

Annual Report of the Charity Trustees of St Michael and All Angels Church Wilmington Reporting Year 2024



NURTURING DISCIPLES OF JESUS ACROSS THE GENERATIONS

St. Michael and All Angels Church is an Anglican Church situated in the Ecclesiastical Parish of Wilmington, working under the jurisdictions of the Diocese of Rochester and the Church of England. It is a registered charity: 1127656.

The Annual Report

Welcome to the Annual Report of the Parochial Church Council of St Michael and All Angels Church, Wilmington. The report is a public document, published on the Charity Commission website, which helps to ensure that the Church is accountable as a charity for both the stewardship of its resources and its work for public benefit in accordance with its goals.

Church Contact Details

Website: www.stmichaelswilmington.org.uk

St. Michael and All Angels Church

Church Hill

Wilmington

Kent DA2 7EH

<https://www.stmichaelswilmington.org.uk/contactus.htm>)

The Church Office

Office Hours: Monday to Thursday 10.00 to 3.30 pm

St. Michael's Church Hall

2 High Road, Wilmington

Kent DA2 7EG

2024 Electoral Roll: 119 congregants.

Church Services

Details of church services, including Sunday worship, festivals and baptism, marriage, funeral and burial of ashes, are published on the church website: www.stmichaelswilmington.org.uk.

St Michael's Mission and Vision

St Michael and All Angels Church, Wilmington is an open, loving church that warmly welcomes people of all ages and life experiences. We encourage people to participate in all we have to offer, spiritually and socially, especially our Sunday services which are the heart of our life together.

Our teaching is rooted in the Bible and seeks to make the Word and Love of God known in our church family and wider community. Our dynamic Children Family and Youth Minister nurtures the faith of children, young people and families, in the Church and community.

As a Christian presence in Wilmington, we organise and take part in many social and outreach events and activities, some of which are listed in this report.

Team Work

St Michael's small paid workforce consists of a full-time Vicar and Children, Youth and Family Minister, supported by a part-time Parish Administrator and a team of over 60 hard-working volunteers who are central to church life.

Volunteers work in a range of roles and teams, helping to lead worship in both the church and the community, leading home study groups and in pastoral, outreach, finance, safeguarding, technology and administration ministries. Our Safeguarding Team, for example, oversees compliance with The House of Bishops' Safeguarding Policy and Practice Guidance, including Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) regulations and training requirements. The Church's two elected Church Wardens, the Bishop's Officers, supported by two Assistant Church Wardens, play a leading role in the management of church services and the careful stewardship of church resources.

Charity Trustees: The Parochial Church Council (PCC)

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) is a body corporate (PCC Powers Measure 1956, Church Representation Rules 2020). PCC members are collectively responsible for promoting the evangelistic, pastoral and ecumenical aims of the church and the careful stewardship of church finances and assets.

PCC members serve a three year term of office, after which they can stand for re-election. Lay members of the PCC are either elected at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM), held in May, co-opted onto the PCC, or occupy an ex-officio place.

The PCC meets six times a year, with additional meetings convened when required. In addition, permanent and ad hoc task groups report regularly to the PCC.

The Vicar's Annual Report

Worship

There continues to be much to give thanks for in the life of St Michael's. These thanks go first and foremost to God but also to all who have contributed to our life and spiritual well-being as a church.

As a Christian church, we profess and affirm that Jesus is our Lord and Saviour. He calls us to come to him and grow in knowledge and love of him. There is much to show that this is happening amongst us, both in numbers of people, and in depth of understanding and Christian living.

We are encouraged that there have regularly been new faces. I keep a list of those who visit, not least to enable me to pray for people by name, if possible. I've been encouraged that pretty much every month, we've had visitors, and some have returned; some have even settled with us.

But church is, of course, not only about new people. We are slowly growing in knowing each other better: this is a crucial way we express love for one another as disciples of Christ. A large proportion of our main 10.30am Sunday service worshipping community are able to stay behind for coffee. The social and outreach group have worked hard this year to encourage our growth in relationships.

The weekly 8.30am and monthly 5pm services continue with regulars, with the latter seeing an encouraging increase in attendance, at times.

We continue to meet on Zoom to pray on the first Wednesday of each month.

