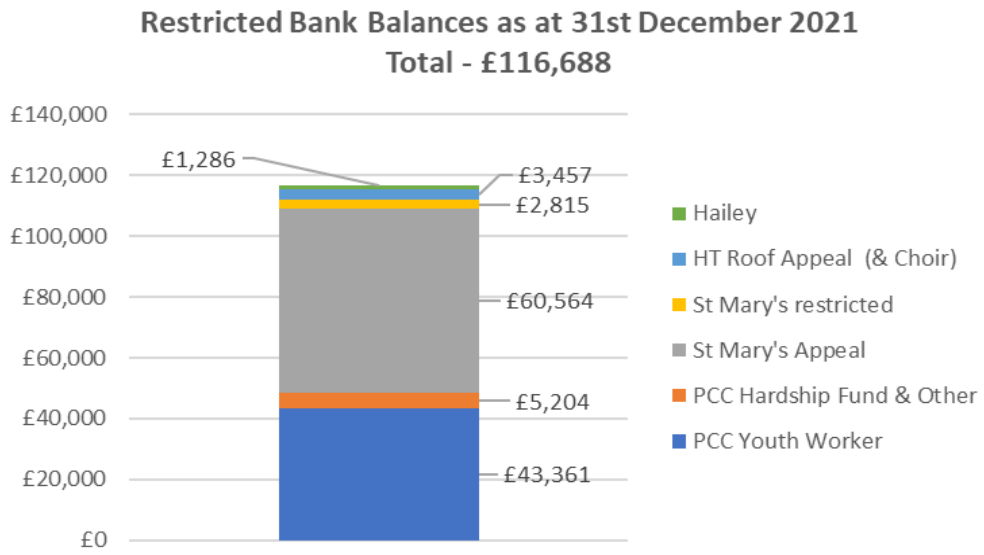
PARISH OF WITNEY
ANNUAL CHURCH MEETINGS
SUNDAY 8TH MAY 2022 4:00PM
ST MARY THE VIRGIN, WITNEY

Present for both meetings:	Toby Wright (chair), Kate Banks, Julia Bee, Lawrence Bee, Ness Brunner-Ellis, Jill Carter, Joanna Collicutt, Sally Down, James Elward, Maurizio Fantato, Michele Foot, Ian Galletley, Alan Gentry, Melody Helm, Monica Hester, Jeremy Lasman, Elpie Lewis, Kate Lockwood, Sheena Menon, Helen Meyrick, Martin Peirce, Rosemary Peirce, Keith Ridgway, Susan Ridgway, Chris Riley, David Taft, Linda Taft, Claire Titcomb, Charlotte Tremain, Hugh White, Andrew Whitehouse and Lorna Whitehouse.
Apologies for both meetings:	Jonathan Brooks, Judy Brooks, Robin Carr, Cordie Edwards, Paul Francis, Dair Henderson, Sue Hodges, Christine Lever, Ian Meyrick, Lorna Roche and Val Pole.

