

Parish of Our Lady of the Rosary, Bexhill-on-Sea
St Mary Magdalene & St Martha's
Income v Expenditure 2022 v 2021 (v Pre-Covid 2019)

Income:	2019	2021	2022	From	21	(19 – pre-Covid)
1st Collection						
Offertory	66,067	46,518	51,662	↑	↓	
Offertory GASDS	45,485	21,523	27,456	↑	↓	
Christmas	7,044	6,517	6,734	↑	↓	
Easter	6,669	4,788	5,837	↑	↓	
<i>Sub Total</i>	<i>127,284</i>	<i>79,346</i>	<i>91,689</i>	<i>↑</i>	<i>↓</i>	
Parish 2nd Collection						
Second Collection	2,996	3,578	2,573	↓	↓	
Second GASDS	4,003	1,889	2,595	↑	↓	
<i>Sub Total</i>	<i>6,999</i>	<i>5,467</i>	<i>5,168</i>	<i>↓</i>	<i>↓</i>	
Other Income						
Mass / Stole Offerings	9,866	12,157	9,744	↓	↓	
Legacies	0	36,000	38,531	↑	↑	
Gift Aid	26,166	25,946	16,454	↓	↓	
Donations	7,098	2,340	4,223	↑	↓	
<i>Sub Total</i>	<i>43,130</i>	<i>76,443</i>	<i>68,952</i>	<i>↓</i>	<i>↑</i>	
Commercial Income						
Repository	1,598	92	481	↑	↓	
Votive Candles	4,185	598	2,296	↑	↓	
Rents*	22,463	6,085	12,938	↑	↓	
Investments	40	27	31	↑	↓	
Insurance	0	8,099	15,887	↑	↑	
Sundry	1,946	3,400	1,327	↓	↓	
<i>Sub Total</i>	<i>30,232</i>	<i>18,301</i>	<i>32,960</i>	<i>↑</i>	<i>↑</i>	
Total	£ 207,645	179,557	198,769	↑	↓	

*includes Nursery rent from School

Expenditure:	2019	2021	2022	From	21	(19 pre-Covid)
Faith Advancement						
Liturgy & Pastoral	25,419	3,045	6,273	↑	↓	
<i>Sub Total</i>	<i>25,419</i>	<i>3,045</i>	<i>6,273</i>	<i>↑</i>	<i>↓</i>	
Personnel						
Staff	52,698	30,071	25,877	↓	↓	
Clergy	26,809	26,627	31,315	↑	↑	
<i>Sub Total</i>	<i>79,507</i>	<i>56,698</i>	<i>57,192</i>	<i>↑</i>	<i>↓</i>	
Establishment						
Professional Fees	-	-	9,905	↑	↑	
Domestic	6,528	13,804	11,638	↓	↑	
Office	10,095	5,049	4,011	↓	↓	
Energy & Water	23,314	18,600	14,018	↓	↓	
Council Tax	904	4,070	1,862	↓	↑	
Insurance & License	7,078	6,363	7,228	↑	↓	
Maintenance & Equipment	17,319	28,587	21,579	↓	↑	
Cleaning (not domestic)	11,883	665	3,573	↑	↓	
Travel	1,929	1,490	1,625	↑	↑	
<i>Sub Total</i>	<i>79,071</i>	<i>78,628</i>	<i>75,439</i>	<i>↓</i>	<i>↓</i>	
Transfers						
Bank Charges	0	218	53	↓	↑	
Charitable Grants	3,500	0	533	↑	↓	
Internal Transfer	-3500	0	0	-	↓	
Transfer to Diocese	37,638	28,528	22,716	↓	↓	
<i>Sub Total</i>	<i>37,638</i>	<i>28,746</i>	<i>23,302</i>	<i>↓</i>	<i>↓</i>	
Total	£ 221,635	167,117	162,206	↓	↓	
Surplus / Deficit	£ -13,990	+12,440	+36,598			

Parish Priest's Statement

We began 2022 still within COVID's grip, with the Omicron variant rapidly gathering pace. At this time, the restrictions on gatherings only allowed our Churches to be at 50% of their usual (seated) capacity, impacting on offertory giving. As always, the parish is grateful for all offertory giving but especially to parishioners who have set up standing orders, which provides us with a regular and confirmed income each month.

