**Anglican, Methodist & URC Community**

**St Augustine of Canterbury Church**

**North Springfield, Chelmsford**

**Reports including the financial report for the 2025 AGM**



**Information**

**Ministers:**

Currently in interregnum.

**Church Officers:**

Church Warden – Val Jellows

Church Warden – Janet Matthams

Church Steward, Methodist Church – Doug Hayton

Church Steward, Methodist Church – Pamela Scammell

**PCC Members** (in addition to the Ministers and Officers listed above) who have served during the year

Treasurer – Carolyn Smith – co-opted

Church Council Secretary – Deborah Wilkes – lay rep.

Safeguarding Officers – Val Jellows & Carolyn Smith

Cristian Bora – Deanery Synod rep

Simon Carpenter – lay rep.

Ben Torkornoo – lay rep.

Helen Leverett – lay rep.

Jenny Murphy – lay rep.

Nicole Wilson – lay rep.

Methodist Circuit rep. (ex officio) – Nigel Murrell

Bank:

National Westminster PLC

4-5 High Street

Chelmsford

CM1 1FZ

Independent Financial Examiner:

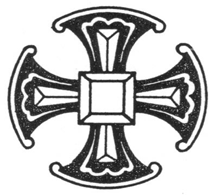
Mary Betley

Yew Tree Barn

Pleshey

St Augustine of Canterbury Church is situated in St Augustine Way, North Springfield, Chelmsford. It is part of the diocese of Chelmsford within the Church of England. It is part of an ecumenical partnership shared between the Roman Catholic Church; Church of England; Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church.

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) is a charity exempted from registration with the Charity Commission.

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**St Augustine of Canterbury, North Springfield**

**Reports for 2024 APCM**

**Update on the Life of the Church** - Val Jellows and Janet Matthams

Since the last AGM we have wished Revd Caroline Brown a fond farewell as she started her retirement. We had a weekend of celebration with a fun and energetic Barn Dance on the Saturday followed by a farewell service on the Sunday attended by friends, colleagues and the church family.

Therefore, since last June, St Augustine’s has been in an interregnum and whilst it understandable to feel anxious and maybe despondent, as we look back over this time, we felt we should look at the good things that have been happening in our church and be grateful for the team that makes it happen.

Church services have continued in their usual pattern, and it is a privilege to welcome visiting clergy to take Communion services. The Team at St Augustine’s have also played their role by giving talks, preparing services or working together on services:

At Christmas we held a Christingle service with the Brownies and Beavers taking part; a thoughtful Blue Christmas service, and the Crib Service which saw young and old dressed as Nativity characters and there was even a Star present! The annual Joint Carol service with the Roman Catholic community was also a delight with candles adding to the atmosphere.

At Easter, the prayerful service of the Stations of the Cross and the Maundy Thursday Communion were held and the Easter Sunday service was a joy seeing a larger number of people in the church than usual. Many of our congregation joined with the Walk of Witness and the outreach in the High Street

on Good Friday.

We have a good relationship with the Indian Orthodox church who are now meeting after our service on 3 Sundays per month.

During this time of a vacancy, we have aimed to be more prayerful. The Interregnum Prayer is now usually said every week in church and copies are available for parishioners to use at home. For some months we had a weekly zoom session called Pause for Prayer which invited people to pray for the church, the community and people in need of prayer. Although this is not currently happening, it may be started again in the Autumn. At Easter we held a Lent course continuing the theme from last year about How to Pray which people found helpful.

Your churchwardens took part in a Methodist Bible study course based on John’s I am statements and in January attended an Anglican Renewal Day at Waltham Abbey which was inspiring despite how freezing cold it was in the Abbey!

Children’s work is continuing with Rainbow Tots meeting on a Friday and Team Rainbow on a Sunday, both during term time. Charlotte Tew continues to coordinate youth work with neighbouring parishes. Our Messy churches during half term holidays attract a good number of children and much fun with some

learning about God does take place. However, there is a slight concern that the number of children attending Sunday Worship with their parents does seem to have declined and we pray for an increase in this area.

Our outreach and social activities continue to see some growth. The Craft and Chat is thriving, and the Games Evening is gaining new members. The B&B continues to meet and with Jenny’s plan there have been some interesting discussions. The Springfield wombles are back in action litter picking locally on a weekly basis, and groups of parishioners have done gardening sessions both around the church and in the Vicarage garden.