Teaching, Preaching and Evangelism

Our aim as a church is to 'nurture disciples across the generations'. In practice, this means seeking to teach the Bible so that we know and understand just how much the God of Heaven and Earth has loved us in Jesus, and what this means for us in response.

A 'first step' is our outreach. This depends on relationships with people who are not yet committed to Christ but is far more than friendship or being social. The word 'evangelism' means the teaching of the Good News (the 'evangel'), which means explaining how we have fallen far short of living God's way in God's world, and what he has done to bring us back.

We've run the "3 2 1" course this year, both on Zoom (Wednesday evenings) and Tuesdays after Coffee Pop In. Although primarily an outreach course, it is a helpful reminder for all Christians of the goodness of God in Christ Jesus.

The Leadership Group meets termly, discussing discipleship (not least reviewing services and planning sermon series) in each of its forms. Home Group leaders and the Treasury Team also meet termly, as we seek to care for one another.

The PCC continues to consider our "three loves": love for God, love for each other and love for the world (those outside the church). We are slowly seeking to work out what greater love might look like in each area.

Ecumenical Relationships

I continue to meet regularly with the local deanery chapter of Anglican ministers. It has been less easy to get to the monthly 'Dartford Churches' lunchtime meetings, typically because of being double-booked by all kinds of things. My regular meetings with the two neighbouring vicars (St Peter's Hextable and Christ Church Dartford) have been paused since the late autumn for reasons which are known locally, but legal proceedings prevent me from explaining in writing.

I continue to be a trustee of the small, but significant, charity, Anglican Futures, which seeks to support all kinds of orthodox Anglicans in their ministries. I am also chair of Latin America for Christ, which is an even smaller charity, seeking to serve the Church in Cuba and more widely in Latin America.

The Church of England

We continue to be grateful for support from the Diocese in a number of ways, both practical and pastoral. There are other Anglican churches in the Diocese which have been generous in their support, notably St Nicholas' Sevenoaks and the Rochester Good Stewards' Trust.

Finance

As the Treasurer reports, we continue to have financial challenges to raise sufficient funds to pay for the Parish Share the Diocese seeks from us, as well as fully funding the Children, Youth and Families Minister. We remain deeply thankful to God for his provision through all who support us financially, both within the church family and more widely.

Children, Youth and Family Ministry

Once again another busy year and I continue to love every minute of my role with the aim that my work continues to follow the church's vision to nurture disciples across the generations.

Sunday Children and Youth Work

The SNUG (Sitting Nicely Under God) has been re-organized to make the seating area bigger to accommodate more parents and young children who use it as a creche for Sunday services which is wonderful. However, I now need to consider the available toys/resources in order to lessen 'toy' noises (e.g. the train track can be noisy) so this is something to work on.

BEEs (The Bible's Eager Explorers) and EPIC (Every Person in Christ)

After much thought and prayer, BEEs and EPIC had a new look from September 2024 and both now run on Sunday mornings. We continue to use the method of 'whole church teaching' meaning that all age groups study the same Bible passage, encouraging discussions about what has been understood and taught and also building up relationships through the generations.

BEEs now includes the younger members of our church family and is for children aged 2 up to Year 6 and the children go into the Parish Centre after the second hymn and return at the start of the final hymn. Numbers fluctuate week by week but it is not about how many children attend but rather how they engage, learn and grow in Jesus and go home knowing one simple truth about Jesus based on the week's Bible reading. As the children approach Year 6, there will need to be some transition work done during the year to prepare them for moving up into EPIC but this is work in progress and we have no-one moving from BEEs to EPIC this September. I continue to try to encourage BEEs to be part of whole church family activities such as the Big Bible Read this Easter but I am aware that this is difficult for some and I need to work on engagement for these activities.

The support of volunteers is invaluable and we now have a WhatsApp group for Sunday support to ensure that they do not miss out on worship and teaching for themselves.

