £9,000 (£8,042 in 2023). However, the picture is similar to previous years in that our regular income is not sustainably covering our running costs. This year the surplus has been driven by claiming arrears of Gift Aid as opposed to last year when we received legacy payments. We still have Gift Aid to claim from 2022 onwards, which we will use judiciously, but this will only provide headroom for a few more years.

Total income in 2024 was nearly £24,000 higher than 2023. This was largely due to the Gift Aid claims of £53,300 (£0 in 2023) substituting for the absence of any legacy gifts (£39,500 in 2023). Total expenditure, similarly, was nearly £24,000 higher driven by the one-off cost of £17,500 for the new infrared heaters. Our congregation generously made gifts of nearly £8,500 in 2024 toward this cost, and in aggregate this means we have raised £13,800. Once the associated Gift Aid has been claimed we will have largely funded the cost of these works.

We benefited from innovations made during the latter part of 2023. We have now had a full year within the Parish Giving Scheme which is assisting our cashflow with over £1,000 per month of associated Gift Aid recovery. Over 50% of our regular income comes through Parish Giving and we seek to encourage further take up. In addition, the card reader has made giving easier with £9,000 received through this means.

4.1 Receipts

Total receipts were £222,000 (2023 £197,883)

Voluntary income increased to £153,000 (2023 £133,843)

- regular voluntary giving and collections for 2024 were £92,000. This compares with £82,027 in 2023, a welcome 12% increase. Income from standing orders has increased by 9% to £85,000 and collections, aided by the card reader, have increased by 75% to nearly £7,000.
- There were no legacies this year, although we were overpaid by £4,955 in 2023 and this was repaid during 2024.
- Brent Council kindly made a grant of £500 to our Parents & Toddlers Group through their "Love where you Live" scheme. In addition we facilitated a grant of £1,000 from the Bishop of Willesden's Mission Fund for the Harlesden Community Gospel Choir.
- Other donations included £8,500 towards the new heaters and £220 towards our Hardship fund.
- Gift Aid claims were received for the 2020 and 2021 calendar years and for the Small Donations Scheme 2022/23. In addition to receipts from the Parish Giving Scheme the total received was £53,300 (no claims were made in 2023)

Fundraising income from property letting was consistent with 2023 at £53,500 (2023 £53,016). The IntoUniversity licence to occupy office and classroom space, expired at the end of March 2024. They have agreed to a new licence with the fee increasing from £26,072 to £28,170 p.a.,

but this is yet to be documented. In addition, last year we reported a deficit of £4,654 of costs associated with the interregnum, but have now recovered £4,589.

Church activities for generating funds rose to £12,000 (2023 £10,395). This includes £3,568 of receipts from the Christmas Craft Fair, within which we are grateful to Wenlock & Taylor, the local estate agents, for sponsorship of £500. We also received £2,704 of donations towards Parents & Toddlers and there was an insurance claim of £4,486 following a break in.

4.2 Expenditure

Our expenditure totalled £212,000 (2023 £189,300)

Of this, £73,500 (2023 £70,000) was our contribution to the Common Fund to provide stipends and employment costs for the clergy and a contribution towards Diocesan costs and the costs of the wider Church. Our offer for 2025 is £76,800 which compares with the request from the Diocese of £99,980.

Staffing and contractor costs decreased to £48,648 from £51,155 following a review of working hours effective from April 2024.

Running expenses increased to £70,000 (2023 £48,523). This is largely due to the one-off cost of £17,500 for the infrared heaters. Further to the break in, the insurance claim referred to above was fully expended on repairs and replacement equipment. Notably, on a like for like basis, we spent c. £3,000 less on gas this year, half of which is attributable to lower usage (associated with the new heaters) with the remainder due to a fall in prices.

Missionary & Charitable Giving totalled £18,000 (2023 £14,214). This includes £600 of payments out of our Hardship fund and £1,500 which related to 2023 (left our account on 2 Jan 2024). In 2021 the PCC agreed a formula to tithe 10% of our income (after agreed deductions) to our Mission Partners.

4.2 Assets

At the year-end our Cash funds had risen to £132,000 (2023 £119,993). We have other monetary assets not yet available to us but likely to be redeemed. This totals £81,389, including outstanding Gift Aid, estimated at £74,185, recoverable for the years 2020-2023.

This amount fell within 2010 by a total of £10,524, this includes an overpayment of £4,955 relating to one of the 2023 legacies.

4.3 Reserves Policy

In 2021 we reviewed our Reserves Policy and this provides that we should aim to sustain 5 months of expenses (based on a 5 year rolling average) and never dip below 1 month of expenses except in exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the PCC. On agreement of

the PCC Reserves can be utilised but must aim to be replenished thereafter from all sources of income until the threshold is again reached, with the aim of replenishing not later than 3 years from utilisation. We currently seek to maintain reserves of £66,751 (2023 £78,875) and to not go below £13,350 (2023 £15,775).