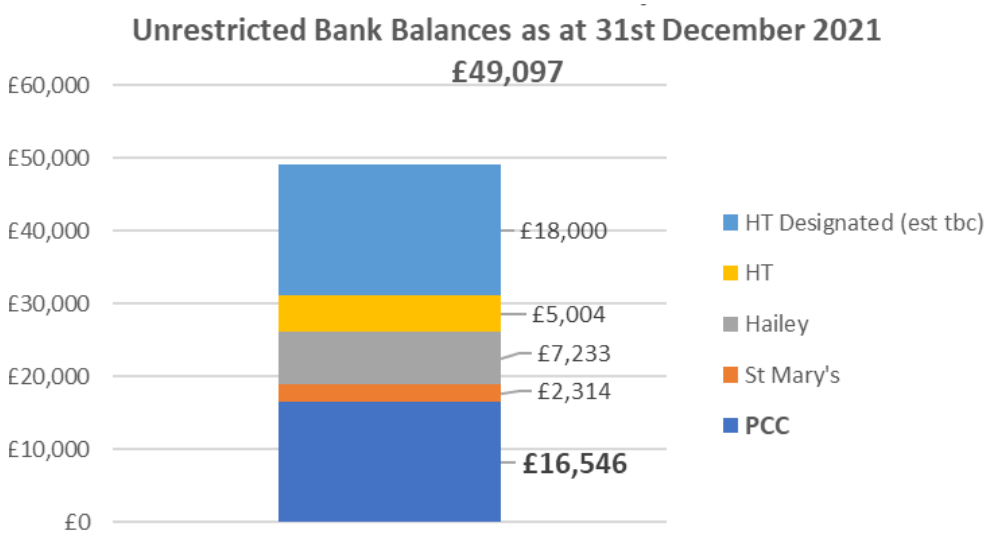
Item	
1.1	The meeting opened with prayer.
2.1	Apologies were received as above.
3.1	**<u>Annual Meeting of Parishioners</u>**
3.1.1	Minutes of the last meeting on 5 May 2021 were approved by show of hands and there were no matters arising.
3.1.2	**Election of Churchwardens** Jeremy has agreed to continue, proposed Julia Bee, seconded Kate Lockwood. Kate Banks has agreed to continue, proposed Linda Taft, seconded Helen Meyrick. The election was uncontested and therefore passed. The meeting of Parishioners closed at 4:05pm
	<u>Annual Parochial Church Meeting</u>
4.1	**Minutes of the meeting held 5 May 2021** Minutes of last meeting on 5 May 2021 were proposed James Elward, seconded Helen Meyrick, approved nem con. There were no matters arising.
4.2	**Reports** Reports of all church activities are available in the Year Review. Thanks to Kate Lockwood and Richard Young for producing the review, and to everyone who contributed. Copies are available in churches and on the website.
4.2.1	**Proceedings of the PCC in previous year** Since the last APCM in May 2021 the PCC has held seven meetings. • The PCC has worked alongside the ministry team, to ensure the safe re-opening of our churches for private prayer and regular worship. Covid Risk assessments have been regularly updated, in line with C of E guidance. • The PCC endorsed the appointment of an Ecumenical Pioneering Minister; and a sixth place of worship has been established within the benefice at Windrush Place. • The PCC has appointed a Schools Chaplain and Youth worker • The PCC has overseen the instigation of an Anna Chaplaincy within the benefice, • The PCC has adopted the C of E online Parish Dashboard to assist in monitoring safeguarding practices. • The PCC reflected on recent C of E reports highlighting safeguarding concerns with a view to ensuring the parish follows best practice. • Faculty applications were submitted for icons and St Mary's and for work at St John's Hailey. • The PCC has responded to Natasha's Law, aimed at improving information about food allergens. • A new architect has been appointed to conduct quinquennial inspections and to oversee improved accessibility and roof repairs at Holy Trinity.

