

St Mary's Church, Walkley

Annual Report of the Parochial Church Council

For the year ending 31 December 2024

Priest in Charge:

Revd Sue Hammersley
(until January 2024)

Revd Dr Beth Keith appointed October 2024 and licensed January 2025

Associate Priest:

The Revd Canon Dr Matthew Rhodes
(from March 2021)

Contents

Trustees Report for the Parochial Church Council of St Mary's Church, Walkley	2
Mission Statement	2
Aim and Purposes	2
Objectives and Activities	2
Achievements and Performance	3
Incumbent's Report	3
Review of the Year: Events and Observations	3
Mission Area	5
Worship	5
Church Attendance	7
Mission, Evangelism and Pastoral Care	8
St Mary's Connection with Moorend Place	9
Charitable Fundraising, Mission Giving and Giving to Secular Charities	9
Deanery Synod Report	12
Fabric Report	13
Financial Review	14
St Mary's Walkley Community Hall	14
Friends of Walkley Cemetery Report	15
Bell Ringing Report	16
Children's Work	17
St Mary's Academy Report	18
Structure, governance and management	19
Membership of the PCC	19
Annual Parochial Church Meeting	19
Election of PCC Members	20
Election of Churchwardens	20
Committee and Subgroups	20
Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure	21
Administrative Information	22
Acknowledgments	23
Appendix: The Church on the Road	24

Trustees Report for the Parochial Church Council of St Mary's Church, Walkley

Mission Statement

The Church on the Road: Inclusive, Eucharistic, a safe place to be with God

Aim and Purposes

St Mary's Parochial Church Council (PCC) has the responsibility of cooperating with those authorised to exercise ministerial oversight of the parish, in promoting within the ecclesiastical parish, the whole mission of the Church; pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. The PCC is also specifically responsible for the maintenance of; the Church and Community Hall of St Mary's, Howard Road, Walkley; the parish burial ground situated at Nichols Road (off Waller Road), Walkley; and takes an active interest in St Mary's Academy, a Church of England primary school located in the parish of Walkley.

Objectives and Activities

The PCC is committed to enabling as many people as possible to worship at our church and to become part of our parish community at St Mary's. The PCC maintains an overview of worship throughout the parish and makes suggestions on how our services can involve the many groups that live within our parish. Our services and worship put faith into practice through prayer and scripture, music and sacrament. When planning our activities for the year, we have considered the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit and in particular, the supplementary guidance on charities for the advancement of religion.

In particular, we try to enable people to live out their faith as part of our parish community through:

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

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

Achievements and Performance

Incumbent's Report

Written by Revd Dr Beth Keith, Priest in Charge

It has been a real joy to read through this report as the newly appointed Priest in Charge of St Mary's Walkley, and to read about all the developments in 2024. Having been involved in leading services here over the past three years, it is wonderful to now be part of this community in a more permanent way. I am deeply grateful for the warm welcome I have received and look forward to the journey ahead as we continue to grow together in faith and service.

I want to take this opportunity to express my heartfelt thanks to everyone who has supported the life and ministry of St Mary's during the vacancy. A church is sustained by God and through the faith, commitment, and generosity of its people. I am especially grateful to the worship team, the Clergy and Lay Readers who have faithfully led services, and the Churchwardens, who have shouldered significant responsibility during this time.

A particular and sincere thank you goes to Vicky Romégoux, who is standing down as Churchwarden at this year's APCM after many years of service as Churchwarden. Her dedication and service to St Mary's have been invaluable, and we are all grateful for the many ways she has supported the church community.

As we step into this new season together, I am excited for all that lies ahead. May St Mary's continue to be a place of inclusive welcome, heartfelt prayer and worship, healing and hospitality in the Walkley community.

With every blessing,
Revd Dr Beth Keith, Priest in Charge

Review of the Year: Events and Observations

Written by the Churchwardens Team

The past year, 2024 has been both a year of change and consolidation. A year when we said goodbye to our Priest in Charge, Revd Sue Hammersley in January and were then very pleased to welcome the appointment of her successor, Revd Dr Beth Keith, in October. In the interval, we have seen our usual Sunday attendance figures increase and diversify, and we have been able to maintain and increase regular opportunities for worship. Our finances have remained stable and the use of our church and hall buildings has expanded in response to new opportunities for partnership working with the local community and statutory authorities.

All of this has been possible because of a small but very dedicated team of people. Thank you to everyone who has served on the PCC or sub committees, in particular our new Treasurer, David Clark, who has put in so much effort this year to manage the transition to a new software based financial accounting system. We owe a debt of gratitude to everyone who plays a part in our weekly worship: The worship team

who work behind the scenes, the stewards and audio video team, those who clean the church and arrange the flowers as well as those who serve refreshments. Thank you to the Lay Readers, David, Catherine, Kath and Joe who preach and deacon and to all who lead the intercessions, serve or read the lesson. Thank you to everyone who plays a part in the music and to Catherine for coordinating this. Worship really is a team effort.

Thank you to the Clergy who support our worship, particularly James, who has joined the team this year, enabling us to re-establish Wednesday morning communion services; especially to Alan who regularly presides on a Sunday morning, to Matthew and Alison from St John's and to Sue, Beth and Shan from St Mark's. Thanks to Matthew, our Associate Priest, for the support he has provided to the PCC and School services during the past year.

We are pleased to be serving a growing and increasingly diverse congregation and have welcomed the willingness of new families to take on a role in our services. Over the last year we have all felt blessed by the number of children in church, who often now make up a quarter of our Sunday worshippers. We are grateful to Oli for leading the quarterly Taizé prayer services and for establishing monthly Diddy Disciples sessions for children under 8 years during Sunday morning worship.

We have had less capacity this year to support activities within the Mission Area but have continued to work with the Dementia Group to send cards to care homes at Easter and Christmas, to participate in joint Lent groups with St Mark's, and take part in the Joint Festival weekend in September. We are thankful to Janet for organising our monthly services for residents in Moorend Place Nursing Home, which are now firmly established.

As part of our responsibility as Christians to care for God's earth, St Mary's took part in the Eco Church programme run by A Rocha. We were pleased to achieve an Eco Church Bronze Award in April.

St Mary's recognise that we have congregant members who are "single at church" and wish to welcome anyone who attends church on their own. Last year we began the process to formally register as a "Single Friendly Church", which we hope to complete in 2025.

Our regular Bellringing band has gone from strength to strength in the last year, assisted by students from the University, and ringing of a high standard has taken place nearly every Sunday morning and for evening services. The Friends of Walkley Cemetery, who maintain our cemetery on a voluntary basis, have had a good year despite the sad loss of long term secretary Bill Gray. Bill's final project, a storage container for maintenance equipment, was granted planning permission and installed just before he died in July.

