



# Stewardship Sunday

27 April 2024



# Christian Stewardship



- **Basis:** We are all Stewards of God's Gifts, which are our's only through God's goodness
- Giving of **time, talents and money**...all important
- **Why** do we give?
  - Our response to God's love for us and to the gifts He has blessed us with
  - "For this service you perform not only meets the needs of God's people, but also produces an outpouring of grateful thanks to God." 2 Corinthians 9, v12
- **How** should we give?
  - Sacrificially, joyously
  - "Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." 2 Corinthians 9, v7
- **We are also Stewards of the rich resources God gives us within the natural world:**
  - He requires us to be responsible Stewards of His World – caring for the environment and using the earth's resources sustainably
  - We aspire by our actions and practices to be an Eco-Church (Sunday Supplement June 2<sup>nd</sup>)
  - This needs to permeate our entire lifestyle, not just at St Bene't's
- Likewise **Christian Stewardship** is broader than our giving of time, talents and money to St Bene't's – it **encompasses all we do in all aspects of our lives**, including how we support charities and aid organisations across the board.

# What do we want to achieve today?



- As St Bene't's moves towards the appointment of a new incumbent, for us to put together the commitment and the resources for a new and even better phase of its life.
- To mobilise the resources of the congregation so that these are ready and available to help our new vicar sustain and grow our ministry

To enable us to do this, the focus of today's session is:

- *To raise awareness of the needs and opportunities for participation by all in the worship and ministry of St Bene't's*
- *To make everyone aware of how St Bene't's' finances work and how to contribute in a way that suits your situation best.*
- *To encourage us all to review our own contributions to Christian Stewardship through St Bene't's and elsewhere*



## *The starting point for our Stewardship Discussion...*

St Bene't's has a very talented, committed and generous congregation.  
So **thank you** so much for

- your giving of time, talents and money to enable the ministry and mission of St Bene't's Church
- your past recognition of St Bene't's financial challenges and ambition
- so many of you signing up to the Parish Giving Scheme to give regularly and periodically review



# How do we use the time and talents of our congregation?

- In our daily services

- Servers
- Readers
- Intercessors
- Sacristy
- Flowers
- Evening Prayer leading and hosting
- NSM and PTO clergy



- Ministry to young people

- Young children
- Youth group
- 20s and 30s group

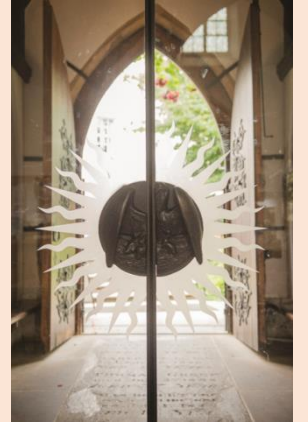


- With our hospitality and social life

- Coffee and after-service refreshments...fizz, biscuits and cake!
- Parish lunches and picnics
- Social Committee

- Church governance and management

- Parochial Church Council
- Standing Committee
- Safeguarding
- Committee work
  - Fabric, Mission, **Eco-Church...**
- Administration
- Communications



- Maintenance and cleaning work

- Repairs to fabric
- Cleaning the church and fabric

- Outreach and ministry in the world

- Pastoral care
- Homeless community, CCHP
- Besom and the marginalised
- Learning and formation (Study mornings...)



# The Challenges surrounding Time and Talents

- We are an **ambitious church** regarding worship, ministry, mission and outreach.
  - This is set out in our Parish Profile
  - The Development Action Plan, present and future, aims to increase this ambition and scope
- However, our ordained **ministry team has reduced from four to one**, and we currently have no ordinands. So to maintain our 'offering' puts a significant load on non-stipendary PTO clergy, clergy from other churches and the university who help us, lay ministers and lay volunteers from the congregation.
- Whilst everything seems to 'just happen' and operate smoothly, **we are now at the limit of our capacity** and plugging gaps relies on a relatively small number of committed volunteers who often carry out several roles.

