

**The Parish of St Michael's Church Axmouth
within the Axe Valley Mission Community**

Address for correspondence:

The Axe Valley Mission Community, The Rectory, Church Street, Axminster EX13 5AQ

**Annual Reports
and
Financial Statement**

**for the year ended
31st December 2023**

AVMC Team Rector:
Vacancy

AVMC Team Vicar and Focal Minister for Axmouth:
The Reverend Nicky Davies

Bankers:
Lloyds Bank
Seaton EX12 2QH

Independent Examiner:
Sarah Johnson
Sidmouth EX10 9SJ

Our web presence:
<https://www.axmouthcommunity.org>
<https://www.facebook.com/axmouth>
<https://www.axevmc.com>

St Michael's Church Axmouth

Annual Reports for 2023

Report from Team Vicar/Focal Minister, Rev Nicky Davies

This last year has felt like a good one. Lots of creative worship, fantastic events and strengthening of relationships both in church and in the wider community.

I am delighted to be serving among you and to be at this, my fourth round of APCMs.

Here in Axmouth, I continue to be encouraged by the collaborative working that goes on both in church and with the wider community. It is a joy to work closely with our churchwarden Ann. Hilary is no longer licensed as a Licensed Lay Minister (LLM) but has focussed her time and energy on supporting and enabling a team of lay people, a great initiative. Lesley did renew her licence as LLM and 'made her vows' at a very moving service in the Cathedral. I am grateful to them both for all they do and for the support they offer. I am also grateful to Emma Loveridge for leading some communion services. Our Worship Group has continued to meet throughout the year.

I wish to say a big thank you to the PCC who are active and supportive. It is great to have two new members and we are imminently appointing a parish Safeguarding Officer. However, we need people to fill other key roles, particularly PCC Secretary, Treasurer and a further Churchwarden to work with Ann. Please search your heart and pray, to see if you could be the person to fill one of these roles...

I am grateful to our acting treasurer Nigel who keeps our finances in such good order and thank you to so many who work behind the scenes, cleaning, arranging flowers (what a team!), those organising social events that bring people together.

The Friday Support Group here is a great strength. It is a wonderful opportunity to deepen our life of faith and important to offer it. I believe it is essential that we offer learning opportunities across AVMC and more training is also being planned.

As ever, I am grateful to The Friends of the Church whose fundraising activities are not only fun, but also ensure the building is kept in good condition. I am also thankful for the Tower Team who are working with the Diocese to develop the Tower area and make it less draughty. Please can I encourage everyone to continue to support the Friends as much as possible so we can make this much-needed development a reality.

Since Clive retired at the end of August, I have been extremely busy with funerals. I am grateful to other ministry team members, including Roger, who has been supporting me in this. Louise and I led a wedding preparation event in February for our wedding couples, most of whom are marrying in Uplyme this year. It was a good afternoon together and we had some very positive feedback. I've been privileged to take some lovely baptisms and all those families are invited to a Teddy Bear's Tea Party at The Rectory in the summer.

In my work with youth across AVMC, I was part of a team of leaders including Simon Smith, who took a dozen teenagers to work with a charity called Red Tribe in remote Kenya. It was the most amazing, positive time. It was wonderful for the young people to meet with the Maasai people, take part in worship and learn about their lives.

It was then with great sadness that we wished farewell to our Youth Worker Simon Smith at the end of the summer. Finances and safeguarding responsibility for the Axe Valley Youth initiative was handed over to Millwey River Church, where their youth worker Tom has taken on some of the work Simon did, including Vibe on a Sunday afternoon. In Uplyme we appointed a youth co-

ordinator/leader for Friday Night Fun (FNF) which is mainly made up of young people from Mrs Ethelston's School. This has been going well and we've had some lovely feedback from parents.

Other activities included a Surf Weekend in north Devon in October when Tom and I were among the leadership team.

Because of the interregnum it was decided not to push ahead with our application to the Mission and Growth Fund to support work with children, families and young people. We will continue to look for future opportunities.

In my role as Team Vicar, I am now active in five of our AVMC primary schools leading worship and assisting with RE teaching. Open the Book teams are a wonderful resource too. Axminster Primary now regularly visit The Minster for key worship events. And following the departure of Tracey Voysey to Honiton, I regularly go into All Saints School, where the new headteacher is very keen to develop the Christian ethos.

In AVMC Nicola Russell has taken on co-ordinating safeguarding during the interregnum, which has been a huge help. I am grateful to Jo and Noreen for their commitment to this vital work for us here. Along with our administrator Louise and Robin Hodges, they ensure DBS checks take place. Further Basic Safeguarding Training is being planned in person, for those who need it.