Item	
	• The PCC has worked with the Commonwealth War Graves Commission to have signs installed showing the presence of war graves in our churchyards at St John's Hailey, Holy Trinity and Crawley • The Safeguarding Policy has been revised for 2022. • The Volunteers Policy; Health & Safety Policy; and Disciplinary & Grievance Procedures have all been reviewed.
4.2.2	**Safeguarding** Over the last year the parish has continued to develop its safeguarding practices. As our buildings gradually reopened and we met more face to face, we have reviewed and updated our policies to ensure they are as relevant as possible. We have also continued to review our online policies as many activities are still held this way. • Training for all PCC/DCC members, children's workers, pastoral visitors, and other roles, has taken place online using the C of E's new training materials. Courses covered include basic, foundation and leadership modules, safer recruitment and domestic abuse. • Concerns have continued to be reported and dealt with as needed. • The PCC has complied with the duty under section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016. • Risk assessments, including for Covid, have been reviewed and put in place as we gradually reopened. Thanks to Alison and her team. Safeguarding duties are increasingly onerous.
4.2.3	**Annual Fabric Report** An extraordinary amount has been achieved, given the restrictions that have taken place this year. **St Mary the Virgin, Witney** In contrast with the previous year, 2021 saw a significantly reduced requirement for ad hoc maintenance in St Mary's. • Theft of some lead flashing around the toilet block and South Aisle, has now been replaced. • We have increased the frequency of gutter clearance to stop a build-up of debris in the gutters and down pipes, causing excess rainwater to overflow the flashing, and flood into the building. • We have upgraded the internal notice boards to present much more attractive and informative information regarding the Ministry Team and some of our current key initiatives. We continue to be hugely grateful for the work of the volunteers who regularly turn up for church cleaning and ad hoc maintenance, without whom the fabric of the church would easily fall into disrepair. **Holy Trinity Church** There are no major works to report this year. • All the gutters have been cleaned and churchyard maintenance carried out. • The organ has been tuned and repaired • The annual servicing of fire extinguishers, boiler and heaters and PAT testing completed. • Minor fault with lights not turning off. They have been replaced with reconditioned unit. • Plans are underway for the new north roof together with improving facilities for the disabled. • The Quinquennial Inspection will be in April. • Further slates off the roof on both north and south sides along with trees shedding minor branches, some dead wood and some not. The council will be approached again to review the proximity of trees and the new architect, Peter Preston, will include his professional opinion on this in the QI.

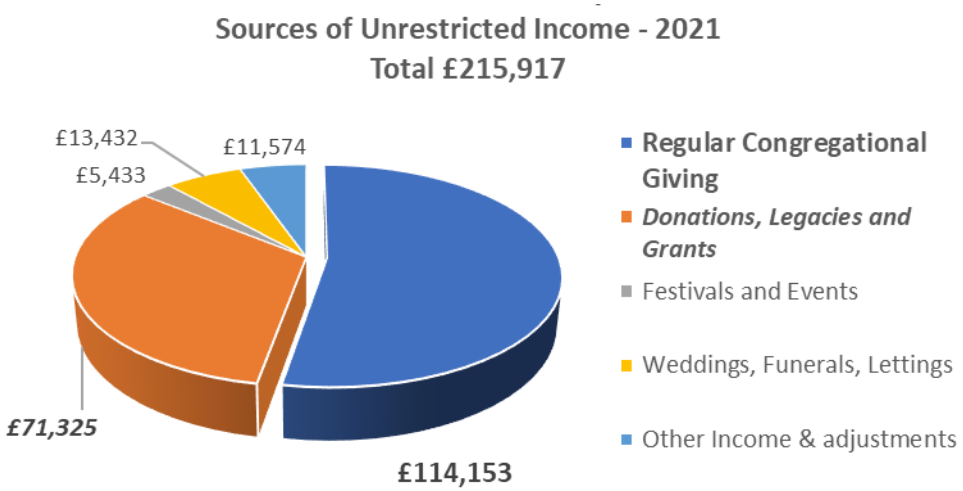
Item	
4.2.3 contd	**St. John the Evangelist, Hailey** • Doors and panels all fit, slide, and close once again. • Routine PAT testing fire extinguisher servicing were all carried out. • Another tile fell out and was replaced, and a recent shower has shown up a leak in the guttering but it is in hand. • The basement has remained free of flooding. • We have achieved the Bronze Eco Church award • We had a snowdrop project and many hundreds were planted along the pathway. • Our neighbours in Yew Tree Cottage had some work done to their cottage and asked to knock a hole in the adjoining wall to go back and forth to the road rather than through the house. The building work is practically finished, and the builder will block off the hole in the wall and the stone mason will finish the repairs to the wall shortly. • In the autumn we had another churchyard tidy up **St John the Baptist, Curbridge** • The church building is in generally fair condition. • The quinquennial inspection took place seven months ago but we still await the written report from the surveyor. • Some tiles need to be reset on the roof, but parishioners have undertaken gully clearing themselves. A roof leak has also been dealt with by the same means. • Small areas of paintwork are in urgent need of redecoration. • A recent electrical inspection identified three items in need of repair and replacement; these have been undertaken and a fully satisfactory certificate of safety has been issued. • The church path is degrading and will need repairs in the mid-term future.
4.2.4	**Finance and Statement of accounts** We are exceptionally grateful for the generosity of our congregations during 2021, which has allowed us to end the year with strong cash balances. However, the majority of the bank account balances held by the Parish at the end of 2021 were Restricted and not available to fund our on-going ministry. • With reported Cash Balances totalling £165,785 the Parish appeared to be exceptionally well funded as at the end of 2021 • However, of these balances, £116,688 were Restricted, and are therefore not available to cover the day to expenses of running the Parish. (see chart) 