EPIC is now just for secondary age young people who stay in the service, and then leave during the final hymn for Bible study in my flat for approximately 45 minutes, returning to church by 12.30pm at the latest. The young people have really embraced the shorter, more consolidated Bible study and take a lot of notes during the sermons - either on the sheet or on their phones (the joy of modern technology) and come prepared with questions! The discussions are packed with theological questions and we really try to drill down into how the text can help when they go to school, when bombarded by social media or when facing tricky situations. It is a real joy to hear them discussing having Jesus in their lives and how much they know His love for them and how He is working in their lives. This is truly one of the highlights of my week and brings joy to my heart! I am extremely grateful to the adults who come and support this, all of which are DBS checked and have undergone appropriate safeguarding training.

I also try to give a weekly parent follow-up using the Family WhatsApp Group where one main teaching point is given and then one question or activity that can be shared as a family as part of my ongoing work in supporting parents in discipling their children. However, this is something that I need to be much more on top of to ensure this is done for every session.

All Age Worship

I have worked closely with the Vicar to make All Age worship more inclusive for everyone, thinking about engagement with God's word, the hymns and songs and keeping it to within the hour. Children and young people are actively involved in these services, reading from the Bible and being involved in the writing and leading of prayers for the whole church. This is ongoing work as we continue to look for ways for generations to worship as God's family together and I welcome any feedback on how we can ensure that our all-age services on the first Sunday of every month are engaging and relevant to the youngest and the oldest - and everyone in between!

Family Support

This year I have continued to support family discipleship and how I can best love and serve families in sharing the gospel together in whatever way is best for each of them and over the year every family has been visited at home and/or shared a meal at my flat. As I have researched and discussed this, it is clear that there is no 'one size fits all' and there are many and varied resources available, but most important is simply bringing the gospel into everyday life, recognizing his provision, praising him and talking to him in prayer and for Jesus to be an everyday part of family life.

Baptism and Thanksgiving Preparation

Working alongside the Vicar, we now have two clear forms of Christening services - baptism and thanksgiving - and have developed a clear information sheet explaining the difference between them and the expectations required for each.

For thanksgivings, I liaise with the Vicar regarding the certificates and Bibles, and will try to attend whenever possible.

For Baptisms, I build up good relationships with the family and particularly the parents, as we work through a 12-week preparation course together before the baptism, sharing updates with the Vicar and working together to ensure parents fully understand the commitment they are making for themselves and the child. I completed one course last year (unfortunately the baptism did not take place due to unforeseen circumstances) and am currently working with two other families for baptisms in the summer.

Under 5s Group

I continue to support the Under 5s group leader on Thursday mornings and this is growing and growing! We follow a simple curriculum where various stories and events from the Bible are looked at each month, in an age appropriate way. Good relationships are being nurtured with parents, grandparents and childminders and, because of this, many of the Under 5s attended the Easter craft morning and, as a direct result of that, 2 new childminders attended the Under 5s group, after the Easter holidays. Long may this continue!

Beavers

Links with the Beavers Group and visits to church have continued with the most recent last December where it was a pleasure to make Christingles with them - and to see their excitement at being able to ring the church bells!

Schools Work

I continue to try to build relationships with all schools in the parish, all of which received cards and goody bags at Christmas and the end of the Summer term, thanking the staff for all their hard work. These were gratefully received.

Strong relationships with the Wilmington Grammar Schools continue to be upheld with bi-annual meetings with the Head Teachers.

Girls' Grammar: Between September and January, I led a Bible Discovery Group for Key Stage 3 in conjunction with a member of staff. We regularly had 18 Christian girls attending, looking at the life and work of Jesus through the Gospel of Mark. They were very engaged and enthusiastic. Unfortunately due to ill-health, this was unable to continue but is something that the Headteacher hopes to re-start in the next school year.

Following the school's annual Christmas hamper competition, the church distributed over 30 hampers to local parishioners with another 20 being given to Wilmington Community Church and Christ Church Dartford.

Boys' Grammar: We took delivery of a large donation of food from the school's Christmas Food Collection and used this to make up bespoke food hampers for local families in need and for some individual older people which were gratefully received.

We received many thank you notes for all the hampers we distributed from both grammar schools and these were passed on, but next year we will be adding some school contact details onto the church letter accompanying the hampers so people can message directly if they would like.

The school hosted Afternoon Teas for Summer, Christmas and Easter and lovely afternoons were shared by many retired members of the church family along with students over tea, a variety of food, delicious cakes and excellent entertainment. The next one is planned for July and I look forward to once again liaising with the school for this.