4.4 Risk Management

Our Financial Control Procedures have been reviewed and were formally adopted by the PCC in July 2024. Revenue budgets are prepared in the autumn prior to each financial year and care is taken to limit contractual commitments to one year. Within the Church building, we have paid particular attention to risks of fire and escape routes, and the appropriate insurance is in place. At the beginning of 2024 our electrical systems were given a thorough overhaul.

4.6 Finance and Treasury team

We are grateful to our Finance and Treasury team – Alan Meakin, who assumed the role of Treasurer in 2021 and Sinitta Falconer who continues to work diligently as our part-time bookkeeper.

5. Structure, Governance and Management

St Mark's is led by the Parochial Church Council, among whom are two appointed church warden's, treasurer, secretary, and the Vicar who make up the Standing Committee.

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. All church attendees who consider themselves as belonging to the worshipping community of St. Mark's are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll. All those on the Electoral Roll may stand for election to the PCC. The council should reflect the diversity of the church community.

5.1 Electoral Roll:

The electoral roll - the formal voting members of St. Mark's Church - now stands at XX. This year was a reset year for our roll. Last year's roll stood at 199.. The Electoral Roll Officer is Kellie Jarrett

5.2 PCC members (trustees)

Ex Officio Members (Ordered Alphabetically)

- Paul Kidner - Church Warden & Deanery Synod Rep
- Vivian McKoy-Salt - Church Warden
- Alan Meakin - Deanery Synod Rep (Treasurer)
- Angie Hansel - Deanery Synod Rep
- Dave Roberts - Vicar, and member of Deanery Synod

Elected Members (Ordered Alphabetically)

- Katie Barringer
- Sue Bush
- Rosabel Johnston
- Maria Mak
- Michael Mclean
- Douglas Morton
- Latham Noble
- John Palmer
- Michelle Percharde (Secretary)
- Siobahn Scott
- Caroline Winterburn

5.4 Staff:

Kellie Jarrett – Church Administrator with a special focus on bookings and community partnerships.

This year, Kellie moved from a 20-hour a week permanent contract plus a 12-hours a week fixed term temporary contract to a single permanent contract of 26 hours a week. This was agreed to be a good balance of the church's needs now a vicar is in post and has proved to provide a good rhythm for the team and for Kellie. Outside her core job description she has supported many events at the church including a Womens' Breakfast and introducing flagging and liturgical dance which have greatly enriched the life of the church.

Vanessa Richards – This year Vanessa transitioned from a 34-hours a week fixed term contract as Youth Pastor to a 26 hour a week role of Youth Pastor and Children's Coordinator. This represented a review of the church's needs, especially in supporting Caroline in her volunteer role as Children's lead. The fruit of Vanessa's more focused work has been wonderful this year, seeing the number of teenagers engaged in church and youth group increase dramatically across 2024.

We are incredibly grateful to Kellie and Vanessa for their commitment to church life and love for those they serve. We are very blessed to have their humour, prayers, and passion at St Mark's both within their respective roles and also as members with other great gifts!

5.5 Volunteers

The church operates because a large group of people give their time and money as an act of love and worship. At the start of the year, we held a joyful volunteer celebration evening hosted by the PCC, and were surprised to see that 90 people were on the invitation list! This represents thousands of hours committed to God through this community in a vast number of ways ranging from the intensely practical tasks of caring for our building through to the pastoral care of housebound members. We are seeing our young people more engaged in this volunteering too and getting excited to be part of this active community.

There are many people who go above and beyond in such roles and who serve in significant ministries in the parish. Our Church Wardens, Viv and Paul, and Treasurer Alan make a huge impact, largely behind the scenes. Paul and Viv's contribution to pastoral care and homegroups has brought love to many, and Alan has consistently and quietly pushed us forward in making our church more environmentally friendly and a home to all sorts of animal neighbours!

Sue and Caroline should be especially recognised for their years of support for families and children at St Mark's. The Parent's and Toddlers group is a gift to our community and a resource for many and Caroline continues to lead our Children's work and teams while we consider how we can resource paid support in this area. It is a huge testimony to her gifting and passion that any future employee would have a strong team and curriculum to use!

Finally, this year was a landmark for Andy Bush, who has been recognised by the Bishop of London as a Licenced Lay Reader. This is an important role in the church through which a member steps into leadership in a different way. Andy's preaching is a great blessing and we look forward to working with Andy in other arenas of ministry at St Mark's

6. Administrative Information

5.1 Safeguarding:

Safeguarding is a vital foundation for all that takes place at St. Mark's. We have a number of procedures, policies and risk assessments as an outworking of our church Safeguarding policy. To show the importance of this area, we have appointed Kellie as our Parish Safeguarding Officer and so these tasks are part of her paid portfolio.