The Little Free Pantry is now regularly used by families and people in our community. Pam was able to secure a couple of grants which various people from our community and the Catholic community have used to help with buying supplies. And it is lovely to have occasional thank you letters or comments from people who have used the pantry. The St Francis Pop up food bus now also comes every Thursday during term time and some of our parishioners help with giving people refreshments and a time to chat.

This year Revd Mark Pengelly who was the Superintendent of the Methodist circuit decided to take on another role in Bath. He was a regular preacher at St Augustine’s as was his wife, Sheridan. Before he left the area he had been helping with pastoral visits and some work in school. Doug Hayton and Val Jellows attended his leaving service and expressed how much we at St Augustine’s valued his contributions.

There have been various fundraising activities:

 Summer Fun Day and the Christmas Bazaar – which together raised over £800 and it was lovely to have the support of the Bishops School choir at Christmas.

 The Barn Dance and Harvest Supper

 Quiz Night for our Lent appeal which raised £350 for our charity Action for Family Carers

Finally, before we conclude here are a few other things that have happened this year:

 Cristian and Val received their certificates from Bishop Adam of Bradwell at the Cathedral for completing the Christian Studies Course.

 Cristian was accepted as an Ordinand and has started his course but is currently worshipping more at All Saints church, which is a stipulation of his course.

 Janet hosted in September the Ride and Stride for Essex where cyclists ride to various churches to raise money to help church buildings.

 The church was given a CollectaTin from the Chelmsford Diocese. This enables people to pay by card or contactless.

Finally, our church may be small, but it is full of faithful welcoming people who are willing to work as a team to ensure that we can serve God and the local community. We started by saying we are now in an interregnum, and we are grateful to those who helped contribute towards the Parish Profile last July. Although the Vacancy is now being advertised for the third time, we must live in hope that the Holy Spirit is working to guiding the right person to apply for the post at St Augustine’s.

We are very grateful for all the work and help everyone gives and please take time to read this report and be thankful for God’s blessings at St Augustine**.**

**Fundamentals**

**Electoral Roll –** Doug Hayton

Every sixth year there is a legal obligation on all Anglian churches to prepare a new church electoral roll. 2025 is a sixth year and so preparation of a new roll began with written notice being given on 16 March 2025. The new roll was published on 30 April by affixing the list of members’ names to the front door of the

church. The final number of members enrolled will be given at the Annual General Meeting (AGM)

Being a member of the roll entitles you to attend and vote at meetings of the church especially the AGM. It is also a good indicator of the health of the church in terms of at least maintaining, if not growing, the number of members on it. If you are not on the roll and would like to be, don’t worry- you can join at any time after the AGM on 18 May.

**GDPR –** Doug Hayton

We carried out a thorough review of our Data Protection Policy and our Privacy Notice in Summer 2024 to made necessary amendments to ensure that both documents complied with recent amendments to the relevant legislation. The Privacy Notice is the public facing notice and sets out the rights of data subjects

(people whose personal data we hold as data holders/users) to see and request that their data be amended or deleted. Failure to do so, where it is justified, can result in a complaint being made to the national Information Commissioner’s Office who have power to impose fines where a breach of the legislation has occurred. It is, therefore, vital that data holders hold personal data in a secure manner to prevent any unauthorised misuse.

**Report on the Fabric of St Augustine of Canterbury** - Val Jellows

This year the JMC have met infrequently as sometimes several people are unable to attend the meeting. However, we have discussed the quinquennial report in principle and a report on the safety and security of the building. Unfortunately, the accounts have not been submitted regularly, and this has been a cause for concern. There continues to be a delay in the sharing agreement which is concerning as the ownership of the building is about to be transferred to the Roman Catholic community.

**Safeguarding –** Carolyn Smith

Val Jellows and Carolyn Smith are joint Parish Safeguarding Officers (PSO). We remain mindful of what has happened in the past and current concerns and will be following diocesan guidance on recruitment and risk assessment of church activities. Safeguarding is considered within church council.

Enhanced DBS checks are requested for everyone who is eligible. We are required to renew a DBS check every 3 years and people will be invited to renew as and when appropriate. DBS checks are required for all clergy, members of church council and certain others depending on their role in the church. Carolyn is lead recruiter on this and can be contacted if people have any queries.