It was again a delight to welcome into church all Year 7 pupils from both grammar schools for back to back carol services on December 11th - seeing and hearing 185 students sing carols was such a blessing and all heard how Jesus's birth means that Jesus 'is home' using the three lions Football's Coming Home nativity parody!

The grammar schools joint Christmas Concert on 12th December was a wonderful evening of Christmas entertainment with over 200 people in attendance - all of which heard how to find the true meaning of Christmas, the birth of Jesus, in a cracker! It was a joy to work with the Bible Discovery Group girls in writing and leading the prayers for this.

Wilmington Primary: The church was again full to bursting for their Christmas concert on 18th December and it was a pleasure to share the Christmas story through a candy cane with all who attended. I continue to liaise with the school over upcoming family events which they then include in their weekly parent emails. A new headteacher took over in January and as I write this I am waiting for a response to my request to meet with him to see how we can further work together.

Oakfield Primary:

I continue to have excellent relationships with Oakfield Primary and it is an absolute pleasure to visit the school and lead termly assemblies covering a variety of themes including change (where the photograph of me at primary school brought lots of laughter!), harvest, perseverance, goodbye and of course Christmas and Easter.

It was a delight to once more work with the school for their Harvest donations which we collected and used to support local families in the parish and donate to Dartford Food bank.

In December 2024 Year groups Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 (90-95 pupils in each) visited the church as year groups to discover how Christmas is celebrated by the church and why - this included three different Christmas treasure hunts around the church and tailored presentations and messages for each group which were all well-received. In April this year we welcomed the whole of Year 1 into church where they heard about how and why we celebrate Easter and they even went on an egg hunt around the church! It is always exciting to see so many children exploring the church and learning about Jesus.

Pre-School:

I was very happy to liaise with Preschool for Harvest and, as well as collecting food donations, they made cards to go in the food boxes we delivered to local people. We also had some of the children and their families visit the Easter Craft morning following pre-school passing on invitations - praise God! This is an area to build on in the coming year.

Although hard work, it was an absolute joy to have shared the Christmas and Easter messages with almost 2500 children, young people and their families (with many of the children hearing both) and I am very grateful for those who supported and helped in a variety of ways - and the coffee and biscuits definitely kept me going!

Special Activities and Services

June 2024: A special **Father's Day service** was led by the children and young people celebrating God the Father's love and everyone received a copy of the Father's Love Letter. This was well received and comments were given congratulating them on leading so well.

August 2024: The **Summer Family Craft Morning** was based around God creating the world in seven days and creating 'me and you' and was attended by 15 children and their families. Although this was not as many families as I had hoped, it did mean that engaging conversations could be had with children and parents and a catch up with some Under 5s and their mums who had left the group to start school. The timing of this could have been an issue (the day after bank holiday and the last full week of the summer holidays) so thought needs to be given to this next year.

October 2024: The children and young people joined forces to lead the **Harvest Festival** service in church and we were reminded that Jesus is the King and we should live for Him.

November 2024: A **Light Party** for teenagers was held in early November where fun was had with glow sticks and man hunt in the graveyard and then decorating biscuits in the dark, by torchlight and in full light - showing the importance of light and linking this to Jesus being the light of the world, finishing with a fire pit, toasting marshmallows, hot chocolate and sparklers! Sadly the numbers attending were low but it was a special time with those that were there, but thought needs to be given for next year.

December 2024: As part of the church Christmas Fair, the Children's **Make and Take** was again a joy, seeing 40 children taking a bag and filling it with crafts telling the nativity: Lollipop stick Mary and Joseph, a toilet roll tube shepherd, a colour by number wise man, a glittery paper plate angel, and baby Jesus in a collaged manger with real straw! They also brought their parents and families to enjoy the fun of the fair!

The **family carol service** was enjoyed by all who attended with the singing of familiar carols and hearing the nativity story presented through a series of gifts left hidden under chairs. It was particularly heartwarming to hear from the care workers at Sonya Lodge how much joy the residents who attended had received as for some hearing the nativity in a childlike way was relevant and appropriate.

The **BEEs and EPIC Nativity** was one which will never be forgotten!