Church finances have raised no concerns this year despite the unexpected expense of repairs to a partially collapsed boundary wall. The general underlying stability of the church has allowed us the capacity to work with several successful events and projects in partnership with the local community, including Art in the Aisles, the Horticultural Show, the Walkley Festival craft fair in June and the Christmas Market

in December, the last of which attracted over 1200 people into the church and hall buildings. These were in addition to the Christmas Tree Festival and the summer Well Dressing which we organised ourselves, and regular church run community events in the hall on the first Saturday of the month, which have raised money for several good causes. We have continued to see increased demand for use of the community hall and for the hire of the church building for meetings and concerts. The church is now used on a regular basis for rehearsals by Grimethorpe Colliery Band who have established a local outreach project for young people. Whilst the overall increase in bookings and the income they bring is welcome, they create extra work for church volunteers. As a result, we have refocused the role of the parish administrator to provide more support for, particularly, the financial administration of the hall.

These events are wonderful ways of networking and showcasing all that the church is involved in. However, it is the members of the congregation who make the church – the ones who welcome newcomers and look after each other, the ones who make these events happen and the ones who commit time and finances to ensure that St Mary's is a thriving, growing church community.

Mission Area

Written by Revd Dr Matthew Rhodes, Associate Priest

St Mary's, St Mark's and St John's continue to work closely together. Following the resignation last year of the Revd Sue Hammersley as Vicar of St Mark's and Priest in Charge of St Mary's, the Revd Dr Beth Keith took on these roles in January 2025. As a sign of our ever-closer engagement, Beth and Matthew Rhodes were also appointed as associate priests at St John's and St Mark's respectively. Matthew is already associate priest at St Mary's, and it is anticipated that following the completion of her curacy this summer, the Revd Alison Wragg will be appointed as associate priest at both Ranmoor and Walkley. Members of St John's and St Mark's meet for morning prayer on Zoom twice a week and the three churches work together on dementia. In September, members of all three churches participated in a very successful mission area weekend.

Worship

Written by David Clark, Lay Reader, Catherine Burchell, Lay Reader & Musician, with contributions from children and young people at St Mary's.

Music

During 2024 we followed our usual pattern of music within services, using a mixture of traditional and more recent hymns, chants and songs.

We are blessed to have several cantors on our rota (with our widest age range yet, and a good mix of voices) who sing during the Eucharistic Prayers and also for the Kyrie or Gloria during relevant seasons.

The choir have sung at special services such as Easter, Pentecost, Advent and Christmas etc. Given the limited rehearsal time, most of the items sung have come from our existing repertoire already known to the choir, but new items have been added too. We now have sufficient singers to attempt 3 part harmony occasionally and thanks to determined effort and practice, this has largely been effective. Anyone who enjoys singing is welcome to join the choir.

Catherine B continues as music co-ordinator and main organist/pianist, with Marie G leading the music for the Taize services. On Remembrance Day Loxley Band played for the traditional morning service of Remembrance and Irving S and friends played for the more reflective evening eucharist. Rosalind, from one of our partner churches, has occasionally played for the morning services when Catherine is away, for which we are grateful.

Children and Young People in worship

Our children and young people have gradually been taking up specific roles within our Parish Eucharist services. Nearly all have carried candles during the Gospel Procession, and several have brought up the elements during the Offertory hymn. Some of the older ones have joined the reading and intercession rotas and two are now regular servers.

One has joined the cantor rota and sang a short solo at Midnight Mass. Others have helped put up and take down the hymn numbers, and one or two have helped with making or serving coffee and washing up. When asked what they particularly liked or disliked about worship, we received overwhelmingly positive and thoughtful comments. Those on the rotas enjoy the roles they have been taking on, commenting on how they to develop their confidence, how they see them as an act of service and how these roles help in the development of their faith. Many enjoy singing in general. They enjoy waving to people during the Peace. They appreciate the diversity within the church, both in terms of race and LGBTQ+. One or two commented on valuing acts of service outside of Sunday worship such as charitable giving and helping to keep the building and garden attractive.

This final section is a brief overview of the year.

The eucharist has continued to be central to our Sunday morning worship. This has been supplemented with occasional evening services including carol services for Epiphany (07 January), Candlemas (28 January), Advent (1 December) and Christmas (22 December). We held a Lent Reflection service on Lent 4 (10 March). We held an evening eucharist on Remembrance Sunday (10 November). Our friends from Walkley Ebenezer Methodist Church now meet midweek for worship and so weren't able to join our non-eucharistic morning Remembrance service. We held our annual Memorial service for All Souls on All Saints Sunday (03 November) and Harvest Festival (29 September).

The Holy Week and Easter services included a Palm Sunday Procession, beginning outside and moving to Church; the Maundy Thursday evening Eucharist followed by a short Vigil Watch; a Good Friday service at the foot of the cross; and an Easter Vigil, beginning in the hall, moving outside for the new fire and processing into Church. The church was also open for two hours before the Good Friday service.

Our Christmas services were busy with increased numbers overall. Our Christingle service (24 December) supported the Children's Society. Across our Carol service (18 December), Christingle, Midnight Eucharist and Christmas Day Eucharist we welcomed more than 220 people to St Mary's (almost 200 in 2023).

It has been possible to restart a midweek communion service (from June) led by James, with support from others. This has been welcomed, particularly by those who struggle to attend on Sunday mornings.

We would like to thank all those who have supported worship over the last year, both Clergy and Laity. In particular, we would like to thank our Clergy, Sue and Matthew, Alan and James, and those who support them, Beth, Shan and Alison.

Worship Group continues to advise the Standing Committee and PCC on decisions regarding worship while undertaking the majority of the detailed planning. All are welcome to attend our services.

Church Attendance

Written by Vicky Romégoux, Churchwarden

In 2024, 70 names were recorded on the Church Electoral Roll, up from 66 in the previous year.

Our Statistics for Mission returns for 2024 record a rise in usual Sunday attendance figures from 34 to 40 adults and the continued increase in the average number of children under 16 attending services, up from 6 to 8. (16% of those now attending are children compared with 3% in the years preceding the pandemic).

Our regular worshipping community numbers rose to 113 from 90, with those aged under 30 making up a significant increase (23%). We welcomed 14 new members into our regular worshipping community and lost 11. We lost only one long term congregant through death; the other leavers moved out of the area, reflecting the constant population "churn" in the local Walkley community, particularly among younger people.