It would not be until Pentecost (5th June 2022), that the situation was sufficiently stable for the Bishops of England and Wales to determine that the Obligation to hear Mass each Sunday could once again be safely fulfilled. It was not until September 2022 that our weekly Mass attendance began to grow, but at the official Mass count of October 2022, we were still only at 65% of our pre-COVID Mass attendance. The requirements of the Catholic Insurers also delayed the re-opening of St Martha's Hall, which has traditionally been a significant source of rental income. And St Mary Magdalene Hall remained closed for the whole year, with no planned date for reopening.

My thanks to the Finance Committee who have kept a watching brief to ensure that our expenditure remains under tight control. In doing so, I am pleased to report that for a second year in a row, the parish balanced its income and expenditure, even making a surplus. This good news should be read with caution, as that surplus was from a legacy payment which should always be regarded as extraordinary income. The surplus will be used to pay for the repairs identified in the five-year Electrical Survey.

Our confidence is tempered in that only the most basic of estate maintenance was carried out in 2022, and little or no progress was made in completing essential and recommended works as identified by the Parish's Quinquennial Survey report. As we move forward, I invite and urge all parishioners to review their first offertory giving. On average, the plate income – whether on the day or via a standing order, equates to £3.15 a person, which is about the cost of a cup of coffee. Moving forward, we will need to have a great effort in raising that upwards, otherwise we will struggle to manage and maintain the parish. The following statement provides more detail.

Fr Simon Dray, Parish Priest.

Offertory: The first offertory is still the largest income. Fortunately, it increased on 2021, but with our reduced Mass attendance, it remains down on pre-Covid levels.

Income:	2019	2021	2022	From	21	(19 – pre-Covid)
Offertory	66,067	46,518	51,662	↑	↓	
Offertory GASDS	45,485	21,523	27,456	↑	↓	

Are you gift-aiding your offertory? If you are a UK taxpayer, the parish can reclaim 25p in every £1 you donate, at no extra cost to you! The Parish Office can help you set up your Gift Aid. Higher rate taxpayers are also eligible for Gift Aid; the parish will claim the 25p, and you can reclaim the difference between the basic and higher rate when you complete your tax return. Even if you are a **pensioner**, if you pay tax on a pension or capital gains taxes on investments, you can Gift Aid your offertory up to the amount of tax you have paid. To reassure you, setting up Gift Aid on your offertory does not trigger any HMRC investigations. Neither will Gift Aid increase any future tax, as it is only retrospective, based entirely on the tax you have already paid. Therefore, there is no good reason for a UK taxpayer not to Gift Aid their offertory donation.

Other income: Of note in other income is a legacy of £30,000, a second payment of £30,000 from the Evelyn D Hodgson Will Trust, which wound up its commitments in 2022. With regards to commercial income, once St Martha's Hall reopened, we were able to add some additional rental income to the rent received from the St Thomas More (Syro Malabar Catholic) mission for use of St Martha's Church and to the income received from St Mary Magdalene Primary School for use of the old Nursery space. We also received a payment from our insurers to cover initial repairs to St Mary Magdalene Hall following the flood (more details in the maintenance section below).

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Expenditure: The parish's expenditure, was £5,000 lower in 2021. Overall, expenditure was relatively stable and is now, probably, at the lowest level possible for the parish to discharge its day-to-day operational needs. Soon, however, we will have to tackle the maintenance needs as outlined in the 2021 Quinquennial Report.

Buildings

As of 31st December 2022, the parish bank account was hovering at £100K, an enormous improvement on the forecast being faced in 2019, which predicted a bank balance of £0 by the end of 2021 – hence the closure of the Nursery, Our Lady of the Rosary Church and staff redundancies which brought our expenditure under control.

As a starting point, our repair estimates are in the region of £1 million. The age of the buildings, the cost-of-living crisis, post COVID and post Brexit delays have added to this estimate. This is ten times the amount of money in the bank account, and in recent years the parish has demonstrated a minimal fundraising capability. Clearly, the Diocesan pastoral plan will influence all decisions on repairs, for the Catholic Parish of Bexhill cannot be viewed in isolation to the challenges that the diocese faces today and in the next few years. As such, the Parish Finance Committee has been in conversation with the Bishop and Diocesan Finance Committee, Property Department and Trustees to ascertain how these works fit within the Diocesan Pastoral Plan.

The Sale of Sidley: There is a buyer who has offered us £580,000. Before the sale can go through, the Council has asked him to prove that there is '*no loss of community amenity*' to the surrounding area, and so he has spent the last year ascertaining this. It may still be a year before we see any funds, and once the sale goes through, money that is owed to the diocese on the '*tab*' must be repaid first, including monies for the unpaid National Insurance on an employee, the fencing protecting the site from arson, and fees paid for the survey and architects drawings for the presbytery / parish office. It is to be hoped that a sum of some £450,000 will be received from the sale to put towards the maintenance and mission of the parish estate.