I am delighted that we published our joint AVMC Mission Action Plan at the start of this year. Each parish is asked to look at it at every PCC meeting and ensure that we are moving forward with our aspirations.

Despite the interregnum I continue to feel well supported by the AVMC Ministry Team, Louise in the office, churchwardens and many others who make this such a great place to be. We still await an application for the Rector role, but I am sure the right person is on their way soon... keep praying.

There is much to be thankful for, and lots to look forward to, as we seek to join in with our diocesan vision to grow in prayer, make new disciples and serve the people of Devon with joy.

Nicky Davies

Electoral Roll

The Electoral Roll for 2023 stood at 29 members, not all of whom are able to come to church.

Next year there will be a full revision of all parish electoral rolls.

Elisabeth Stewart

PCC report

This is the 2023 report from the Axmouth PCC. We and all PCCs are required to make an annual report to review the year's activity and provide perspective for the financial accounts.

The PCC has the legal responsibility to cooperate with the Rector/Vicar in promoting the whole mission of the Church through pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical work.

The Churchwarden and PCC are ultimately responsible for the church building but the Friends of Axmouth Church undertake most of its maintenance and raise funding for it.

This Report complies with requirements of the Charity Act 1993 and the Church Accounting Regulations 1997. The Council has complied with its duty under section 5 of the Safeguarding & Clergy Discipline Measure 2016. The PCC is a

charity but is excepted from registering with the Charity Commission within the meaning of the section 30 of the Charities Act 2011. Its governing document is the Parochial Church Councils (Powers) Measure 1956.

Membership and Office Bearers 2023

In accordance with the Church Representation Rules 2020, members of the PCC are either ex officio, elected at an Annual Church Meeting or co-opted by the PCC.

During the year the following served:

Ex Officio	Revd Clive Sedgewick	<i>Team Rector until Sep 2023</i>
	Revd Nicky Davies	Team Vicar & Chair
	Lesley Gubbins	Licensed Lay Minister
Elected	Ann Harding	Churchwarden & Vice-Chair
	Regina Bridgeman-Gibbs	
	Paul Britton	
	Sue Craker	<i>Safeguarding Officer until May 2023</i>
	Kate Eaton	
	Hilary Harron	<i>Licensed Lay Minister until Oct 2023</i>
	Helen Pearson	
	Paul Sayers	
	Vacancy	<i>Secretary</i>
	Vacancy	<i>Treasurer</i>
Co-opted	Nigel Harding	Acting Treasurer
Not on PCC	Elisabeth Stewart	Electoral Roll Officer

Sub Committees 2023

The sole permanent sub-committee is the Standing Committee, required by law and with delegated power to transact PCC business between meetings, subject to any directions given by the PCC. It consists of the Team Vicar and two members elected by the PCC. It meets as needed. There is also

- Support Group focusing on Bible reading and Intercession, open to all and meeting weekly
- Lay Leaders Team aiming to strengthen lay participation in our services
- Tower Group focusing on improving its insulation as part of the net carbon zero initiative

Subjects discussed included: church services in all their forms, administration of the common cup, the mission action plan, our share of the common fund, going green, appointment of new rector, parish magazine, sound system, safeguarding, lay training, charitable giving, friendship lunches, Christmas tree festival, the churchyard, permission to initiate work on glazing the tower...

Mission Action Plan for 2024

The mission community aims are

- Growing in prayer
- Making new disciples
- Serving the people of the Axe Valley with joy

During the coming year at Axmouth we shall

- Continue building the lay team
- Encourage home groups and teaching opportunities
- Hold social events for lay leaders & ministry team
- Hold events for special groups, such as the Friends, Village Hall
- Publish and embrace the principles of *Living in Love and Faith*
- Offer greetings on entry and hospitality after services
- Publish user-friendly and accessible church information both in church and online
- Continue growing a strong eco-culture in church
- Work towards winning awards

Financial report

Our regular giving in 2023 was only slightly down on last year, whilst Church fees for weddings and funerals were well up, enabling us once again to pay our Common Fund in full. The Common Fund this year was £17,910. You will be pleased to know that there is a slight reduction for 2024 - to £17,226.

We have carried out two major works this year:

Audio Visual Direct completed the installation of our new sound system, which has a few remaining gremlins we are still tackling.

Ion Glass have carried out two comprehensive surveys during the year in connection with our plans to improve the green credentials of the Church, and to prevent the draught from the tower keeping us all cool! Ongoing discussions are going on with the Diocese in this regard, more of which elsewhere.