Two evening Taizé prayer services were attended by an average of 15 people, about half of whom are not regular worshippers at St Mary's. Eleven outreach services were held at Moorend Nursing Home, with an average attendance of 15 residents and their relatives. Wednesday morning communion services in church restarted in July, with numbers varying between 4 and 7 regular communicants.

The average number of people who watched our services online via YouTube, although hard to estimate exactly, remained steady at 4. Five services were viewed by between 10 and 15 people, with no clear pattern to explain the variation in numbers, except when snow and ice made travel difficult.

Eighty one people (48 communicants) attended the Easter Day Eucharist and Vigil services in person, up 20% from the previous year. The number of communicants at services on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day decreased from 87 to 71, although the number of people attending all services during the same period, including the Christingle service, increased from 181 to 226.

Four school services took place in Church, involving over 220 children, strongly supported by an average attendance of 50 parents and carers.

Six baptisms, 2 funerals and 1 wedding took place this year, an increase from last year. In addition, a well-attended afternoon service for the renewal of wedding vows for 2 members of the congregation was held in October. One unusual short service of blessing, a Quinceanera, took place in Church at the request of a family from El Salvador, during a party to celebrate their daughter's 15th Birthday.

Mission, Evangelism and Pastoral Care

Written by Katharine S. Boyd, Lay Reader

For the past year St Mary's has continued to be largely run by an extended team covering all aspects of church life including pastoral care. Despite not having a dedicated pastoral worker, we have maintained our approach of quietly providing care behind the scenes. As before, when various people both ordained and lay, see a need arise they naturally respond to it, either in person or by phone, email, text or letters and cards. Between us we manage to support members of the congregation and keep in touch with several people who may no longer be able to attend church regularly. Anyone wishing to discuss a pastoral or safeguarding issue can of course speak to any of the Clergy, Lay Readers, Parish Safeguarding Officer or Churchwarden team.

The concern expressed in last year's report for how members of the extended team access pastoral care when they need it has remained and, as before, we have done our best to look after each other's needs. We now look forward to having additional support as St Mary's once again has a dedicated Priest in Charge.

The past year has seen the congregation grow steadily in both numbers and diversity. It is heartening to hear people describe St Mary's as a warm, friendly and welcoming community and seeing them find their place here. It has also been particularly good to have more people, essentially younger members of the congregation undertaking various active roles in and around the service. The start of Diddy Disciples is proving popular with the young children and those leading the group. Our continued links with Moored Plane care home are greatly valued as are the Taizé services, both of which cater for different needs in worshipping.

St Mary's has hosted and been a significant part of a number of local events such as fairs, concerts, open days and the well dressing bringing a great many people into contact with us and our buildings. This continues to strengthen our links with the community and again it is heartening to see how much this is valued and enjoyed by both groups and individuals who are not necessarily of religious faith but feel at home with us. It's been a lot of hard work by all our wider team but very much worth the effort.

Well done us!

St Mary's Connection with Moorend Place

Written by Janet Elsdon

A group of visitors from St Mary's was able to keep up connections with Moorend Place care home during 2024. Our visits to sing hymns and say prayers together with the residents carried on most months with additional meetings around Christmas and Easter.

On behalf of the church, we again sent each resident an individually addressed Christmas card, and an Easter card which included a small palm cross.

The 'Oaks and Acorns' also continued their visits. 'Oaks and Acorns' is a group of toddlers and their parents that visit monthly and involves interacting with the residents by reading stories, singing songs and playing together.

All our visits end with the offer of hospitality from Moorend Place staff and a chance to chat with residents and staff over coffee and biscuits.

Anyone with pre-school aged children who might be interested in joining 'Oaks and Acorns', or anyone wishing to join the singing group, please speak to one of the Churchwardens.

Charitable Fundraising, Mission Giving and Giving to Secular Charities

Written by Joyce Gambling and Lynette Jackson

Once again, we have excelled ourselves with outstanding cakes and refreshments at our Coffee Mornings and Walkley Weekend Events.

So... a big thank you to our generous bakers and kitchen helpers!

These events have raised money for local groups and charities besides church funds.

Thank you, once again, to Margaret and June who continue to knit for us, but sadly the Wool and Haberdashery Fair we held in October was our last one. Most of the goods not sold have gone to St. Luke's vintage shop.

The books and table in the foyer continue to be prosperous.

The Walkley Events Weekends raise lots for church funds but are hard work and needs lots of additional volunteers.

Vicky and Joyce had a lovely day at the Walkley Christmas Market event as Mother Christmas and Elf. A total of 97 children and parents came for a chat and all children received a gift.

The charities we donate to from church funds have already been chosen for next year. They are the Prisoners Fellowship, Sheffield Wildlife Trust, Goldiggers Trust and Langsett Advice Centre. Each will receive £150. If anyone has a charity they would like us to consider for 2026 contact Lynette or Joyce.

Table 1: Money raised by St Mary's and the people of Walkley at fundraising events and special appeals/collections during 2024:

The Children's Society	
Money boxes (not through church accounts) (£266.00)	
Christingle service (£144.60)	£410.60
Christian Aid (not through church accounts)	£912
Gurka Trust	£52.53
Archer project	£30
Macmillan Cancer Support	£86.70
Royal British Legion	£159.92
Friends of Walkley Cemetery	£118
S6 Food Bank Christmas Tree Festival donations	£322.57
Christian Aid Gaza Appeal	£75.70
Total	£2168.02

Table 2: The charities St Mary's have donated to from unrestricted funds (provided from within the annual church budget):

A Rocha	£150
Prison Fellowship	£150
Sheffield Churches Council for Community Care	£150
Gold Diggers Trust	£150
Total	£600.00

Deanery Synod Report

Written by Janet Elsdon, Deanery Synod Representative

In 2024 all deanery meetings were held with deanery of Ecclesfield: the deanery Hallam has been twinned with.

The January meeting (Synod) was held at Christ Church Hillsborough and Wadsley Bridge and the main topic of this meeting was Ministry to Older People.

The meeting heard from Andy Poultney about JOY (Joint Old and Young), a project running in Parson Cross that brings different age groups together to play, pray and share a meal.