Item	
4.2.4 contd	

- Of the £49,097 Unrestricted Funds, only £16,546 was available to the Parish to fund our day-to-day ministry expenditure, the remainder being held by the DCCs to cover ad hoc maintenance expenses (or designated by HT DCC for their roof appeal)
- £16,546 is equivalent to just 28 days of our day-to-day costs.

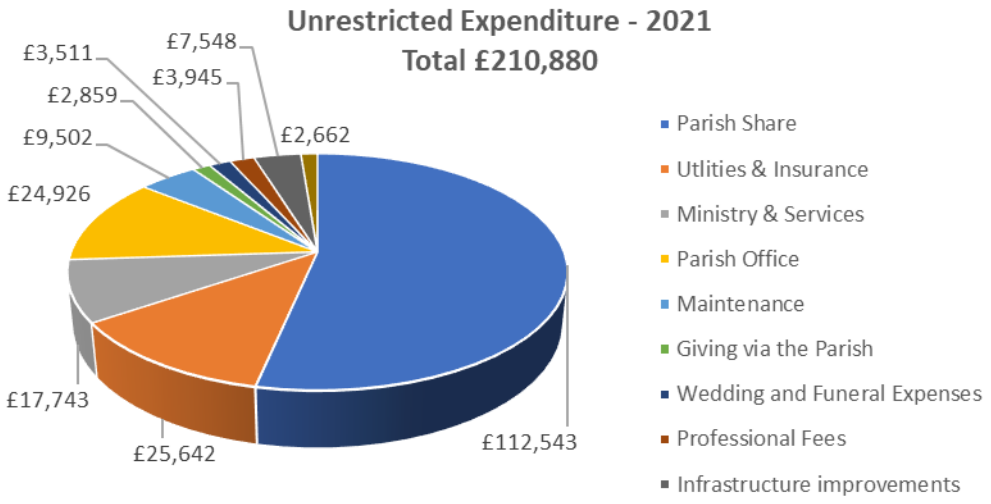


- The income for the year ended 31st December 2021 totalled £332,665, with total expenditure of £241,851, resulting in a substantial surplus of £90,814. These figures include Restricted and Unrestricted Funds
- However, unrestricted income totalled £215,917, while costs amounted to £210,880. These figures include some small accounting adjustments to eradicate historic balance sheet anomalies



- Excluding these adjustments, the Parish achieved a small operating surplus of £2,262 in 2021. (2020 deficit £12,843). The improvement in this outturn largely reflects a substantial reduction in the need for ad hoc maintenance across our churches in the year
- The breakdown of unrestricted income and costs is shown above. Regular congregational giving covers 54% of our costs. This rises to 89% if income from ad hoc donations and grants is included
- However, our regular congregational giving is down from 2020 by approximately £3,000
- As regular congregational giving only covers just over half of our ongoing costs, there remains a significant risk that we will not be able to cover our core ministry costs for 2022 without a continued Appeal to our congregation for financial support.