Safeguarding training is mandatory for clergy, members of church council and people in certain roles where they are in contact with children or vulnerable adults. This is available online through the diocese or face to face if required. Please contact Carolyn or Val and we will help facilitate this.

We would encourage anyone who has concerns about the safety or welfare of a child or adult to contact us. Contact details are available on the website and church notice board and to ensure confidentiality a dedicated mobile phone has been purchased for this purpose and the number for this phone is 07729746842. Anyone ringing this is invited to either leave a voicemail message or send a text.

**Statistics for Mission** – Val Jellows

Attached to this report is the Statistic for Mission summary which gives an overview of what has been happening last year and preceding years. It is worth mentioning that sometimes what appears to be improved or decreased figures is sometimes a result of which dates are covered by the question. Also, for the second part of 2024 the church has been in vacancy plus 2023 was unusual as the figures include services for the 40th Anniversary.

In summary

 Attendance – if we ignore the anomaly for 2023 (40th Anniversary) the attendance figures have remained roughly the same which is reassuring during our vacancy.

 Worshipping Communities – a very slight increase. These are people who would consider themselves as part of St Augustine’s and attend possibly about once a month.

 Usual Sunday Attendance – this continues to be about 20 although in recent months the number of children attending has dropped.

 Average weekly attendance in October. – Whilst there have been fewer children on a Sunday, during October the school services which happen once a week dominate our figures.

 Baptism, marriage and funerals. Last year we had 2 baptisms and no weddings or funerals.

 Electoral Roll – continues to stay the same**.**

**Youth & Children’s Work**

**Messy Church –** Pamela Scammell

Messy Church takes place on the Wednesday of each half term, 2-4pm.

A regular group of volunteers help with activities in the hall or preparing snacks. We follow the same routine of activities around the hall followed by a short worship in the front of the church, then a light snack. In the past year the themes have been - ‘God’s Wonderful World’ & Patterns in Nature, ‘Come Fishing’, Jesus calls His disciples and Daniel in the Lion’s Den.

**Rainbow Tots –** Grace Carey

Springfield Rainbow Tots meet in the Church Hall, on Friday mornings during term-time from 9:30 - 11:30am Providing a small meeting place for local parents and carers to socialise and bring their little ones to play, the group caters for children aged from Birth up to school age. A home corner, cars, tent and tunnel,

tuff tray activity, dolls, books, puzzles and a baby corner are regularly on offer and the children have enjoyed a variety of crafts each week with activities such as play dough, biscuit decorating, painting, colouring and making cards. We have a blessing and a prayer each week at the end of the session along with a story, singing songs and nursery rhymes.

The group was originally set up in December 2023 by local mums, (Thank you, you know who you are). We have amazing help from our volunteers Pam and Deborah and Simon each week. We often get some other people who may help us in the kitchen if we need cover. With generous donations of toys and equipment from the local community and support from St Augustine's church, together with the Church leasing the hall to us on a regular basis. One of our favourite events is the Christmas party children loved it, and it was such a lovely event. This is our second event now which has sold out. We have also had a leavers party and picnic at the end of July where the children that are leaving and going to school in September, are given a children's Bible as a goodbye gift which is really appreciated by the children. This is supported by the Church, and we are very grateful for that.

The group is going well with some families regularly coming on a weekly basis and every week we welcome new members of the community who we support and direct to different areas if they need it. What is lovely is hearing from our new members. Recently we had a member come and tell us they asked their child " what was the best party of your day”, and the child replied "Rainbow Tots " and their parent then asked them "what was the worst part of your day” and the child responded " leaving Rainbow Tots". Hearing things like this, make volunteering to help support the community and children and families have a safe space totally worth every minute of it.

We meet Fridays (term-time only) 9.30 am – 11.30 am in the Church small hall.

£1:50 donation suggested per family including drinks and snacks/biscuits. Allergies are catered for.

**School Liaison -** Jenny Murphy

During our interregnum, I have taken on the role of liaising with our two local primary schools (The Bishops’ School and Springfield Primary School) in order to maintain close contact.

I met with Greg Waters in July to introduce myself as the contact person and was able to give him dates of our church’s special events for the Autumn term. Since Rev Caroline left, Father Harvey and Sally Croft (All Saints) have been helping with leading school assemblies and school services in church. As a church school and with Greg a lay preacher, the Bishops’ School is able to manage most RE activities ‘in house’. Nevertheless, I keep in touch and Greg tries to support our church events, e.g. providing singers for our Christmas fair.