Helen Coates from Sheffield Churches Council for Community Care (SCCCC) gave a longer talk highlighting areas of SCCCC work which include: a Good Neighbour scheme of visits and phone calls, a Pen Pal scheme, a Placement Support scheme offering help with moving house or finding a residential care home, H2H (Hospital to Home) aiding with resettlement at home after a hospital stay, and a new service called Back Home which aims to prevent readmission to hospital. SCCCC is a now secular, non-profit organisation, with much of its work going unseen. More information, however, can be found on their website: [Sheffield Churches Council for Community Care](#)

In May the Synod met at Oughtibridge. Yvonne Hayes and Revd Will Gowers gave a short presentation about the Cursillo movement which aims to equip Christians to live out their faith and ministry in practical ways. For more information, see their website: [Cursillo](#)

The main topic of this Synod was, however, Church Buildings. Simon Chesters-Thompson, Secretary of the Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC), outlined the faculty process and the work of the DAC. David Castle (Diocesan Net Zero Carbon Programme Manager) spoke about aspects of the Roadmap to Net Zero by 2030, a goal endorsed by General Synod in 2022. Jo Edwards (Diocesan Church Buildings Officer) explained the work of the Buildings Support Team and the advice and support they offer. The meeting ended with a talk from Margaret Ainger, who in a

voluntary role as Diocesan Eco Church Champion, works alongside Cathy Rhodes. Cathy is the Diocesan Environment Officer, also a voluntary role.

The last Synod of the year was the September meeting at Wadsley. This meeting, with Archdeacon Malcolm Chamberlain and Alex Shilkoff (Strategic Programme Director) looked at the refreshed Diocesan Strategy. There was a review of the strategy 2019 to 2025 and feedback on how this had progressed. Consultation on the strategy 2025 to 2031 began in 2023 and the three Rs have been retained but in the new strategy to mean:

- Renewed to receive the Light of Christ
- Released to walk in the Light of Christ
- Rejuvenated to reflect the Light of Christ.

The Diocesan Strategy is to align with the Church of England's Six Bold Outcomes, more can be read about this at [Church of England - Vision and Strategy](#)

Towards the end of 2024 the Revd Canon Dr Matthew Rhodes stepped down as Area Dean. A new Area Dean is expected to be announced in spring 2025.

St Mary's was represented by Janet and Dave and Dave continues as Deanery Lay Chair. Janet and Dave are happy to answer questions about Deanery Synod, please do ask.

Fabric Report

Written by Vicky Romégoux, Church Warden

The repair and restoration of the Victorian church building and the maintenance and improvement of the community hall are a key part of the Church's mission to the community of Walkley.

Our biggest fabric expenditure this year was to make good the partly collapsed retaining wall to the rear of the church, and we were grateful for the financial contribution made by our neighbours towards the cost. Progress on the repair of the Guild Room roof has been slow, initially due to access difficulties which have now been resolved.

The exceptionally wet weather conditions in 2024 led to problems with water penetration in the west wall of the tower, affecting the power supply to the spiral staircase, bell chamber and clock mechanism and causing significant damage to the plasterwork in the ringing chamber. Repointing is urgently required.

The church continues to feature on the Heritage at Risk Register due to the fragile state of the side aisle roofs, which makes routine maintenance repairs difficult to carry out. Fortunately, the roofs survived the weather condition in 2024 more or less intact. Finding funding for their replacement is an urgent priority.

After many years in development, plans for the church hall refurbishment and improvement of the link between the church and hall buildings are almost complete and ready for initial consultation with stakeholders in 2025. We will be continuing to

work with the Church Architect to establish detailed costings for the project and explore potential avenues for fund raising.

We finally obtained Faculty and planning permission for the installation of a storage container unit in the Cemetery to house the maintenance equipment needed by the Friends of Walkley Cemetery group. The project was planned and supervised by Bill Gray from the Friends Group before his untimely death in July. We are anticipating that the external wooden cladding specified in the planning conditions will be in place by summer 2025.

An inspection of both hall and church buildings by South Yorkshire Fire Service took place in April. A great deal of work was put in by volunteers to ensure that the buildings were compliant, which resulted in a successful outcome.

Financial Review

Written by David Clark, Treasurer

2024 has seen a number of changes in the way finance at St Mary's is managed. Following a handover and after decades of service Geoff Vause, Jeff Boyd and Janet Elsdon all stood down from the positions of bookkeeper, Gift Aid Administrator and Hall Treasurer respectively. I took on the role of Treasurer, with much of the day-to-day Hall finance being processed by our refocused Parish Administrator role.

In preparation for this changeover PCC agreed to pay for software, known as Liberty Accounts, in use by St Marks, to underpin our accounting. This has, after a prolonged and intense period of learning, reduced the administrative workload of both the church and hall finances. Other progress in 2024 has seen the acquisition of two debit cards, tied to a current account, which enables more straightforward purchasing without volunteers needing to use personal funds.

I'd like to thank the wardens team, who help count the money, and Vicky in particular for facilitating the handover, the Treasurer at St Mark's, (also called David!) those who do the banking and those who have adapted their method of giving to reduce the administrative workload.

Our money exists in named funds, each with a different purpose and specific requirements on how it can be spent. These fit into three categories, Unrestricted, restricted and endowment. Unrestricted funds include our General Fund and any Designated Funds. Designated funds are where the PCC has set aside money for a specific purpose but could choose to re or un designate it for another purpose. Restricted Funds are where the money was given for a particular reason and must be used for such, unless the donor gives permission otherwise. We only have one Endowment Fund, an expendable Endowment Fund where, except in exceptional circumstances, only the income from the capital may be used.

St Mary's has had a mixed year financially but ends 2024 in a good position. The following breakdown by fund should be read in tandem with the financial statements.

General Fund – Unrestricted

Financial statements page 2 with detail on pages 3-6.

As at 31 December 2024 the General Fund stands at £27,046, up just over £2,000 on the 31 December 2023. While planned giving has gone down, partly to due to changing personal circumstances, collections at services are up. As collections includes the GiveaLittle contactless donation station, this may also reflect changes in patterns of giving. Where possible we would encourage people to give by monthly standing order due to its reliability for budgeting and simplicity of administration, recognising that this won't be appropriate for everyone. Receipts from fund raising are up this year due to increased weekend event activity, both in house and through our partnership with the Walkley Events Collective (formerly Walkley Festival). Those cake sales really do start to add up! Lettings of the church building (as distinct from the hall) have also increased, the majority from renting to the Grimethorpe led brass band, followed by the Walkley Events Collective and other one-off small bookings.

Our expenditure increased this year due to needing to repair the rear boundary wall (£7,000) and an increased Common Fund contribution (£1,800). Common Fund is the money we give the diocese towards its costs for providing ministry both at St Mary's and parishes throughout the diocese. Beth and Matthew are part of this provision, but also the Diocesan Safeguarding team, fabric, financial and legal support. For more information please do speak to me, or look at the [Diocesan website](#). Our utility bills have decreased due to a recalibration on how they are split between the church and hall to more accurately reflect current occupancy rates. Looking ahead our 5-year fixed term gas contract finishes in August 2025 and therefore payments will increase substantially.