# The Challenges surrounding Time and Talents

- So maintaining our current daily round of services and all our ministry and outreach work really **requires more people to offer their time and talents** to enable it to continue in its present mode.
- To achieve the **expanded level of activity under a new vicar**, as set out in the Parish Profile and DAP (which will be reviewed and refreshed under a new incumbent), will certainly require **a higher level and wider range of time and talents to be offered from the congregation, to convert ambition and plans into a viable reality.**
- **So please think about how and where you might offer your time and expertise** to help maintain St Bene't's current ministry and give a wider pool of people to call on to work alongside our new incumbent...
  - ... to help achieve **our shared vision** for how St Bene't's can continue to thrive as a community of people...*
  - ... drawn together to worship God and sent out from the church to live lives that help others to know what God's love looks like.*

# For what does St Bene't's need financial resources?

- We need resources to cover the costs of
  - A. The building – repair, maintenance and improvement
  - B. Running costs for worship and regular activities
    - including cost of a full-time vicar, paid to the Diocese through the Parish Share
  - C. Our wider ministry, mission and outreach
- Item A, including utility and building insurance costs, is covered by the **Giddy Fund**
  - At the end of 2023 this stood at **£1.16M**
- Item B, our Basic Regular Costs, should be covered by our annual income, held in our **General Fund**, primarily regular giving from the congregation (with occasional legacies and benefactions which we cannot rely on).
- Item C covers activities in our rolling **Development Action Plan** with its three pillars:
  - Deepening our Commitment to God
  - Engaging with Need
  - Growing God's Church

These costs are covered by the **Millennium Ministry Fund**, comprising of money set aside from bequests. At the end of 2023 this stood at **£314K**.
- Given that we do not need to worry about A, we should be able to give more to C than many other churches.