The **Christmas Eve Crib Service** was well attended with many non-church families enjoying glow sticks and phone torches lighting up the darkened church showing Jesus is the Light of the World.

The **Christmas Day family service** was well received and we have had positive feedback regarding the 10am start and shorter length (45 minutes).

January 2024: The Christingle Service in the format of a cafe church, included singing, stories and making a Christingle showing God's love for us in sending his son to be the light of the world. This service was really appreciated by those that attended although numbers were well down on previous years but seeing the church lit by just the light of the Christingle candles is something really special and never ceases to give me tingles. However, some thought needs to be given to this with the possibility of including it within the family carol service this year. Watch this space...

March 2024: The children and young people wonderfully led the **Mothering Sunday** service, celebrating and remembering the love of mothers and many who attended commented how much they had enjoyed the service and how well the children and young people had led.

April 2024: The **Easter Craft Morning and Egg Hunt** was again combined with Coffee Pop-In and fun was had by all ages from 0 to 90! 43 children and their families all enjoyed crafts, a video story, singing and after finding the hidden message on the eggs hidden around the church, (rain did not stop play!) all went home with a bag of goodies and knowing Jesus is Alive!

The children and young people all took part in the **Big Bible Read** in Holy Week with the youth completing a late-night read on Maundy Thursday and a sleepover in the church - apologies for the smell of bacon lingering for the Good Friday morning service!

Lakeview Camp: In August 2024 I attended Lakeview as a group leader and six young people from St Michael's also attended. I was also asked to lead one of the camp meetings and the daily morning Bible Study for the girls which was a real joy.

Although extremely tiring (and walking nearly 44 miles over eight days) it was inspiring to see almost 200 young people enjoying time together and learning about Jesus and praising God together.

Study

Master's Degree: Studying for the MA (Master's Degree [Christian Ministry, specialising in children and youth]) continues, having passed my third year with grades C, B, C, A and have now almost finished my fourth and final year (at time of writing I have 8 weeks left!). I have attended two residential study weeks, completed an intensive on-line learning week and participated in six seminar days in Newcastle, on zoom and in London.

This final year is different to the others with higher grade boundaries and each of the four modules being ten weeks instead of nine. It also requires weekly submissions as well as interim and final assignments with at least seven hours of online lectures weekly as well as reading, weekly memory

verses and weekly uploads of written work. I have really appreciated having Wednesdays set aside for university work meaning I have a set block of time to complete work but have been flexible at busy times such as Christmas when schools' work is in high demand.

Since the last Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM), I have studied modules covering Evangelism and Apologetics, Biblical Counselling, Advanced Biblical Studies and The Great Commission and am currently studying the final module Pastoral Care for Children and Young People.

I have really enjoyed the in-depth studies and level of work required but it has definitely been challenging and particularly this final year! I have made life-long friends and am looking forward to graduating (hopefully!) at the Crosslands Conference in Birmingham, in January 2026!

The Growing Young Disciples Course: Having completed the final module of Year 3, Practical Children, Family and Youth Ministry, last June, I was informed in August that I had been awarded with the GYD Seminary Certificate.

I had a wonderful time at the conference in early January where I enjoyed worship, teaching, seminars, training, prayer, good food and fellowship with 400 other children and youth workers, leaders and volunteers from across the country. The theme was Jesus: Prophet, Priest and King with the main morning worship sessions focussed on Jesus in these three roles and the evening studying Jesus as the suffering servant through Isaiah 52 and 53. I was also presented with my Academy Seminary Certificate as part of the Academy afternoon tea!

I am now part of the GYD Fellowship (alumni) and we meet online termly to discuss particular themes and think through how the Bible speaks into the issues, continuing to learn and grow in my ministry.

I also attend relevant diocesan training as well as attending network sessions for all Children and Youth Ministers in the Diocese where we share ideas, resources and nice cakes! Currently, I am about to undertake a 2-day course in Mental Health England Course laid on free by the Diocese.