We were able to support our three charities again this year.

The financial statement is appended at the end of this document. The accounts have been kindly audited by Sarah Johnson. You will see that we are showing a deficit for the year, and this was covered by funds transferred from reserves.

I again repeat my wish to retire as your Treasurer but will obviously continue in place until a willing volunteer can be found.

Nigel Harding

Churchwarden's report

2023 has been a busy and, I think, successful year here in Axmouth. Our Church congregation numbers have held up well and at festivals the Church has been full. It was lovely to see so many people at our Songs of Praise service which opened the Country Garden Flower Festival. Thank you to Hazel and the flower team for making the church welcoming with beautiful flowers all year.

We were sorry to say goodbye to Clive during the year and are still looking for a new Rector to replace him. In this respect we are very lucky to have a wonderful Lay team led by Hilary and, with

them, Lesley, Emma and Nicky, we are managing the interregnum very well. With prayers and hope, we will be welcoming a new Rector before too long.

One of the main focuses this year has been enclosing the tower arch to conserve heat and hopefully keep us all a little warmer! Emma and Lesley have worked very hard on this and we thank them, together with the rest of the tower group team. Hopefully things will progress during the coming months.

The Ship Inn continues to host our Friendship Lunches, organised by Gina and Elisabeth. These are much appreciated by all those who attend.

After seven years of cutting the Churchyard grass, Chris has decided to retire. We welcome Carole Nicholls, who has taken over what is quite a hard task. The Churchyard clear-up days continue - weather permitting - with young and old taking part.

The Friends of the Church continue their support, both practically and financially, and we value this very much.

We are a Church in the community and this is demonstrated by the many volunteers we have. The list is endless, cleaners, flower ladies, those that make tea and coffee, clock winders, locking up and unlocking the Church - so many things go on behind the scenes.

I would personally like to thank Mike Clark, who has been drafted in by the Archdeacon to help during the interregnum. He is always there to take a service or give support and advice.

Lastly and by no means least - Nicky. Thank you for all you do - it has been a difficult task having to be at the helm on your own. We value the time you spend with us and involving yourself in the Axmouth community. It is a pleasure to work with you.

Ann Harding

Deanery Synod

Axmouth Church currently has no lay members of the Deanery Synod. We are entitled to 2.

Honiton Deanery is working towards a new Rural Dean and hopes to have one in place by the Autumn. Meanwhile, there have been no applications for the post of AVMC Team Rector; it is being advertised again. The Revd Canon Karen Curnock has been appointed as our Secretary.

Minutes of Deanery Synod proceedings are posted on the Axmouth Church website.

Nicky Davies

Safeguarding

There have been no Safeguarding issues in 2023. PCC members and those in leadership already have, or are undertaking, the relevant training and DBS checks.

A new Safeguarding officer for the parish is imminent.

Nicky Davies

Church Attendance

The average congregation at church services, including people not on the electoral roll, was 27.

65 people rejoiced with us at Easter, 145 came to special services during Advent and 83 joined us for Christmas worship.

The diocese requested our attendance figures in October: we reported four services, with an average of 22 people present, apart from our Harvest celebration which was attended by 58.

We held 1 baptism, 4 marriage and 4 funeral services this year.

Lay Leaders Team

It became apparent last year, in the light of the interregnum after Clive's departure and facing the retirement of Licensed Lay Ministers, that we needed to strengthen our team of lay leaders.

We have been fortunate in already having a pool of lay people who have been leading, reading and praying in Sunday worship over the years; but we have added new leaders to this team, notably Kate Eaton and Paul Sayers, and also encouraged one or two experienced leaders to exercise their gift of preaching, including Iain Purdon.

In November 2023, Pancha Barratt and Kate Eaton joined me on a diocesan preaching course. This was online and run by Jon Curtis, as part of the Grow series of Lay training. We all enjoyed the four weeks and have certificates and workbooks to prove we finished the course.

We continue to scan the Diocesan website for more training and are ready to commit ourselves once more when we find a useful and relevant course.

Hilary Harron

Support Group

Looking back to 2020 I found notes written in lockdown, when we had to be physically distant from each other. They chart the subtle change as the Bible and Prayer Group grew into a Support Group.

The coronavirus pandemic has made us all think about the way we live our lives, hasn't it? We have been stopped from doing the things that have been part of our lives - the way we interact with each other, in physical gestures - a hug of affection or greeting, a taking of the hand, a reassuring arm around the shoulder - all things Jesus used to do when in his ministry.