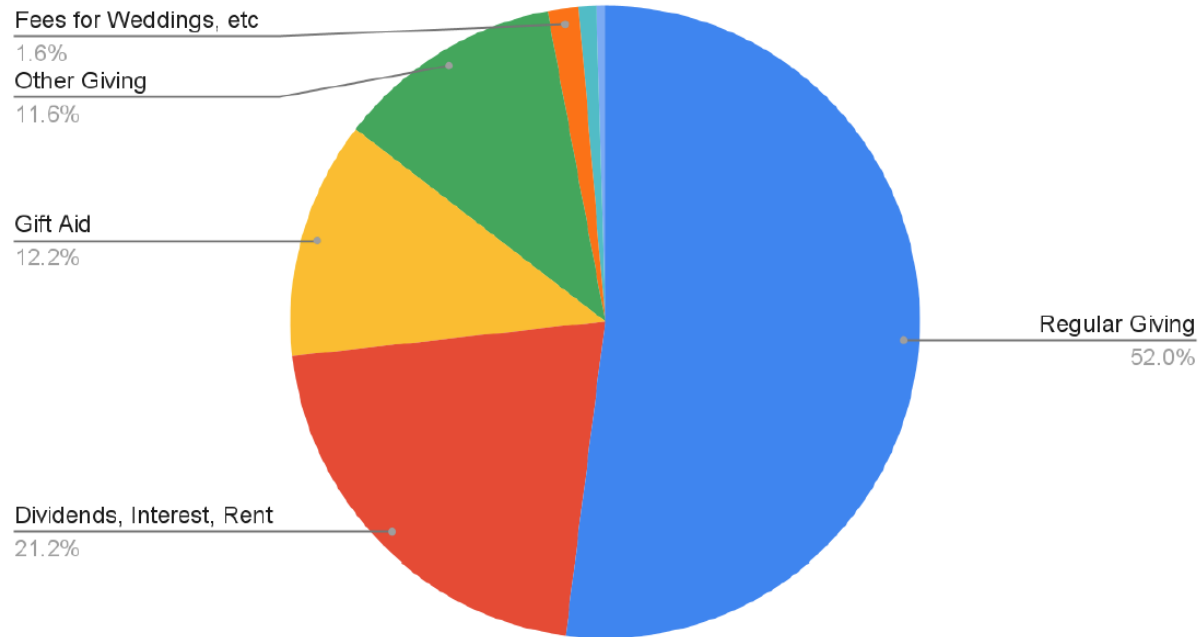


# What is the current state of St Bene't's Finances?

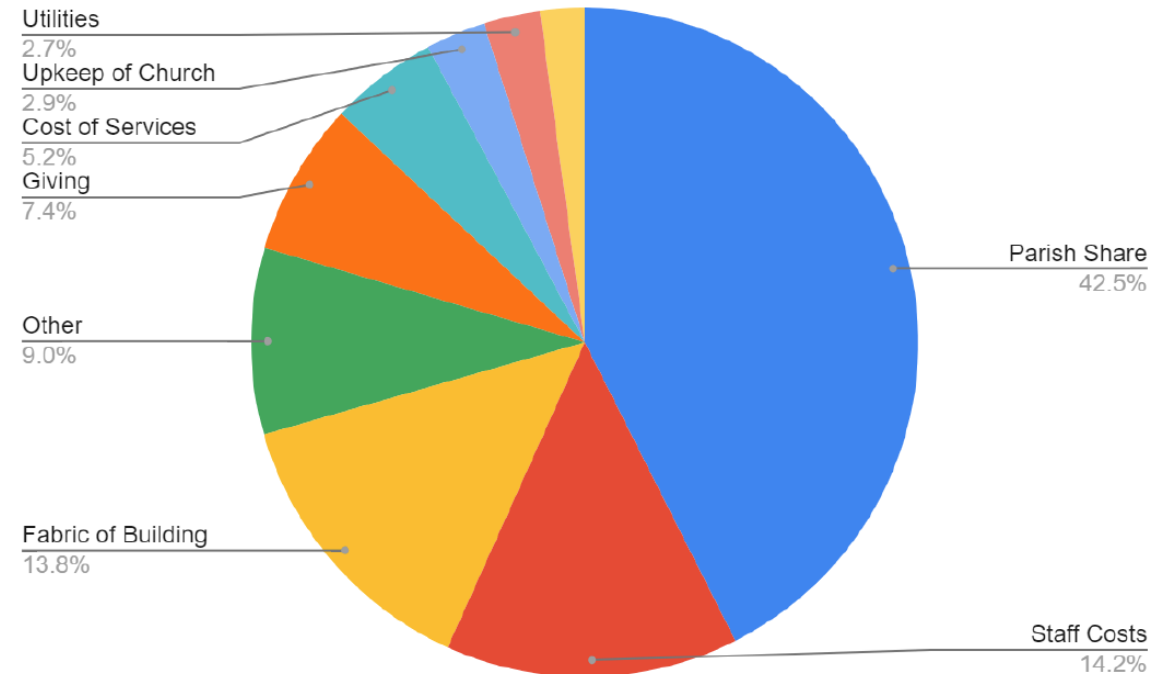
## Summary of the 2023 Financial Statements

### Income

2023



### Expenditure



# A few key facts behind the accounts

- In 2023 total expenditure of £184K exceeded total income of £164K by £20K
- £10.5K of this was covered by the Giddy and Millennium Funds.
- If we strip away income and expenditure associated with these two restricted funds and focus on the General Fund, we get a better picture of our 'everyday' financial situation. Here in 2023 our income was £131.5K and our expenditure was £141K, giving a net operating loss of £9.5K.
- In fact, we have regularly operated with an annual operating loss of about £7K, going back to 2018 before the pandemic.
- The current accessible reserves, held in the General Fund and which can be used for any purpose the PCC chooses, including balancing the books, are £177K. So whilst we have been able to cover these losses of £7-10K pa, this cannot continue indefinitely.
- The PCC and Financial Planning Group regularly review expenditure to ensure that savings can be made wherever possible, but there is relatively little scope for this.
- Hence the only way for St Bene't's to balance its books (and once this is achieved to then generate a small £10-20K surplus each year to grow the Millennium Fund for enhanced ministry and outreach) is to increase the regular giving by the congregation.

# How can we donate?

- Our preferred route is using the Parish Giving Scheme (PGS)
  - Like paying by Standing Order but using a Direct Debit via the PGS
  - PGS carry out all administration, including recovering the 25% Gift Aid tax 'bonus'
  - All administration costs covered by the Diocese
  - Major reduction in load on our Treasurer
  - Option to increase gift annually in line with inflation (RPI)
    - A specific annual review is good practice anyway
  - Secure and confidential method
    - Details on St Bene't's website
    - Booklets available today
    - For questions and help, see Nicolas Bell, Planned Giving Coordinator
- The guaranteed way to ensure you give regularly - every week/month or whatever frequency suits you best



# Other ways to give...

- **Leaving a legacy** to St Bene't's is another way to support the ongoing ministry of St Bene't's to future generations
- We occasionally do get legacies from members of the congregation and you may wish to consider this
- The PCC currently puts these into the Millennium Fund for ministry and outreach support
- Unrestricted legacies are preferred, but speak to the Vicar or churchwardens if you would like to leave a legacy for a particular purpose
- Leaving a legacy to a charity has tax benefits – it reduces the tax bill for other beneficiaries. For more details, speak to your solicitor who can provide appropriate wording for your will.
- **One-off donations** for something specific are also welcome. Please speak to the Wardens or, soon, our new vicar.