Living in the village and being the Children Youth and Families Minister for St Michael's is truly a gift from God and I want to thank everyone who supports me, helps me and prays for me. Praise be to God. *Sharon Stirman, Children, Youth and Families Minister*

Music in St Michael's

Music is an important ministry in St Michael's Church and plays a leading role in both our regular services and on special occasions such as church festivals. Music is at the heart of our worship, as we celebrate God's majesty. Music elevates, transports and energises us, releasing deep emotions. A group of up to ten people meets every couple of months to choose songs to sing on a Sunday, to ensure that as many people as possible feel there is 'something for them' in each service. We are conscious of this challenge, given the wide age range of our church family but rejoice in this diversity.

Deanery Synod Report

The Deanery Synod is the collective group of representatives from churches in the Dartford Deanery. Deanery Synod Representatives attend 3 evening meetings a year and report back to the PCC. These meetings enable representatives to discuss subjects that have cascaded down from the General Synod through the Diocesan Synod, providing input on what we as a parish church feel and how we believe God has guided our thinking. Items may also be raised by churches and PCC's to go back up the chain to raise awareness within the Diocese and church as a whole. We seek to approach everything prayerfully and be open to God's Word and guidance.

Church Fabric Report

With regard to the state of the fabric of both the church and the church hall, we leave 2024 in a good state.

The following key works were undertaken:

1. Church Hall. The roof of the small room at the rear of the church hall was repaired preventing further water damage and dampness.
2. Church Vestry. The roof of the Vestry was replaced following inspection. This work was necessary to prevent further leaks and damp. This replacement was somewhat overdue as the roof was squashy to walk on. As the vestry roof gives access to the main gulleys to the church roof this was essential.
3. Internal Church Walls. It was noticed that paint was seen to be flaking away from the walls. Following investigation this appeared to be caused by a blocked downpipe on the roof drainage system adjacent to the bell tower. This drain was unblocked and the walls were treated to prevent further flaking. This area continues to be observed for any further work that may be required.
4. Wi-Fi. It should be noted that thanks to the work of Carl, the vicar, there is an improved provision of Wi-Fi within the Parish Centre.

Also of note, but not yet acted upon as various options are reviewed, is the support of the Diocese who paid for an energy survey on the main church building. This report has provided us with various actions we can take to achieve the Church of England Zero Carbon 2030 initiative.

The church graveyard was maintained throughout the year by the Church Yard Working Party, meeting on a Tuesday to work keeping the graveyard in a good condition. As can be imagined this is a difficult job and I wish to thank all those involved in this important task. With regard to the trees within the graveyard boundaries the following work was undertaken.

1. Following a large bough snapping in high winds this bough was removed, for the sake of safety, from the main body of the tree and removed.
2. Two further trees, adjacent to the church hall, were removed close to the site of the proposed disabled toilet.

The maintenance of the church and the smooth running of services is undertaken by a large body of volunteers and we would like to thank all those involved, including those who clean the church and those who arrange the flowers for church, ensuring it looks its best for services. We would also wish to thank all the assistant wardens, sides persons and those who volunteer to open the church for services. Also, thank you to those involved in the technical side of service delivery.

Church Hall Report

We want our Church Hall to benefit both parishioners and the wider community by providing a safe and attractive multi-purpose space. The Hall is used for various church activities such as Village Breakfast, together with external bookings which generate income. These include our regular users, St Michael's Preschool, 'Dance-a-Cise', Brownies and Guides, and one-off events such as birthday parties and local elections. It has also been used by Alcoholics Anonymous at different times during the year.

Furthermore, we have been able to increase rental in holiday times. The new floor (installed summer 2024) is certainly an improvement. *Parish Administrator and Church Hall Manager*

Church Safeguarding Report as at May 2025

Parish Safeguarding Officer: Sharon Stirman

Deputy Parish Safeguarding Officer: Louise Richards

St Michael & All Angels Church adopts the House of Bishop's Safeguarding Policy Statement which is displayed on the notice board at the back of the church building. There have been two formal safeguarding concerns since the last APCM. Sharon and Louise continue to monitor the safeguarding email account, attend annual diocesan Safeguarding Conference and read the regular diocesan safeguarding bulletins reporting any changes and/or updates to the PCC.