Hall Fund – Designated

Financial statements page 7.

As at 31 December 2024 the Hall fund stands at £30,055, down £820 on 31 December 2023. There has been an increase in the number of new bookings, see the hall report for details, and receipts have increased slightly. Unfortunately payments out have increased more. The hall is paying a more accurate proportion of the split utility costs, most notably gas. The grant funding for the parish administrator was used up during 2024 and, as the role was refocused on the hall, PCC agreed that the shortfall should be met from the Hall Fund rather than the General Fund. It is anticipated that some additional grant funding will be available for this post in 2025. There was outstanding rent of £1,296 at the end of 2024, some of which has since been received, and this would have turned the deficit into a small surplus. Work is ongoing to avoid a similar situation in 2025. The PCC will review the fees prior to September 2025, with a view to ensuring the sustainability of the hall and preventing it becoming a drain on the General Fund.

Boyes Reserve Fund – Designated

Financial statements page 8 and the Reserves Policy section below.

Cemetery Fund – Designated

Financial statements page 9 and the Reserves Policy section below.

Parish Administrator Funds – Restricted

Financial statements page 10.

Spencer Bequest Fund – Expendable Endowment

Financial statements page 11 including notes on its use.

Restoration Fund – Restricted

Financial statements page 12.

As at 31 December 2024 the Restoration Fund contained a total of £6,014. This Fund was established in 2005 with the intention of funding replacement of the church roof coverings, heating installation, windows, especially the West Window, organ and restoration of the bells. The current priorities within this remit are the renewal of the side aisle roofs, the pointing and any window repairs. The PCC are revising the current masterplan for the church in the context of the Quinquennial report and plans for the refurbishment of the church hall. It is expected in 2025 that monies from this fund will be used for repointing work in the lower sections of the tower.

Organ Fund – Restricted

Financial statements page 12.

Bells Fund – Restricted

Financial statements page 13.

Kitchen Refurbishment Fund – Restricted

Financial statements page 13 including notes.

Defibrillator Fund – Restricted

Financial statements page 14 including notes on its use.

PA System & Audio Equipment Fund – Restricted

Financial statements page 14.

Cassock alb Fund – Restricted

Financial statements page 15.

With new servers joining the rota it is expected that some or all of this fund will be expended in 2025.

Soft Fabric Fund – Restricted

Financial statements page 15.

Choir Music Fund – Restricted

Financial statements page 16.

Expectant Advent verses Fund – Restricted

Financial statements page 16.

This was money left over from a donation towards use of copyrighted music during Advent in the pandemic. Permission has been sought and received in 2024 for this to be repurposed and it's envisaged the money will be spent in 2025.

Walkley Community Forum/Garden Planting Fund – Restricted

Financial statements page 17.

This money is to be used for garden work at the front of the church building and some of this will be spent in 2025.

PCC Remuneration

Catherine Burchell receives an honorarium for her service as organist/pianist. No other PCC member receives remuneration or expenses from PCC funds. Likewise, there are no related party transactions involving PCC funds.

Reserves Policy

The purpose of a reserve is to smooth out fluctuations in cash flow and to meet emergencies in respect of our liabilities. In recent years, the Boyes Fund has been used in lieu of specific reserves to respond to urgent or unexpected payments. Following a review in 2020, PCC resolved that the Reserves Policy should be to hold funds equivalent to 3 months' outgoings as unreserved cash within the General Fund

Current Account; and where that is not possible, to prioritise the accrual of such funds when budgeting; and to maintain the separate Boyes (Reserve) Fund at an ideal value of £6,000 so as to cover the costs of urgent works where needed, allocating a minimum of £500 p.a. to that goal. This was achieved at the end of 2021.

PCC has designated a sum of £200 per annum (since 2019) to create a fund providing for foreseeable expenditure in relation to the upkeep of St Mary's Cemetery. In 2021 this fund was augmented by £5,000 towards the provision of a secure storage unit. A sizable portion of this has now been used and it is expected that the remainder will be spent in 2025.

The Community Hall monies are kept in a designated fund and hold £5,000 in reserve to meet recurring costs; any balance over this amount is retained towards the cost of refurbishment.

It is our policy to deposit the Restoration Fund, the Spencer Bequest, the Boyes Fund and the Restricted Funds relating to kitchen refurbishment with the CBF Church of England Deposit Fund.

St Mary's Walkley Community Hall

Written by Vicky Romégoux, Churchwarden

The hall has now been open for 30 years and whilst ready for refurbishment and general upgrading (with plans in the last stages of development) the hall is nevertheless a valued meeting space for St Mary's Church and an increasingly popular community venue in Walkley.

In 2024 the number of groups or individuals making regular hall bookings increased from 20 to 28 and one-off bookings from 10 to 24. The extra income has been welcome but the demands on volunteer time are considerable. As a result, the role of the Parish Administrator has been rejigged to focus more on the administration of the community hall, particularly the finance and invoicing.

Increased demand this year has come from new and existing users for activities involving health and wellbeing, particularly Tai Chi and Yoga, and all kinds of dance classes. New regular users include Woodcraft Folk (an activity group for children), and Shimmy School (a musical exercise group for older adults).

In summary, the hall has provided a space for:

- cultural events, allowing communities to gather and maintain their cultural ties
- the pursuit of good health by exercise classes, dancing, and mindful physical activity
- singing and making music by choirs, bands and musicians
- study and learning through classes and talks, for example Walkley Edge Artists
- creativity in writing, artwork and crafts

- fun time: parties and family gatherings
- regular themed coffee mornings enabling fellowship and fundraising for charities such as Macmillan Cancer Support, the Gurkhas and Christian Aid
- celebration of key life events, 'significant' birthday and anniversary and baptism parties, and a party to celebrate the renewal of wedding vows,

The hall continues to be a venue for events run by groups other than the church, such as an Art Show during Walkley Festival, a Horticultural Show in late August. The hall was also used twice as a Polling Station: for the local elections in May and the General Election in July.

Following on from the successful Christmas Market in 2023, three large scale community events were held in the hall and church in partnership with the Walkley Forum and Festival: Art in the Aisles, a two day event in May featuring work from local artists, the Festival Makers Market in June and the Christmas Market in December. These were hugely popular, attracting over 1200 people during the day, and have undoubtedly increased the profile of the community hall as a local venue.

The popularity of the hall has led to some increased wear and tear; repairs have been carried out to the hall steps and some internal doors hinges have been replaced. General housekeeping maintenance tasks this year focussed on clearing storage areas, and a spring clean of the kitchen.