The Support Group is still a Bible group now, and a prayer meeting too, but it offers more: reassurance, and the chance to learn from each other. It not only prepares us for the worship on Sunday but also gives us strength for living our daily lives in faith, whatever might befall us.

We meet every Friday in the Bindon Chapel at 9.30, read the Bible passages set for the following Sunday, ponder, talk, and pray. Then we talk a bit more over a cup of coffee or tea. We don't always agree but we have learnt to respect each other's feelings and appreciate the varied interpretation of the readings.

We have been joined by two new 'Supporters' - Sylvie Winder and Meg Lenton - who have brought their own individual insights and experience into the group.

If you think this group might suit you, come along on a Friday morning or contact me.

Hilary Harron

Tower Group

The Tower Group project is to prevent heat loss in the church and to move closer to net carbon zero by glazing in the tower, with a sub-project to include secondary glazing. Funding for a survey and proposal for the works was raised by the Friends, plus an anonymous donor, and a proposal was drawn up. This formed the basis of an application for faculty to carry out the work, which was submitted to the Diocesan Advisory Committee. From there the proposal was circulated to the prescribed advisory bodies.

The proposal met with a mixed reaction and the group's response was submitted to the DAC. We will continue to work with them in 2024.

Lesley Gubbins

Flower Ladies

Axmouth Church is very fortunate to have a loyal band of Flower Ladies, with 21 currently on the rota. One member moved away from Axmouth to be nearer to her family, we thank her for her commitment and lovely displays. We now have three ladies who have moved into the village and are keen to help with putting flowers up in the church especially around Easter time, Harvest Festival and Remembrance Sunday.

One big event we had was Mr Loveridge's daughter's wedding in September. Roses were gathered from the estate during July and August and carefully dried to use for confetti.

Hazel Webb

Parish Magazine

The magazine has been produced quarterly, A5 size and in full colour throughout. Huge thanks to the many in the community who offer photographs, news and fascinating articles, including Axmouth Children's Theatre, plus regular updates from the Church, Village Hall and Parish Council.

Seaton Print produce the magazines and Jan Stansfield circulates copies to our very welcome volunteer distributors throughout the community. The print run has been increased slightly to allow for former Axmouth residents too, some living nearby and one in Denbighshire.

Advertising support is currently very positive so many thanks to Nancy Dickens who manages that, also to Charlotte Bailey who handles the design layout.

We gratefully thank our proof reader Eileen Mather. She has now moved away from Axmouth so anyone willing to take on that role would be most welcome.

Dot Browning

Appendix follows ...



Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees of **St Michael's Parish Church, Axmouth**

On accounts for the year ended **31st December 2023**

Charity no (if any) **An Excepted Charity**

Set out on pages

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 (the Charities Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act,
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act, and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's statement

My examination was carried out in accordance with general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair' view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no material matters have come to my attention which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records

I have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed: *S A Johnson*

Date: **28/3/2024**

Name: **Sarah Johnson**

Relevant professional qualification(s) or body (if any):

Address: **14, Windsor Mead, Sidford, Sidmouth, EX10 9SJ**

St Michael's Church, Axmouth
 Financial Statement
 Year ended 31st December 2023

	2023		2022	
Receipts	£		£	
Voluntary receipts				
Regular Giving				
Planned giving	13,580.00		13,870.00	
Collections and other giving	4,474.30		5,030.89	
Income tax recovered	4,814.77	22,869.07	4,626.21	23,527.10
Other voluntary receipts				
Donations - Note 2		11,652.78		11,815.83
Receipts from activities for generating funds				
Parish Magazine Note 8	1,465.00		1,529.00	
Social and fund-raising Note 9	518.12		3,384.61	
Traidcraft - Note 3	242.89	2,226.01	1,825.90	6,739.51
Receipts from Church activities				
Fees		3,771.00		1,222.00
Receipts from investments				
Bank interest				
Total Receipts		<u>40,518.86</u>		<u>43,304.44</u>
Payments	£		£	
Diocesan common fund	17,910.00		17,848.00	
R W Dack & Sons			6,530.22	
ion Glass:surveys re glazing	10,171.80			
Insurance	2,380.80		2,242.27	
Light and heat	1,151.67		1,059.80	
General Maintenance - Note 5	3,596.15		4,328.40	
Churchyard maintenance	2,274.00		1,650.00	
Magazine printing Note 8	1,948.51		1,665.00	
Hire of Hall			45.50	
AVMC expenses	2,304.00		2,112.00	
Cost of services Note 7	742.70		662.88	
Donations - Note 2	1,881.69		566.16	
Traidcraft - Note 3	224.23		1,674.93	
Total payments		44,585.55		40,385.16
Surplus/ deficit of receipts over payments		4,066.69		2,919.28
Opening cash at Bank and in hand		<u>£19,498.83</u>		<u>£16,579.55</u>
Closing cash at Bank and in hand		<u><u>£15,432.14</u></u>		<u><u>£19,498.83</u></u>