Item	
4.2.4 contd	



Only 2 pages of the Year Review relate to finance but it underpins everything that happens in the parish.
We have an increasingly broad ministry because of the generosity of many people.
We have received a substantial legacy from Dennis Woodhams, to whom we are very grateful.
The vast majority of restricted funds can only be spent in line with the wishes of the donor.

<u>2022</u>
Last year we covered 54% of our costs from congregational giving (Parish Giving Scheme, envelope scheme, loose plate collections, contactless device at St Mary's, Gift Aid). This is not sufficient for financial stability.

The Food & Drink Festival is the only festival in 2022 that raises money for the Parish funds. The Beer Festival can only be used to support maintenance of the building, and Witney Feast raises funds for St Mary's DCC.

There will be another appeal this year. The emphasis will be on encouraging people to increase regular giving to match one-off donations given for previous appeals. Previous appeals have asked for an average of £350/person to make up the deficit.

The consequences of not being able to raise sufficient funds will mean an inability to heat the buildings; pay expenses; or default on the parish share – which has future implications for being able to afford 2 ministers as part of the ministry team. It is anticipated that heating costs may increase to £30k.

Current giving averages £70-£80/person each month. We're hugely grateful for all donations.

Other methods for increasing giving:

- Promote the PGS to new members
- Reinstate welcome evenings for people new to the parish
- Reinstate passing the collection plate round at services
- Have someone holding the collection plate at weddings
- Considering another Christmas Tree festival.

Thanks were expressed to Jeremy for all he does as treasurer and Churchwarden.

4.2.5 **Electoral roll on 28 April 2022**

St. Mary's:	140	(from 144 in 2021)
Holy Trinity:	57	(from 59 in 2021)
Hailey:	33	(from 34 in 2021)
Curbridge:	9	(from 9 in 2021)
Total:	**239**	(from 246 in 2021)

Item	
4.2.6	**Rector's report** It is good to have the opportunity to come together and celebrate what God is doing in our parish and benefice. Thanks to those who attend morning and evening prayer as we offer our sacrifice of praise. It's been good to see it build up again after Covid shut downs. Offering prayer together is vital and undergirds all our work. It is a way of encouraging sanctification of time. Thanks also to those who support the weekday Eucharists in our common Life. Thanks to those who support our other prayer meetings – so vital as the heartbeat to all we are and do. Thanks to Ness and Hugh who continue to hold so much in the life of the benefice, along with Joanna, Sally and Mark. Also to Richard, and he continues to hold Lay ministry in our sights and does so much in terms of Communications. We have been blessed that the ministry team continues to grow and flourish. Laverne has considerable energy to lead our ministry to young people and children. She's establishing great contacts and opportunities. Jacky Bone is our Ecumenical Pioneering Minister focussing on the new housing community on Windrush Estate. Julia Bee, our Anna Chaplain, is leading our ministry of care to older people and to our nursing and care homes. James has moved from being a Pastoral Assistant and begun his training at vicar-school. Rebecca Coatsworth continues as a Pastoral Assistant and leads our Young Disciples programme. I'm indebted to the retired clergy and LLMs who support so much within the parish; for their continuing wisdom, graciousness and insights. Particular thanks to the wardens who do an immense amount of work and in particular to Elpie, Charlotte and Claire as they are standing down. I'm indebted to all the churchwardens and deputies; the parish couldn't function without you. Thanks to Jeremy Lasman for the huge amount of work o n the finances, and to the district treasurers as well. Thanks to Paul at Holy Trinity and Francis at St Mary's for their wonderful contribution to our liturgy and life. Thanks to all those who serve in our three choirs and play the organs. It is particularly good that Paul is strengthening his health once more. Thanks to Michelle, our parish administrator for all she does. Many people comment on the importance of her friendly welcome. There are many positive ways in which we see God's spirit strengthening and leading us as we seek to build and proclaim the kingdom of God as a Community of Mercy and Kindness. Amazing ministry is growing up in all our churches thanks to everyone. Prayer that we will grow in knowledge of God's love and power of God's Spirit. May God be kind to everyone who keeps on loving our Lord Jesus Christ.
4.2.7	**Deanery Synod Report** Meetings were held on 23rd March and 2nd September on Zoom and on 17th November at North Leigh in person and on Zoom. <u>Coming out of Covid: (March meeting)</u> Churches reported that they had been using a variety of live streamed services but were starting to return to in-person services. The Rev'd Canon Toby Wright reported that he'd had a few services in church but mainly used Zoom. The services have included an organist with a church organ in his own home and his wife to lead the singing of hymns; the words being displayed on screen.