St Mary Magdalene Church: The 2021 Quinquennial identified numerous repairs, notably (but not limited to) the walls and windows on the South-Side (the sea-side and the prevailing weather side) of the Church.

Harding Bond, a local quantity surveyor has assessed the Quinquennial Report and has provided a more detailed maintenance report with the view of producing a schedule of works. The repair estimate is £407,000 (+ 10% management fees). This report has been submitted to the Diocesan Finance Committee and Property department for review. It has been discussed with the Bishop and Trustees who confirm that these works must be undertaken in line with the Diocesan Pastoral Plan. This is not simply to fulfil our obligations resulting from the Grade II listing and monitoring by Historic Churches (Southern Division) but because it plays a key role in our Mission, due to its Town Centre location and proximity to the Secondary School and its clear pastoral links with our primary school. Maintaining the presence of the Catholic Community in the centre of Bexhill is, therefore, a key priority for us. We are also aware that other Churches in Bexhill have come under the watchful attention of the '*Victorian Society*', who may take a keen interest in any significant works.

St Mary Magdalene Hall: Throughout 2022, the hall has remained closed and unfit for use following a flood in 2021. Despite significant efforts at repairing the specialist sprung wooden floor, these have proved unsuccessful. Additionally, due to the age of the building affecting other maintenance needs, the costs to bring the hall back into use are beyond our abilities, especially as we still have a functional hall at St Martha's.

St Mary Magdalene Presbytery: The presbytery has been surveyed and discussed in detail with the Diocese, who advised the appointment of an architect to outline possibilities for refurbishment. This has led to the decision not to carry out the relevant works, as costs would be more than £500,000, generating residential units beyond our requirements and potentially difficult to let. Downstairs, only three rooms are in regular use and are also in need of significant refurbishment. This leads us to conclude that the building is no longer fit for purpose and a financial liability on the parish.

St Martha's Church and Hall: These buildings are generally in good condition but require routine ongoing refurbishment. Harding Bond Surveyors have taken the 2021 Quinquennial Report to create a detailed Maintenance Report (which we should receive in October). It is likely that the Parish Finance Committee will have to liaise with the Diocesan Finance Committee to take any works forward, as the costs are likely to be above the Parish Finance Committee's limit of authorisation of £7,500.

The Way Forward

Following extensive consultation with the Bishop, Trustees and Diocesan Finance Committee, the decision has been taken to prioritise the repairs and conservation necessary at the parish church of St Mary Magdalene. In order to provide adequate funding for this, we intend to begin the process of decommissioning the presbytery and hall at St Mary Magdalene's, as continuing to retain these facilities will present an unmanageable financial burden. The site will be separated at the interconnecting door between the sacristy and the house with a view to selling the whole plot at the back of the site, including both presbytery and hall.

This decision has been directed by the Bishop and reflects his determination to retain and preserve the church, and for this to be the main focus of refurbishment. We will investigate the potential for meeting and office space elsewhere in the parish. The process of decommissioning the presbytery will not happen overnight and groups who have planned to use the presbytery / parish office for the 2023/24 academic year, are likely to be largely unaffected.

For the accommodation of the resident parish priest, we will continue to occupy the diocesan owned flat as a presbytery for the time being, with future needs for accommodating the priest being considered after the refurbishment of the church.

Adding the sale of the back half of the site at St Mary Magdalene brings in additional funds, above and beyond the sale of Sidley, improves the financial health of the parish not only for the immediate repairs, but for the future.

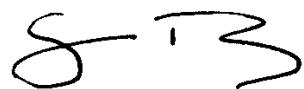
All parishioners and groups are asked to think about their fundraising endeavours and goals. The parish already supports many worthy third-party charities in the second collection. As such, when parish groups hold fundraising activities, it would be good if a significant proportion of those monies are raised for the benefit of the parish community, its mission and maintenance.

Finance Committee

We are always interested in hearing from parishioners who have the relevant skills, temperament, and enthusiasm to serve on the finance committee, which advises the parish priest who retains legal responsibility for the parish estate.

And so, after consultation with the Diocese and with the approval of the parish finance committee, I can now present the 2022 Accounts to the parish.

These accounts are subject to local audit.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "S. Dray".

Fr Simon Dray, Parish Priest
21st September 2023