Note 1**Restricted Funds**

As at 31st December 2023 included in the bank current and deposit account balances were the following restricted funds:

	Fabric Fund	C/Yard Fund	Making Waves	Music/ Books	Millions for Mission	
Balance at 1st Jan 2022	2,532.00	4,495.00	1,490.00	0.00	1,982.00	
Movement in year	805.00	1,000.00	1,490.00	0.00	1,982.00	
Balance at 31st dec 2021	<u>1,727.00</u>	<u>3,495.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>	£5,222.00

Note 2

2) Donations

A breakdown of donations received during the year:

	£
Council Magazine support	500.00
Council Churchyard maintenance	500.00
Personal Donations	6,049.58
Friends for ion Glass deposit	4,588.20
Commonwealth War Graves	15.00
	<u>11,652.78</u>

A breakdown of donations made during the year:

	£
Partners for Progress	500.00
Shelterbox Trust	500.00
SEAN	500.00
Royal British Legion: collection	241.11
Seaton Food Bank	116.00
DEC Earthquake fund	24.58
	<u>1,881.69</u>

3) Traidcraft

Traidcraft sales raised £18.66

	£	
Sales banked	242.89	
Purchases	<u>224.23</u>	18.66

4) Diocesan Common Fund

The Diocesan common fund request for 2022 was £17910 which we were able to pay in full
The Common Fund required for 2024 is £17226

5) General Maintenance

	£
Fire extinguisher service	152.40
Electrical repairs	54.00
Memorial board	130.00
EDDC:green bin	50.00
Audio visual: balance	3,141.60
Penguin Internet	21.00
Sundry materials	47.15
	<u>3,596.15</u>

7) Cost of Services

CCLI licences	316.00
Paschal candle and stand	300.00
Seaton Print:brochures etc	72.00
General/hospitality expenses	54.70
	<u>742.70</u>

8) Parish Magazine

Advertising receipts	1,465.00
Parish Council grant	500.00
	<u>1,965.00</u>
Printing costs	1,686.00
InDesign publisher	262.51
	<u>1,948.51</u>
Surplus	<u>16.49</u>

9) Social and fundraising

Lee Abbey receipts	1,026.15
Harvest lunch and auction	436.00
Christmas lunch	353.80
Clive's collection	89.71
Dust concert	310.00
Earthquake donation	24.58
Card sales	124.81
	<u>2,365.05</u>

Payments made:

Lee Abbey	1,200.00
Rose Tidball retirement collection	457.47
Seaton Print: cost of cards	99.75
Clive Sedgewick retirement collection	89.71
	<u>1,846.93</u>
	<u>518.12</u>

Balance sheet as at 31st December 2023

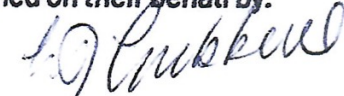
Lloyds Bank Treasurer's account
Cash in Hand


£15,381.66

50.48

£15,432.14

Approved by the Trustees on... 11th March 2024
and signed on their behalf by:


L.J. GUBBINS


N.R. HARDINGE
Hon Treasurer

3588.15	
47.75	
3741.80	
3700.00	
300.00	
742.70	
84.70	
1948.51	
1968.00	
500.00	
1465.00	
124.81	
24.58	
310.00	
89.71	
383.80	
438.00	
1,020.15	
89.71	
98.75	
457.47	
1,200.00	
£2,365.05	
£2,365.05	

(A) Diocesan Common Fund
The Diocesan common fund request for 2022 was £1,701.0 which we were able to pay in full
The Common Fund request for 2024 is £1,200.00

(B) General Maintenance
Fire extinguisher service
Electrical repairs
Memorial board
EOD Green pin
Audio visual balance
Partain internet
Sundry materials

(C) Cost of Services
CCU licences
Paschal candle and stand
Seaton Print products etc
General hospitality expenses

(D) Parish Magazine
Advertising receipts
Parish Council grant

Printing costs
Indesign publisher
Surplus

(E) Social and fundraising
Lee Abbey receipts
Harvest lunch and auction
Christmas lunch
Clive's collection
Dust concert
Erdreunke donation
Card sales

Payments made:
Lee Abbey
Rose Tiddell retirement collection
Seaton Print: cost of cards
Clive Sedgewick retirement collection