Springfield Primary School welcomed Rev Caroline on many occasions and when I contacted them to offer my help, with any religious education, they were keen to invite me into school. I visited a reception class to help with their Harvest Topic and shared their home-made vegetable soup. Later in the term, two year one

classes asked me to visit them in school to talk about the Christmas story and they were keen to sing some carols to me. This term, the year one classes wanted to visit church and learn about the importance of the cross symbol and to hear the Easter story. The visit was successful and each child was given a palm cross to

take home. We send fliers and posters to the school to advertise our special services and events. We know of at least one family who came to our crib service as a result of this.

**Team Rainbow –** Pamela Scammell

This has been a shared responsibility this year, with Deborah, Pamela, Nicole, Ross, Gillian, Charlotte and Jenny all taking sessions. Gillian organised a Nativity play which all the children took part in as well as their parents which was very well received and the children enjoyed performing.

The number of children who attend still varies from six to zero. We really need some more Team Rainbow helpers as Deborah and Pamela are both travelling a lot this year.

**Teen Worship** – Charlotte Tew

Whilst there has been a noticeable reduction in numbers of young people aged 11-18 regularly attending St Augustines’ in recent months, we do still have one or two attending on an ad hoc basis. Two were involved with readings at the recent Mothering Sunday service which they enjoyed.

Some children from our church have started attending the youth group at North Springfield Baptist church. This was set up in September 2023 and started with very few members but has now expanded a bit with an average of 15 members attending on a monthly basis.

The group is open to anyone, although we do always let members know it is a Christian Youth Group. It is made up of a mixture of social time/playing games and Christian themed conversation with different young people now taking turns to lead a short prayer which is nice to see. Recently we have watched ‘Hope Explored’ which lead to some interesting discussions.

The leaders were also recently successful in obtaining a grant of around £1200, some of which has been put towards a new table tennis table amongst other things.

We are hoping to organise a joint activity day in the summer with other Church youth groups in he local area. Another joint initiative is ‘Fellowship Afloat’ which Steve Reddings from St Andrews is organising. 25 young people are coming from various youth groups so it will be a good chance to network. Our young people are unable to join this year for various reasons but I am going along to get a feel for things and hopefully encourage our young people to go next year on a weekend that more can manage. It’s a mixture of outdoor activities such as sailing, high ropes, and fellowship and fun, so hopefully will be a good weekend.

We would be grateful for your continued prayers as this group develops – and if anyone is keen has young people they feel might enjoy it, do get in touch. The group meets the first Friday of the month 6.30-8.30 pm.

**Deepening Discipleship**

**Bible & Beverage-** Janet Matthams

We are a small outreach group, open to anyone but usually husbands come from time to time. Meeting at the Endeavour Pub, Springfield Road 7.30-9.30 pm in the small side room, which is reserved for us, with table and chairs. Each month the programme is based on the Bible and topical for the time of the year. Sometimes there is a quiz. Discussion and arguments ensue and bible references are looked up on Google. Jenny has prepared a programme card, six monthly. The latest one is April to September. Cristian was one of the founders and still comes when his studies allow.

**Lent Group –** Val Jellows

For the Lent course this year we used a study guide produced by the Diocese of Lincoln called Teach us to pray. It was divided into 5 sessions which were held on a Sunday evening. Numbers varied but about 8 people took part. There were some very thoughtful discussions and help given to enrich our prayer life.

**Community Outreach**

**Cherish –** Deborah Wilkes

Cherish is held once a month, on Zoom, and is much appreciated by those who attend. Since Rev. Caroline’s departure Deborah leads a service, or we listen to a recorded URC service or sometimes we listen to Evensong. There is usually a short time after the formal session to catch up on any important news. All are welcome so perhaps other church members would like to join us.

**Craft and chat –** Val Jellows

Our Craft and Chat group continues to thrive and is now held twice a month. The people who attend varies and in recent weeks new members have joined, so we regularly have ten or more people. Some come to do knitting or craft work whilst others just come to chat. Sometimes we have cake (thank you Carolyn) and tea/coffee is always available.

**Fundraising including charity fundraising –** Pamela Scammell

A fund raising Quiz was held during Lent in aid of ‘Action for Family Carers’. This was a success and raised £350. A Christmas Bazaar and Summer Fete raised in excess of £500, eachtowards Church funds. At Christmas we held a Christingle service and donations at the service were given to ‘The Children’s Society’.