# Some key facts about our Planned Giving

- **Total Planned Giving** in 2023 was £82,968, with £17,358 being recovered from HMRC through Gift Aid, making a total of **£100,326**. This was 64% of our income – or **81%** if we exclude investment income of £35K.
- At the end of 2023 there were **57 donors** using the (preferred) Parish Giving Scheme (PGS) and **16** continuing to give via Direct Debit or Standing Order. [For comparison in 2017-18 there were 120 regular donors, with a smaller electoral roll].
- During 2023, 9 people left these schemes and 5 joined, with a net financial impact of **- £6,600**.
- For comparison, **there are 185 members of our Electoral Roll**. Even allowing for a significant number of joint donations, it seems that many regular members of the congregation do not participate in regular giving, which is the only way the church can really plan its finances. *[This may be in part due to the disruption of Covid-19 and our failure to communicate since then how the PGS works and its benefits.]*
- More than half the regular donors have not increased their contribution by inflation since joining (this can be done automatically through PGS). An **annual review is good practice** and of course may need to go down or up, depending on individual circumstances. Recent cost of living challenges may have been a significant factor here.

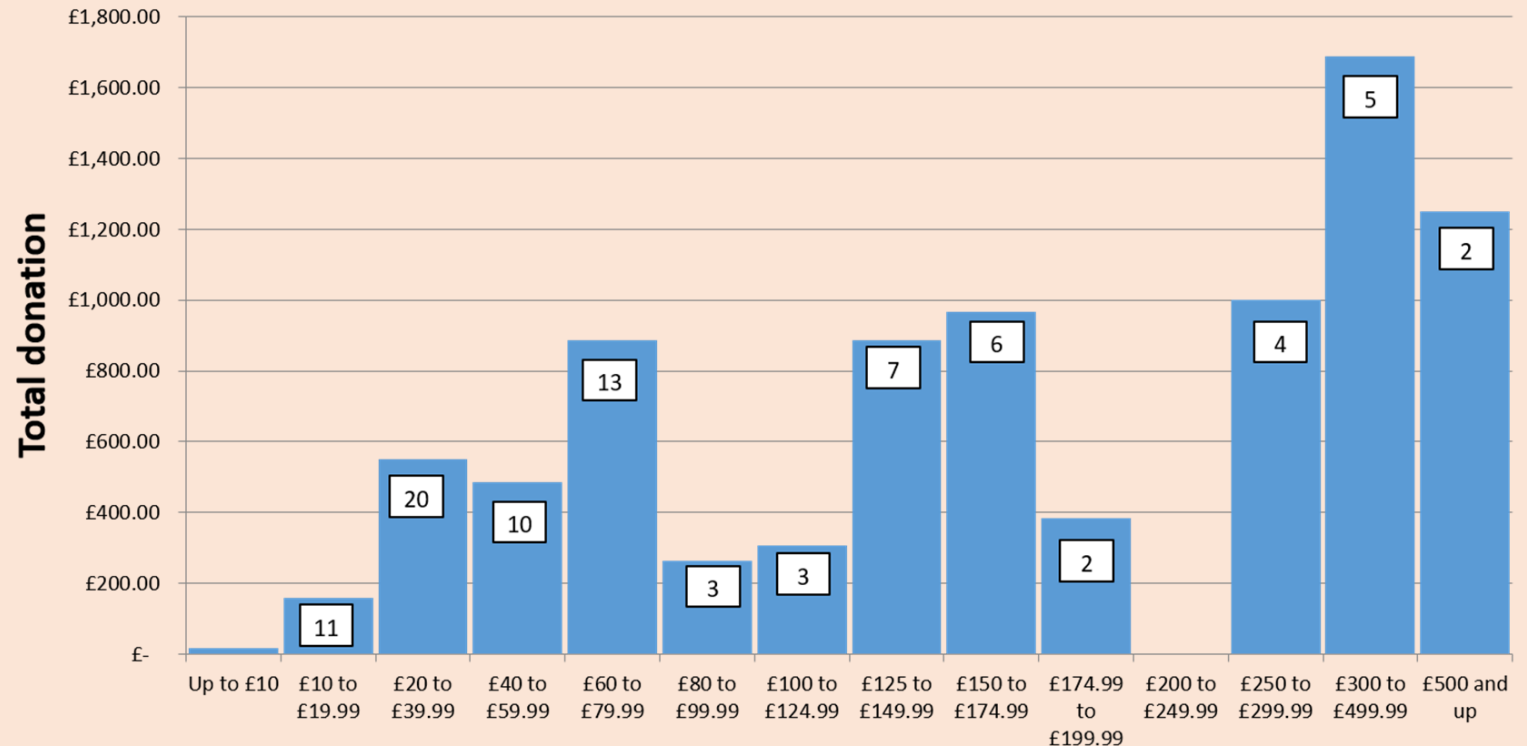
# Distribution of current Planned Giving