Friends of Walkley Cemetery Report

Written by Hilary Evans, Friends of Walkley Cemetery

Updates and 2024 Review

2024 has been a busy year in the Cemetery and one of change in the Friends Committee following the sad passing of Bill Grey our Chair and the stepping down of Carol Grey as Treasurer. They are both greatly missed, and we are very grateful for all their hard work over the years. Many thanks also to Sylvia Barker for her continued work managing the war graves and regular strimming and Mark Townsend who will continue as liaison with the Community Payback Team.

Workdays

These continue to be held on the second Saturday of the month from 10.00am to 2.00pm. Work has included the following: bramble clearance – focussing on the lower area of the cemetery, managing spread of invasive plant species - Himalayan balsam and bracken bashing, strimming and keeping paths open and clear of vegetation. We recently had to remove the old boardwalk as it had become unsafe.

Many thanks to our regular support from North Sheffield Conservation Volunteers.

Many thanks also to the Community Payback Team who have done a great job clearing vegetation from areas of graves and general tidying.

New Container

As a result of Bill Grey's dedicated work, and support from St Mary's Church, our new storage container was installed in July. This means we can keep tools and equipment on site. The container will be timber clad, in line with planning permission, once we have secured quotes.

Management Plan

We have been working on a management plan to guide the Friends work and activities in the Cemetery. We know how many people enjoy the peace and contact with nature the cemetery provides. It is an important wildlife habitat as well as a burial site with local historic and cultural value. Therefore, the proposed vision for the plan is:

Walkley cemetery will be a haven for local wildlife and people, where the function of the site as a cemetery is respected and its history is celebrated.

Cemetery Tours and Remembrance Day

The annual Remembrance Day tour took place on Sunday 10th November. Crosses were placed on all war graves and Irving kindly played the Last Post on the harmonica.

We have had good feedback from visitors to the stories and information displayed on key graves on workdays. Thanks to Hugh Waterhouse for producing these.

Mapping and Locating Graves

Hugh has continued to help relatives locate graves and map areas of graves after vegetation clearance work.

Publicity

We have a new Instagram feed [@walkleycemetery](#) to complement our Facebook page, and we've found the keys to the Cemetery notice board! Look out for posts and posters about workday and events.

Bell Ringing Report

Written by Pete McCoy, Tower Captain and Steeple Keeper

It is now over 20 years since I first came to St Marys Walkley and got the bells ringable after 16 years of nothing and decades of the bells being the hardest ring of bells in South Yorkshire. In 2004 that was the start of a four-phase plan.

- Phase one was to get them ringable
- Phase two was taking on a full project to rehang and remodel the bells.
- Phase three start teaching a band and set the basics up.
- Phase four carrying on that band with a lasting legacy, you could say a lifetime's work.

Yes, we have had highs and lows over the years, ringers come and some move on, some then come back. Its life! However, at the centre is a core of ringers that keep

things together and ever since 2004 we have always had very strong links with Sheffield Universities Guild of Change Ringers (SUGCR) who support the ringing. Their home tower is St Marie's Cathedral, but we have at Walkley been a second home to them for two decades.

Back in 2004, the year we first tested the bells, the NUA (Northern Universities Association of Bellringers annual event) was held in Sheffield. So, I felt it quite fitting that we marked that 20th anniversary weekend this November by hosting the NUA with SUGCR. About 80 young adults who are future of "The Exercise" came to Walkley to ring bells, compete in striking competitions, and have fun. As they were all dancing a ceilidh, I quietly watched from the balcony with a small content smile thinking about the last 20 years with all the joys and tears. It had all been worth it. So here's to ringing at Walkley for the next 20 years and beyond. Phase four should always be unfinished business

For the NUA competition, Sheffield won on home soil, and we put in a fun competition as an extra, with teams having 7 minutes to learn and ring their 'method' (Bellringers word for a tune). A tough challenge set by the Judges Peter McCoy and Erica Oram.

During 2024 at Walkley, the standard and amount of ringing returned to pre pandemic levels and things have very much improved. Practice nights have been very busy with on average around 16 ringers taking it in turn to ring, including many from the University, returning ringers and new people learning the basics and starting out in their bell ringing career. Our band of ringers range from the age of 12 to people in their 80s.

In July one of our ringers, Sophie, represented Yorkshire in the National Youth contest held in the City of London. She conducted the 6 bell band in the Call changes section and got to ring at some of the city's churches including St Mary le Bow famous for Bow Bells.

Quarter peals are being rung in the traditional Sunday lunch time slot: 30 Quarters being scored in 2024. They each last about 45 minutes of non-stop ringing.

These have included 35 different ringers in the quarter peals and 8 different conductors. including first quarter peals for four of our ringers. We had one full peal in 2024 which was on the 29th February with 2 first pealers in the band.

In June, Walkley hosted the Sheffield branch striking competition. Rotherham won the main competition, but Walkley won the Call changes cup.

All this makes Walkley a successful bell tower where the ringers and church are at the forefront of the churches' mission to the community, during our very long phase four.

Thank you to everyone who has supported the bellringing at St Mary's Walkley in 2024.

Children's Work

Written by Oli Giles

We've started some regular children's work at St. Mary's in the form of [Diddy Disciples](#) (a structured and reputable source for children's work in the Church of England that mirrors the parts of the church service). We are currently running the Diddy Disciples sessions once a month, on the second Sunday of the month during the normal morning service.

There are 4 of us who run the sessions on a voluntary basis. We hold the sessions in St. Mary's hall, where we go during the first hymn, while the rest of the congregation continue with the service. We return to the church in time for the Eucharist.

The sessions themselves consist of singing (using well known common folk tunes), as well as the children participating in actions while a story from the bible is read. We do simple prayer actions to say sorry and pray for people. There is always a 'creative response' which mainly consists of colouring in templates. We close with a peace song while holding a piece of cloth.

Although we've only run 6 sessions so far, there has been generally good feedback, and over these 6 sessions we've had a total of 10 different children attend - some only once, but others on a regular basis.

In terms of other family-friendly activities, we have been part of the Mission Area Weekend - where there were some children's activities provided across both St. Mark's and St. Mary's. There has also been the Posada during Advent, which made a trip to St. Mary's Primary School. Of course, there's the almost weekly use of the Children's Corner at the back of church, and children playing musical instruments during the last hymn.

We hope to build on the progress we have made already, and continue to offer monthly sessions, perhaps building the frequency of these in future. We also plan to do further joint events with the other children and young people in the Mission Area.