**Games Evening –** Deborah Wilkes

Games evening continues on the last Monday evening of the month from 7-9pm. We enjoy playing the more traditional board games like ‘Frustration’ and ‘Boggle’ as well as modern games. Thanks to Grant for introducing us to some quick, modern games. You do not need to worry that you do not know the rules as they are all explained as we go along. We most often play one game altogether and adapt a game for four players and play it with ten. Occasionally, we split into two groups and play separate games, but we always share a drink and something chocolate – unless it is Lent. All welcome and bring along your favourite game.

**Litter Picking – Pamela Scammell**

Litter pickingwas paused when the clocks went back because it was too dark. Now the clocks are on BST, we have resumed most Tuesdays, 6-7pm, meeting at the Church car park. There are between 2 and 6 regular helpers who enjoy a walk and chat while picking up litter. Anyone who would like to join us would be most welcome**.**

**Progressive Christianity Network (PCN) –** Jenny Murphy

The Progressive Christianity Network group convenes once a month via Zoom; meeting on-line being more convenient to most members. Our group is affiliated to PCN Britain and we are one of four groups which meet regularly in the East of England district. We have twenty-three people on the mailing list (eight of whom come from St Augustine’s) and our average monthly attendance is ten. We are a group of people from a variety of faiths and none.

Our programme over the past year has been to examine the book ‘The Fourth Gospel’ by John Shelby Spong. Having studied quite a few books recently we decided to have a change and since December we have been sharing our individual statements of belief and inviting discussion on differing views.

We were very sorry to learn of the death, in September, of a regular member, David Dickens. A former Methodist minister, David had a deep-searching and enquiring faith and his erudite comments at our meetings are sadly missed.

**The Little Free Pantry –** Pamela Scammell

The Little Free Pantry is continuing to be used regularly by local people. Local residents and members of the Ecumenical church, and the Catholic congregation contribute towards replenishing it and checking it is being used properly. We were successful in applying for a grant to be spent on the provision of food for families with children and for individuals from across the Essex County Council authority. Individuals from both churches spent the money on food and toiletries, and it will gradually be put into the pantry when needed. We thank Springfield library for being a collection point.

**Ecumenical Work**

**Anglican Deanery Synod of Chelmsford –** Cristian Bora

During the past year, Deanery Synod has continued to meet regularly, bringing together people from churches across the Chelmsford area to share news, pray, and make decisions.

A major concern that came up at our meetings is the shortage of clergy in our area. Many churches now share a vicar, and some are without one altogether. This means it can be hard to hold Communion services regularly, especially during vacancies or busy times like Christmas and Easter. A motion was passed at Synod asking the Bishop to come and speak about whether lay people might be allowed to help more in these situations. It’s clear this is something affecting many churches locally.

We also talked a lot about money, how much we give, what it pays for, and what help is available.

Each year, every church is asked to contribute to the Parish Share. This money doesn’t just stay in one place. It helps fund the work of the Church across the diocese. Here's what it pays for:

* Our clergy: Their stipends (pay), pensions, national insurance, housing, council tax, water bills, and essential repairs to vicarages.
* Training new clergy: This includes ordinands (those training for ministry) and curates.
* Support services: Such as safeguarding officers, area deans, archdeacons, chaplains, and the diocesan office staff who help keep everything running.
* The national church: Some of our share goes to support church work across the country through the Church of England’s national bodies.
* Grants and support: A portion is used to help poorer parishes through the “Mutual Support Fund,” so churches that are struggling financially can still receive ministry and support.

In Chelmsford Deanery, we’ve done well. By October 2024, nearly 69% of our total Parish Share had been paid, better than many other deaneries. Some churches gave more than they were asked, while others gave what they could. The Share for 2025 has been calculated using new census figures, and churches have had a say in how it is shared out fairly.

At the February 2025 meeting, we were reminded that the Diocese has been spending more than it receives. That can’t continue. The message was not to feel guilty, but to be honest about what we can do with the resources God has given us. Churches are encouraged to be generous where possible and to talk together as deaneries about supporting one another.

There is help available. The Diocese has people who can advise on digital giving, Gift Aid, and applying for grants, whether for church repairs, mission projects, or environmental work. Some national church funding is also being made available to help churches become more welcoming, younger, and more diverse.