We have taken big steps in making St Mark's safer and communicating how we do so. We hope to build a safeguarding culture at our church and as such we want to see more people trained, and empowered to report concerns they might have.

St. Mark's also has a Children's Champion, Sue Bush, whose responsibility is to make sure children are nurtured within the worshipping life of the church.

5.1.1 Parish Dashboard

Our safeguarding actions and requirements are recorded on the Diocese Safeguarding dashboard which is copied below

St Mark Kensal Rise
Safeguarding Dashboard - Level 2










Mandatory Requirements - 51% progress

The dashboard has three levels of [mandatory requirements](#).

Green is good - Amber for advance notice - Red means overdue

Select any dashboard light for more information.

👁️
Mandatory Requirements
Safeguarding Standards

	Policies and Action Plan The PCC reviewed their action plan on 12/11/2024.	>
	Safeguarding Procedures The PCC has approved and reviewed their safeguarding procedures.	>
	Safeguarding Roles People have been appointed to key safeguarding roles.	>
	Training for Key Roles Everyone who plays a key safeguarding role has completed the relevant training.	>
	Learning and Development Two actions need to be completed soon	>
	Displayed Information Important safeguarding information is being displayed.	>
	Church Activities 74 actions need to be completed soon	>
	Safer Recruitment and People Management One action needs to be completed soon	>
	Reviews and Reports Safeguarding is regularly reviewed and reported upon.	>

This dashboard has improved greatly over the last year, moving from 21% completion to 51% and addressing all 'red' issues. The actions that will move us forward include targeting 3 specific volunteers to complete their advanced training, and addressing the "Church Activities" section which includes producing a complete set of Risk Assessments for all activities.

5.1.2 Goals for 2025

Key Safeguarding Priorities

- Ensure all volunteers complete basic safeguarding training
- Keep ahead of DBS renewals as required
- Reach level 3 on the Diocese Safeguarding Dashboard in 2025

Church and PCC priorities

- Create a culture of safeguarding in newsletters, from the pulpit and safeguarding Sunday
- Review all church Risk Assessments and include understanding of risks into church life

Buildings and Maintenance:

St Mark's has stewardship over the site on Bathurst Gardens, including the church, hall (with kitchen and stage room), classroom, upper room, and two offices. We also have stewardship of the 'Curates House' property at 82 Herbert Gardens which is currently occupied.

Fabric & Church Warden's Report

This report covers the period Jan 1st – Dec 31st 2024

Since Paul Kidner's appointment as Churchwarden at the last APCM, he has been actively involved with the Vicar in reviewing the state of the buildings and supporting him and the 'buildings group' in applying for grants and raising funds towards improvements to the heating system and the garden.

The main achievement this year was the installation of infrared heaters. The PCC signed off a motion to apply for permission to hang these in the main church building to address the generational problems we have had for many years with low Winter temperatures. Having taken appropriate advice that the existing heat delivery method of radiators was insufficient for the space we have obtained the necessary permissions and installed sixteen heater units in the church. In future we aim to use the electric heaters with the gas boilers for backup in very cold weather.

We have been awarded £3,500 to safeguard and diversify our Church Garden. This is an exciting way to relaunch interest in this space this year and we are very grateful to Brent Towards Net-Zero for the funding

We had a burglary in November and have since the year-end had two more - although nothing significant has been stolen it has highlighted lapses in our security systems - these have now been reviewed and money has been and will be spent to avoid recurrence.

Paul has joined with the Vicar, John Palmer, Kellie Jarrett and Sue Bush on the building group during the year. We continue to seek advice from Glenn Ford and from Ann Katrin Koester on various matters including developing sustainable solutions to heating and maintenance.

City Bridge Trust Eco-Audit: In November we heard that our application for an 'Eco-Audit' from the City Bridge Trust had been accepted and we were, therefore, eligible for a professional environmental audit and then to apply for funding to fulfil the recommendations of this audit. We look forward to receiving this document to shape our future building maintenance and use.

The quinquennial (5 yearly) inspection of the Church was carried out in March 2023. Besides ongoing maintenance tasks a number of the items highlighted in the report have now been attended to. We plan this year to have the Church Hall refurbished and attend to deficiencies in the flooring in the church and chancel. A number of areas on the roof were noted as being in need of attention so we intend to address these and hope that the occasional leaks we have been experiencing will reduce.

We continue to have our hall well used by the community on a rental basis and have the classroom and one of the offices let to Into University during the weekdays. These provide useful additional income. Viv and I would like to thank the PCC for all their hard work and support over the last year.