St Mary's Academy Report

Written by Duncan Payne, Chair, Local School Board, St Mary's C of E Academy

Diocese of Sheffield Academies Trust Update

A change in leadership has taken place at The Diocese of Sheffield Academies Trust (DSAT) over the previous year following Andrew Waldron's departure as CEO. The role has been filled by Alison Adair, who had previously been DSAT's Deputy CEO.

Local School Board Update

The Local School Board (LSB) is still working to establish precisely how they should function and support the school, following the change implemented in the prior year, which moved from the governing body model to local school boards. It's quite a different way of working and is therefore taking some getting used to. The LSB

added to its membership over the last year following being joined by Debra Ball, a retired DSAT Headteacher. Debra is someone who both knows DSAT and has worked with the LSB model and so is in a great position to advise the LSB on how to support the school.

School Leadership

There has been a significant leadership change in the school over the past year. St Mary's had been operating a model in which it employed a full-time "Head of School" and an "Executive Headteacher" for a couple of days each week. The school, under DSAT's guidance, has returned to a model which no longer employs an Executive Head. This resulted in the appointment of Joy Burgess as Head Teacher ahead of the 2024 summer term. Joy joins us from Derbyshire, where she was working across a total of 3 different schools.

School & Church Contact

The school attended St Mary's Church for their Easter, Leavers and Harvest celebrations. In December 2024, the children shared a Christingle Service as part of the Christmas Festival. Bishop Pete, the Bishop of Sheffield, joined the Harvest Festival and shared the service with Revd Dr Matthew Rhodes.

Revd Dr Matthew Rhodes joined the Reception class, in July 2024, to help deliver the Christianity curriculum and work with the children. Revd Dr Matthew Rhodes met with Joy and Rebekah Binney (Assistant Headteacher) in January 2025 to look at ways forward with a view to developing additional ways of working together and starting to prepare school and staff for the next Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) assessment. Revd Dr Matthew Rhodes also now contributes to the weekly RISE newsletter to share the Christian message.

Structure, governance and management

Written by Vicky Romégoux, Churchwarden

Membership of the PCC

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. At St Mary's in 2024 the membership of the PCC consisted of the Associate Priest, Churchwardens and members elected by those members of the congregation who are on the Electoral Roll of the church. Each year, PCC aims to elect from its members: a Vice Chair, a Secretary, a Treasurer, Safeguarding Officer and an Electoral Roll Officer. This year we were able to elect a Treasurer and PCC Secretary, following the APCM. All those who attend our services are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and stand for election to the PCC.

The PCC members are responsible for making decisions on all matters of general concern and importance to the parish including deciding on how the funds of the PCC are to be spent. PCC aims to provide an induction for new members, aided by new online course materials from St Peter's College (which supports lay training in the diocese).

PCC met a total of six times during the year; for the first time since the pandemic these were all face to face meetings. The Decisions by Correspondence procedure (introduced in the new Church Representation Rules) was used for a limited number of formal decisions to enable decision making by all members in between meetings where timeliness was paramount.

After the resignation of Sue Hammersley (Priest in Charge) in January, meetings were supported by Matthew (Associate Priest) and chaired by the Lay Chair David Clark. Standing Committee members continued to find the facility to meet remotely via Google Meet especially helpful, given the number of meetings that are required to be present at as well as PCC.

Annual Parochial Church Meeting

The Annual Parochial Church Meeting took place on 17 March 2024. The meeting took place in church following the service and was chaired by the Associate Priest, Revd Matthew Rhodes.

Election of PCC Members

There were four vacancies on the PCC, as Lynette Jackson, Alexandra Thackeray and Jeff Boyd had come to the end of their terms of office and Oliver Giles tendered his resignation. Lynette Jackson and Alexandra Thackeray offered to stand for a further three years and were re-elected without opposition. The meeting expressed gratitude to all PCC members: outgoing, continuing and new, especially Jeff Boyd, who had been the longest standing PCC member, having served for over 30 years.

Election of Churchwardens

The election of Churchwardens took place at the Meeting of Parishioners, which immediately precedes the APCM.

The model adopted in 2022 by which one Churchwarden was supported by two assistants was felt to have worked well and it was decided to continue in 2024. The waiver of the six-year term is continued, while noting that this will not be sustainable in the longer term. Vicky Romégoux was duly re-elected as Churchwarden for a further year. For 2024, it was agreed that Vicky would be supported by two assistant Churchwardens. Both Janet Elsdén and Alexandra Thackeray therefore agreed to continue in these roles.

Committee and Subgroups

Given its wide responsibilities, the PCC has a number of committees and subgroups each dealing with a particular aspect of parish life.

Standing Committee

This committee traditionally consists of (ex officio) our Minister(s), the Churchwarden, the two assistant Churchwardens, the Vice Chair of PCC, and the PCC Secretary. Membership also includes our Parish Safeguarding Officer (Catherine Burchell), and one of the Deanery Representatives (Janet Elsdén). It meets between PCC meetings to set the agenda and transacts business to the extent authorised by the Church Representation Rules. Since the APCM in 2009, the Standing Committee has also been responsible for the wider issues of stewardship,

human resources and how we should be looking after each other as well as our buildings.

Worship Group

This group consists of our minister(s); Katharine Boyd, one of our Lay Readers; our musician Catherine Burchell, who is also a Lay Reader; Janet Elsdon, Assistant Churchwarden and David Clark, Vice Chair of the PCC and Lay Reader. Its remit includes the review and preparation of liturgy, including seasonal orders of service and special occasions, as well as assembling the various rotas necessary to our worship.

Finance Group

The Standing Committee has taken on the role of finance group, acting collectively as the Treasurer by monitoring our income and expenditure in liaison with our bookkeeper.

Fabric Committee

This committee consists of Vicky Romégoux, Pete McCoy, Alexandra Thackeray and David Clark and Revd Dr Matthew Rhodes. It attends to the stewardship of the Church buildings and fabric. It operates by correspondence with meetings scheduled when required.

Hall Committee

This committee consists of Vicky Romégoux, Janet Elsdon, plus Lynette Jackson, Joyce Gambling, Alexandra Thackeray and David Clark (Treasurer). This committee manages the bookings and finances and aims to make best use of St Mary's Walkley Community Hall for church and community.

The following groups have a membership extending beyond PCC members:

Events and Fundraising Committee

This committee consists of Joyce Gambling, Lynette Jackson, and by invitation Helen Vause.

Social Action and Charitable Giving Committee

This committee consists of Joyce Gambling, and Lynette Jackson

Friends of Walkley Cemetery

The Friends aim to improve access to and use of Walkley Cemetery and maintain and promote its heritage. PCC appointed the following people to liaise with the Friends Group on behalf of the church: Joyce Gambling, Vicky Romégoux and Pete McCoy (for risk assessment). Membership also includes (ex officio) Revd Dr Matthew Rhodes.