**Anglican North Chelmsford Ministry and Mission Partnership (MMP) –** Doug Hayton

Unfortunately, the MMP, which covers four urban and eight rural churches in the area, has not met during the past year. There are a number of reasons for this. First Bishop Guli has decided to take the Diocese in a different direction. While she had allowed successful MMPs to continue any meaningful decision making

powers have been taken back to the centre. Second there are just three full time stipendiary priests covering the twelve churches. One is full time at All Saints, Springfield, the second covers six rural churches and the third at St Mary and St Leonard, Broomfield and also the Chair of the MMP has been on long term sick leave.

It remains unclear when and if the MMP will meet again.

**Methodist Update –** Doug Hayton

The Methodist Church is governed nationally by what is called the Methodist Conference. Beneath this sits a number of districts each led by a Chair who is an experienced Methodist Minister. Each district is divided into a number of circuits which each contain several local churches. The Chelmsford Methodist Circuit sits

in the Beds, Essex and Herts District. A Superintendent minister has overall charge of all the churches in their circuit and is normally assisted by one or two other ordained ministers. A minister normally stays in a circuit for five or seven years and then moves on elsewhere. There is a matching process every year but like many other denominations the number of vacancies is significantly greater than the number of ministers wishing to move.

In September 2024 the Rev Asif Karim joined the Chelmsford circuit. The plan was that he would serve at Trinity Methodist Church in Chelmsford, the largest church in the circuit, enabling the Superintendent Minister, the Rev Mark Pengelly to spend more time working with other churches in the circuit. The minister based at Maldon, the Rev Barry Allen had already indicated thar he wished to retire in August 2025.

Things have not worked out according to plan. At the end of 2024 Rev Mark Pengelly gave three months notice that he intended to resign with effect from 31 March 2025 so that he could make a change of direction by taking up a hospital chaplaincy post in the Bath area. This potentially then meant that the Chelmsford

circuit would potentially be left with just one minister for the entire circuit.

I am pleased to say that a solution has been found. From April to September the District Chair, Rev Dr David Chapman, will also serve as Superintendent Minister for the Chelmsford Circuit. Rev Asif Karim will serve as minister to Trinity, Moulsham Lodge and Broomfield until September (the start of the Methodist year) when he will become the Superintendent Minister for the entire circuit and have particular responsibility for the Chelmsford churches including St Augustine’s. Asif already has experience of being a superintendent minister in the Romford area before he came to Chelmsford.

A replacement minister for Rev Barry Allen has been appointed. She is Rev Dr Jennifer Walters. She will be based in Maldon and serve at the churches in South Woodham Ferrers, Maldon, Hatfield Peverel, Witham and Halstead, a not insignificant geographical span.

In addition to the above application has been made to the Methodist Conference for two of the more experienced local preachers to be authorised to administerholy communion. This will enable all the churches in the circuit to have acommunion service with reasonable frequency which would simply not be possible with just two ministers.

**URC Update –** Deborah Wilkes

Our mission partnership which is currently known as Chelmsford and South West Essex Mission Partnership and includes us, Christ Church, Church of Our Saviour, Howe Greene, Ingatestone, Billercay, Hutton & Shenfield, Wickford, Grays, Basildon and Hockley is planning to celebrate its launch with a service on Saturday, 17th May, 3pm at Grays URC.

Val and Deborah have both attended a Communion training which was the first one that we have both attended in person as our initial one was on Zoom during Covid.

Deborah has also attended various meetings to work out the details, including finance, of our mission partnership.