Since the arrival of Dave and Rachel in July 2023 we would like to acknowledge and thank them both for the enormous amount of hard work they have both put in. Dave has been full of energy and enthusiasm and has exhibited strong leadership in all areas of the life of our church. It has been a pleasure to work with them.

Paul Kidner and Vivienne McKoy – Salt
Churchwardens

5.3 Wider Church Affairs

St Mark's church is part of the Church of England, which, in turn, is part of God's one Holy Church! We try to engage with the Church at a Diocese level (We are in London Diocese) and at Deanery level (we are part of Brent Deanery)

It has been a difficult, and somewhat damaging year for the Church of England as an institution. The publication of the Makin Report into the historic abuses of Lay Reader John Smyth has caused the resignation and discipline of leaders including the Archbishop of Canterbury in a time when the church is divided on issues of doctrine and pastoral issues of sexuality. We must prayerfully lament this division and abuse.

At the same time, on the parish level, we are seeing something of a different story - church attendance in the Church of England grew 6% this year, a trend of growth that we are seeing in our own church. In the period between 2021 and 2024 sales of Bibles have doubled, with much of that growth coming from Millennials and Gen-Z. We must learn the lessons about humility and accountability while prayerfully offering hope to this rising generation.

5.3.1 London Diocese Update

by Oliver Holme, General Secretary of London Diocesan Synod

The Diocese of London is the largest and most diverse in the Church of England. We have over 500 churches and 750 licensed clergy. We are able to have a church in almost every community, supporting the vision for every Londoner to encounter the love of God in Christ. In 2024, 50 new deacons were ordained and early draft statistics indicate that Average Weekly Attendance in London grew by 7.5% to over 60,000.

During 2024, we have continued working towards our priorities of becoming a younger, safer and more racially just Church. For example:

- 19 London Youth Apprentices engaged 715 young people weekly and funding was granted to enable the launch of five youth ministers in Hackney and Islington.
- In a challenging year for safeguarding, referrals to the Diocesan Safeguarding Team increased substantially, indicating more trust and confidence in the safeguarding service. 789 people were given safeguarding leadership training, and 3,808 DBS checks were carried out.
- Churches across the Diocese engaged with Race Equality Week, Racial Justice Sunday, and Black History Month last year, reflecting on racial justice and committing to action.

The breadth of parishes and Bishop's Mission Orders in London nurtured confident disciples, compassionate communities and creative growth in an amazing variety of ways. They also contributed over £23m in Common Fund, an increase of almost £1m. Alongside £13.2m income raised by the London Diocesan Fund (LDF) and £3.6m from LDF reserves, this paid to provide ministry and support parishes across the Diocese.

5.3.2 Deanery Synod Report 2024

by Alan Meakin

The Deanery Synod is an elected group from all the Church of England churches in Brent. As a church we are allowed up to 3 members on the Deanery Synod, plus any Clergy who sit ex officio. It meets 3 times a year, usually to address a particular theme. Our current representatives are Paul Kidner, Alan Meakin and Angela Hansel.

The three meetings this year covered the work of the Mothers' Union, Climate Action and Safeguarding.

On 23rd January Pauline McCalla, who is the Willesden Area representative for The Mothers' Union (London Diocese), presented an overview of the work of the Mothers' Union in supporting families, prisoners, and refugees in the Area.

While we are not engaged with the Mothers' Union, the nature of their work and ambitions are reflected in activities at St Mark's, including working with women's refuges and foodbanks. It also highlighted how we can work with other churches in our neighbourhood, not necessarily under the auspices of the Mothers' Union, to address areas of need.

On 12th June we heard about Brent Council's response to Climate Action in the Borough, and how churches can act responsibly in their stewardship of God's creation, with tips from a church awarded an Eco Church Bronze Accreditation.

A Faith Climate Action Plan has been launched by Brent's Faith Climate Action Group as a resource for places of worship in Brent to use and help promote greener behaviours and sustainable ways of living. The plan focuses on key areas where faith organisations and places of worship can have a long-term environmental impact, as well as saving money (e.g. on energy bills) and promoting a healthier lifestyle for their congregations. Our progress in this area is detailed in Section 3.2 of this report.

On 29th October Angela Colman, the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer for the Willesden Area led us in a Biblical reflection on safeguarding, and spoke about how we can all make our churches safe spaces for everyone.

Using Biblical passages, Angela highlighted safeguarding scenarios, including identification of victims and appropriate courses of action. Significant progress has been made in the Willesden area over the last couple of years to improve the culture with emphasis on compliance with procedures and best practice. As a result of increased diligence, there has been an increase in Safeguarding referrals. Our progress in this area is detailed in Section 5.1 of this report.

Approved by the Parochial Church Council on 28th April 2025

Signed on their behalf

by Revd Dave Roberts (Chair)

And by Vivienne McKoy-Salt (Church Warden)

and Paul Kidner (Church Warden)