Item	
4.2.7 contd	Although members of congregation without suitable technology had been lost to some extent, many others had joined in who were housebound, from care homes, or from distant places. <u>The Contemplative Toolkit: (September meeting)</u> The Rev'd Charlie Kerr, School Chaplaincy Advisor for the Oxford Diocesan Board of Education, spoke about resources to deal with anxiety, mental health and a lack of spirituality in schools since the pandemic. <u>Appointments</u> • The Rev'd Dr Tess Kuin Lawton moved from being Area Dean to a new post as Canon Missioner at Winchester Cathedral. • The Rev'd Margaret Dixon was licensed as Area Dean by Bishop Gavin Collins at North Leigh, with The Rev'd Simon Kirby and The Rev'd Janice Collier as Associate Deans. • The Rev'd Miles Welbourne is Curate at Bampton with a special interest in rural work, children's work and technology. • Laverne Williams is working as Youth Leader and Schools Chaplain for 11 schools, based at St Mary's Witney. • The Rev'd Canon Toby Wright was elected to General Synod from the Oxford Diocese. <u>Finance</u> The Deanery share has been paid.
4.3	**Churchwardens' report** 2021 remained an extremely demanding year for all the churches in the Parishes, as we had to continue to respond to the challenges of the on-going pandemic. We are therefore hugely grateful for both the wisdom and efforts of our Ministry Team, PCC/DCCs, Churchwardens, Deputy Wardens and a whole raft of volunteers for their hard work to ensure that we could continue to offer safe services of worship and occasional Offices for our community. We must pay particular thanks to Claire Hermon, Elpie Lewis and Charlotte Tremain who are standing down after many years of service to the Parish as deputy wardens at St Mary's, Hailey and Holy Trinity respectively. Charlotte and Elpie have previously been Churchwardens as well. Their passion for the Parish and their service has been hugely appreciated and of great benefit to all. Thanks also go to Toby for all he does, and to Kate Lockwood as PCC Secretary. Also to church cleaners and all the people who organise events.
4.4 4.4.1	**Elections** Only people on the parish electoral roll may vote for deputy wardens. **Deputy Churchwardens** The following people were proposed and duly elected: **St Mary's –** Maurizio Fantato, Melody Helm, **Holy Trinity -** Dair Henderson, Keith Ridgway **Hailey -** Robin Carr **Curbridge -** Ian Galletley
4.5	**Appointment of Independent examiners** The meeting agreed to reappoint Whitley Stimpson Ltd. Proposed Toby Wright, seconded Jeremy Lasman, approved nem com.
4.6	**Any other business** There is much to note and celebrate. • The environment group has been operating for over a year. They have some fantastic plans for the forthcoming Great Big Green Week. • The ministry team, who held everything together during the Covid pandemic • Messy Mass at Holy Trinity • Hailey Tiddlers group have held their first meeting

Item	
	• The Anna Chaplaincy has started, and Julia has been making connections with six care homes in the benefice. • Messy Church on the Windrush Estate is now the 6th 'church' in the benefice. • We have an organ scholar, who has played at St Mary's and Holy Trinity. • It was good to be able to get together in person for Holy Week this year and thanks are expressed to Padre Mark for preaching. • Laverne has settled in very quickly and doing amazing work with our young people.
4.7	**Date of next meeting** Sunday 26 March 2023 at 4:00pm

Signed: *Toby Wright* **Date:** 26 March 2023