**Accounts and Stewardship**

**Financial Review**

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| The financial statements show that despite the difficult economic climate which we are experiencing and going into an interregnum following Rev. Caroline's retirement in June, we managed to cover our costs and meet agreed commitments for 2024.  Total receipts on ordinary unrestricted funds were £27,696 (£20,694 in 2023) and total expenditure was £25,147 (£23,451 in 2023) which are detailed in the R& P account and attached notes. Whilst we were still not in a position to pay our parish share in full (£34,868 was assessment for 2024) we did pay the £16,500 which we had offered and which was an increase on 2023.  Although the accounts show an increase in both planned giving and loose plate collections which in turn contributed to an increase in the amount recovered from HMRC through gift aid and GASDS, it is important to note that there has also been a, not unexpected, drop in regular giving since Rev. Caroline retired. For this reason we did not make an additional contribution towards parish share for 2024, instead we opted to increase our offer for 2025 to £17,500 (full parish share assessment for 2025 is £35,787).  At the end of 2024 we had 13 donors signed up to the Parish Giving Scheme (PGS). This is provided through the Church of England and has the benefit of allowing donors to give anonymously if they wish and also decide on frequency of donations eg. monthly, quarterly, yearly or as a one off, and for the church gift aid is claimed monthly from HMRC on our behalf and there is no charge for administration. People are also able to make contactless payments through using a QR code or through SumUp. SumUp is especially useful for payments such as Banns and at fundraising events, although a small charge is made for this.  Various fundraising activities were held over the year raising a total of £2,935, so a very big thank you to everyone who organised, helped and supported these. In addition people are also able to to raise funds for us by registering with Easy Fundraising when shopping online at selected retailers (this includes Amazon, Sainsbury, Tesco Asda, Iceland etc). There are no additional costs for doing this. We currently have 15 people registered. Details of how to join are on the church website - http://staugustinespringfield.org.uk  The value of the CBF investment fund shares rose slightly over the year and interest rates meant that the amount we received from bank and investments was higher than 2023. Income from church activities such as banns and funerals was lower with only 2 sets of banns and no funerals or weddings.  A big thank you to Pam Scammell who secured two grants for the Little Free Pantry(LFP), one of £900 which had to be used by March 31st 2024 and a further grant of £1500 in December. These together with the generosity of everyone who donates to the LFP have enabled it to continue to help anyone in need. We have also made a donation of £100 towards the Food Bus which visits fortnightly.  Expenditure over the year was higher than budget with additional costs including purchase of a new projector ( we had previously used Rev. Caroline's) and placing an advert in the Church Times for the post of House for Duty. Even though there was no response to the initial advert we are able to re-advertise with no additional cost.  With regard to the honorarium for Mary Betley (Independent Examiner), Mary declined payment and was provided with a small gift instead.  The net result for 2024 was that both income and expenditure were higher than budgeted, despite a drop in income following Rev. Caroline's retirement. For 2025 there is a need to continue to show growth in both church community and financially, as this will work in our favour in seeking a new minister.  The total known balance on unrestricted funds at the year end (including cash, bank balances and investments at market value) amounted to £24,818 (2023 - £21,214) |
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**Reserves Policy**

The reserves policy of the Church Council has been reviewed. The Church Council aims to keep approximately three months general running costs in reserves. In addition CBF deposit fund (£3,571 at 31/12/24) to be restricted to cover emergency/unplanned building /maintenance costs.

The Church Council recognises its responsibility to increase its contribution towards paying parish share and gradually increase its contribution towards payment in full. Therefore monies remaining will normally be used to increase contribution to parish share and/or mission within the parish.

We will continue to maintain shares and investment in CBF Fund.

It is the policy of the Church Council to invest any unrestricted funds in excess of £10,000 with the CBF Church of England Funds. As we have yet to pay our parish share in full, no additional monies were invested, other than dividends and interest received in 2024.

Any other balances are invested in an ordinary deposit account with the National Westminster Bank plc.

The balance remaining at 31 December 2024 is after deducting appropriate income and expenditure.

Approved by the Church Council on 8th May 2025 and signed on their behalf by:

Signature: …………………………………….

Ms Val Jellows (Church Warden)

**Independent Examiner’s Report**

**to the Church Council of North Springfield, Chelmsford**

This report on the financial statements of the Church Council for the year ended 31st December 2024, which are set out on pages 15 to 20, is in respect of an examination carried out in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations 2006 (“the Regulations”) and section 43 of the Charities Act 1993 (“the Act”).

**Respective Responsibilities of the Church Council (CC) and the examiner**

As members of the CC you are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements. You consider that the audit requirement of the Regulations and section 43(2) of the Act do not apply. It is my responsibility to issue this report on those financial statements accounts in accordance with the terms of the Regulations.

**Basis of this report**

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 43 (7)(b) of the Act and to be found in the *Church Guidance*, 2006 edition. That examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the CC and a comparison of the accounts with those records. It also includes considering any unusual items or disclosures in the financial statements and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the view given by the financial statements.

Independent examiner’s statement

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

1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements

* to keep accounting records in accordance with section 41 of the Act; and
* to prepare financial statements, which accord with the accounting records and comply with the requirements of the Act and the Regulations have not been met; or

1. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the financial statements to be reached.

April 2025