## Analysis of Dec 2023 Giving by Amount

[Quarterly donations have been converted into monthly ones for this table]

Giving Bands, £	Frequency
<20	9
20-30	10
30-40	8
40-50	11
50-75	10
75-100	9
100-200	9
200-300	4
>300	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>74</b>

Total amounts given by donation range



Average donation per month (including Gift Aid)

- We are heavily dependent on regular contributions from key donors
- **Ten donors contribute 48% of our planned giving income.**
- This means we are vulnerable to large fluctuations in our regular giving. Increasing the number of donors and evening out the distribution would give more long-term stability to our income.

# How can we fund our Wider Ministry and Outreach?

- We do have our Millennium (Ministry) Fund, currently £314K
- But this requires regular replenishment to make it sustainable
- Current Giddy building maintenance spending ~£20K per annum
- Imagine if we decided to match what we get for free from Giddy to grow the Millennium Ministry Fund by raising another £20K per annum...

...this is our next challenge!

- Without increased giving, we would have used up our unrestricted reserves by 2040

...this is our continuing challenge - to continue to cover our running costs





# What next?



- In the light of what we have presented about St Bene't's situation and your own particular circumstances, we ask that you **prayerfully**
  - **Think about** how **your Christian Stewardship** through St Bene't's sits alongside how you care for God's world and his people through all aspects of your life
  - **Consider how you might continue or grow** contributing your time and talents to the worship and ministry of St Bene't's
  - **Continue to review your giving annually** if you are already a regular donor, or
  - **Consider making a regular PGS donation** to St Bene't's if you are not and regard St Bene't's to be your 'home'
- And **circumstances change** – so do not be afraid to review your giving of your precious time and resources at any time in the light of your changes



# Lunch and Discussion Groups

**Purpose:** To listen to and share our response to the gifts we have been given as individuals and as a church

1. How wisely do we individually manage *all* that we have been given?

- a. What is our response to the time we are given?
- b. What is our response to the talents we are given?
- c. What is our response to the money to we are given?

2. How wisely do we at St. Bene't's manage *all* that we have been given?

- a. How well does St. Bene't's provide opportunities for people to use their time wisely?
- b. How well does St. Bene't's encourage the use of the available talents?
- c. How well does St. Bene't's administer the money it has been given?

*Thank you for listening and we hope you  
enjoy your lunch and discussions*



# Feedback from Discussion Sessions - 1

- Young people:
  - Reading Bible more, talking about faiths with parents, school worship, Credo course, more biscuits after church
- Approach differs with age, responsibilities, & life experiences – give what you can
- How to maximise your time if working age? Recognising that the church runs lots of services etc. at different times to suit different availabilities.
- Acknowledging that people do a lot outside of the church – how can we better support them?
- Allocating a particular time for contemplation/prayer & living well – great worth in this.
- **Switching from direct debit to parish giving scheme** – recognising the latter's value
- 'Talents' should be seen in a wider way; might be things e.g. having a garden
- Being more reflective about our own use of time and likewise not spreading ourselves too thinly
- Encouraging each other promotes pastoral growth
- Tithing as a way of thinking about giving – 10% of what? Gross/net income? Tithing doesn't resonate for all and might be more applicable to money than to time
- Close attention to mundane things like warmly welcoming people at coffee – being attentive to the day-to-day things we can do to. Not all of our talents can be put on a rota!

# Feedback from Discussion Sessions - 2

- More regular information about church finances
- A table/statements of where the needs are to match them with talents – more specific listing of what is needed. ‘A network of people having quiet words?’
- Sunday supplements? Way of getting to know members of the congregation better. Several mentions of more social gatherings and ways for people to find out more about the talents we all have.
- Great administration of rotas and training is provided for volunteering opportunities
- This is a very gifted congregation! All abilities should be welcome to volunteer and we should help those who seek to volunteer and recognise the value of different abilities.
- More workshops – e.g. for intercessing and cantoring
- Maybe House Groups?