These committees and subgroups are all responsible to the PCC and report back to it regularly. Where decisions are such as need to be recorded, their Minutes are received by the full PCC and discussed as necessary.

Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure

Written by Catherine Burchell, Parish Safeguarding Officer

St Mary's PCC is complying with the Clergy Discipline and Safeguarding Measure (2016).

Catherine Burchell continues as the Parish Safeguarding Officer with support from the Churchwarden team. DBS administration continues to be covered by the Parish Administrator at St John's, Ranmoor, for which we are grateful.

Our Parish Safeguarding Policy is reviewed and updated annually and can be found on our website. Those hiring the hall or church are required either to have their own safeguarding policy (if they work with children or vulnerable adults), or to sign up to ours.

Use of the Parish Safeguarding Dashboard is now mandatory. This is an online tool with a traffic-light system designed to help churches ensure all policies are regularly reviewed and updated, all procedures have been followed when recruiting people to paid posts and volunteer roles and relevant safeguarding training is kept up to date for those who need it. This is our second year using the dashboard, and towards the end of 2024 we had achieved sufficient green lights on the initial level to proceed to the second tier of questions.

Everyone can play a part in ensuring St Mary's is a place where all are treated with dignity and respect, and those most vulnerable in particular, are kept safe. Good practice is continually evolving as times change, and you may notice new systems being put in place to ensure this is maintained. Sometimes this will mean doing things in a different way to how they were done in the past, but there are good reasons behind any changes.

Anyone from St Mary's may complete Basic Awareness training (available online). The course is informative, thought-provoking and well worth doing. PCC members are also required to complete Foundation level and Awareness of Domestic Abuse training. Some other roles require further training at Leadership level. During 2024 several people worked hard to bring their training up to date.

Safeguarding support continues to be provided by the Diocese, and this has been valued. Catherine was unable to attend this year's Celebration of Parish Safeguarding Officers day in Doncaster but plans to attend the one in Sheffield in 2025.

Administrative Information

St Mary's Church is situated in Walkley, Sheffield. It is part of the Diocese of Sheffield within the Church of England.

Correspondence

Correspondence can be sent:

- by email to pccsecretary@stmaryswalkley.co.uk
- by post to: St Mary's Church, Howard Road, Sheffield, S6 3RX

The PCC is a body corporate (PCC Powers Measure 1956, Church Representation Rules 2006) and a charity currently excepted from registration with the Charity Commission.

PCC members who have served at any time from 1st January 2024 until the date this report was approved are:

Ex Officio members:

- Priest in Charge: The Rev Sue Hammersley (Chair of PCC)***
- Associate Priest: The Rev Canon Dr Matthew Rhodes
- Churchwarden: Vicky Romégoux:
- Deanery Synod Representatives: David Clark* (re-elected 2023)
Janet Elsdon** (re-elected 2023)

**Also Lay Reader and Vice Chair of PCC*

***Also Assistant Churchwarden*

**** Resigned January 2024*

Elected PCC members

- Catherine Burchell, PSO and Lay Reader (elected May 2022 for 3 years)
- Joyce Gambling (re-elected March 2023, for 3 years)
- Lucy Harrison (elected March 2023 for 3 years)
- Carol Hawke (elected May 2022 for 3 years) *
- Lynette Jackson (re-elected March 2024 for 3 years)
- Pete McCoy (re-elected May 2022 for 3 years)
- Alexandra Thackeray, Assistant Churchwarden (re-elected March 2024 for 3 years)

** Resigned July 2024*

There is one vacancy for a two year appointment and three vacancies for three year appointments.

Approved by the PCC on _____ and signed on their behalf by:

Acknowledgments

The following individuals contributed to the writing and editing of this report:

- Katharine S Boyd
- Catherine Burchell
- David Clark
- Janet Elsdon
- Joyce Gambling
- Oliver Giles
- Lucy Harrison

- Lynette Jackson

- Beth Keith
- Pete McCoy
- Matthew Rhodes
- Vicky Romégoux
- Alexandra Thackeray

Thanks also go to all members of the St Mary's Walkley, Parochial Church Council

Appendix: The Church on the Road

At the beginning of 2019, the PCC adopted a new Mission Statement, identifying St Mary's as: The Church on the Road: Inclusive, Eucharistic, a safe place to be with God. As Melanie FitzGerald, Priest in Charge and then incumbent at St Mary's from December 2002 to February 2020, described in the parish magazine:

"St Mary's is very obviously a church on the road; so close to the road that people do not notice that we are there. Many people walk, ride and drive past. We stand here for them all: people of faith, people on the edge of faith, and people of no faith. Some will stop here for a moment, visiting the church or the hall."

They come in to rest for a while on their journey of life. Everything that happens here (hall and church) is rejuvenating; coffee, art, dance and of course spiritual refreshment in the church, which is a place of memories and silent prayer.

They may join us for worship in Holy Communion, praise and thanksgiving. This is refreshment for the spiritual life with prayers of thanks for the help that we have received and prayers for help as we leave, with prayers for others who journey too. "We are an inclusive place of hospitality for weary travellers on the journey of life.

Some will stumble into this place lost or in need of healing, battered and wounded. They will usually stay much longer for the safety and healing that the church on the road can offer. Here, like the monasteries of old, inner wounds can be tended, as the battered one turns to God for help and finds, or re-finds their faith, and starts to see that Jesus travels with them on their journey.

Here, they will receive the map of faith and learn how to read it; here, they will regain inner strength and become part of the community of the faithful for a while.

Here, they will find healing and grow in strength and when the time comes for them to leave we will wave them off with our blessings and prayers as they travel on, now lit up with the light of Christ within them.

We are a place of healing and teaching the faith to help those who journey find their way. There are those who have always been here, part of the community, and those who are called to join us and work with us to keep the church on the road as a place for others to come: the cleaners, coffee makers, welcomers, bookkeepers, those who sit and wait with the doors open, those who pray, teach and preach, those who are stewards of the Baptism and Eucharist.

All of us who try to be gracious and generous to everyone who comes to this place of hospitality to keep it as a safe place to be with God. It can be hard at times, being there for others, but for those who are called this church on the road is our journey, living as a holy community, worshipping God and engaging in the mission of God in this place; open to all who come, like the monasteries of old but living and working in the world as well. We (the people) keep this safe place (the building) to be with God so that anybody may come, some to visit, some to stay and get help, some who are called to stay in the service of this: the church on the road.