Reports are given to the PCC at every meeting and currently the Safeguarding training data is as follows:

Those holding current **basic** training certificates: 24

Those required but yet to undertake training: 0

Those holding current **foundation** training certificates: 37

Those required but yet to undertake training: 0

Those holding current **leadership** certificates: 8

Those required but yet to undertake training: 2

Those holding current **awareness of domestic abuse** certificates: 27

Those required but yet to undertake training:

Safeguarding Requirements

Volunteers

All volunteers in any role are required to undertake a Basic Safeguarding course.

PCC, Church Wardens and those volunteering with children and youth activities

All PCC members must complete both Basic and Foundation safeguarding courses either individually online or through the church hosting formal training as a group and should be completed by August 2025

All those volunteering with children and youth activities must complete both Basic and Foundation safeguarding courses as soon as possible after offering to volunteer - they must not be left unsupervised until training is complete.

Churchwardens are to have completed both Basic and Foundation courses and to be booked onto a Leadership course by the end of August 2025.

All PCC members and church wardens are recommended to complete the Raising Awareness of Domestic Abuse training but this is no longer conditional.

Provisional training dates for new PCC members and additional sides persons as elected at the APCM are to be confirmed.

Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Scheme (DBS)

Lead: Sharon Stirman

These checks are ongoing and individuals are contacted individually by the DBS Lead.

All PCC members are required to undertake an enhanced DBS check as are all volunteers who support work with children, young people and vulnerable adults or hold leadership roles such as House Group Leaders.

DBS invitations, for new PCC members and sides persons, as elected, will be generated for completion of DBS within 10 days of APCM

Current DBS data

There are no outstanding DBS checks as of 25.04.2025

Pastoral Ministry

A small group of people meet regularly to consider prayerfully whether those in our fellowship who are suffering or troubled in some way may need help, comfort and support. They may be housebound through illness, disability or advancing years and no longer able to get to church as they once did; they may be grieving the death of a loved one, lonely or struggling with varying circumstances of life. It is important that each person feels valued and part of the family of Christ here in Wilmington. Prayer, phone calls, visits and Home Communion can really help with this. Some may also be in need of practical assistance - for example, lifts to church or a hospital appointment or help with shopping.

As a group we are looking at the possibilities of starting up an informal bereavement support group. It can be comforting to share memories of loved ones, exchange experiences or just chat in a safe place over a cup of tea or coffee.

Of course it is not just those in the pastoral group who minister in this way – many in our congregation make frequent phone calls and visits to others.

May we all continue to show the love and compassion of Jesus, in practical and spiritual ways, to our friends and neighbours.

Specific prayer needs can be shared on the prayer lines which operate either by telephone or via WhatsApp.

Prayer ministry takes place during 10.30am Communion services.

Ministry to Farrell Court and Emily Court May 2025

Services for residents in these units of sheltered accommodation take place with permission and encouragement from the managers of the homes. The services reach out to residents and help to enable them to feel a part of the family of St Michael's. Numbers are fairly small but have grown slightly this past year. Many of the regulars in Farrell Court and Emily Court try to encourage others to join in and two faithful residents at Emily Court hold their own prayer meetings regularly.

Currently, services are as follows:

Farrell Court – monthly, usually 3rd Monday at 7pm.

Emily Court – fortnightly, usually 2nd and 4th Mondays, at 10.45am.

We welcome anyone who would like to take part in these services to boost the singing and/or help with the leading.

Social and Outreach Activities

The team comprises Steve Jefferys, Illya Prior, Richard Kinderman, Chris Stapley Pam Silk-Sleafer and Marc Culliford we have also had assistance from a lot of others throughout the year. During 2024 we had the following events which took place: Messiah Evening, The Lost Treasure of Wilmington, The Village Fair, International Harvest Meal, Quiz Night, Christmas Fair.

These events helped us to come together as a church family and also be seen out in the community. It also meant we raised additional funds for the church to the extent of £2,178.90. We have a full program planned for 2025 some of which have already taken place. We hope you will be able to support us with many of these, they are always fun times. We will particularly need help at the Village Fair this year as we are running two stalls this time, the pick a jar as usual and a barbecue as there wasn't one at the fair last year.

If you have any suggestions for further events please speak to any of the team. If you wish to join the team you would be very welcome just come and talk to me. Love in Christ

Wilmington Parish News

The “Wilmington Parish News” is produced 4 times a year. The magazine, which has existed for many years, is distributed to approximately 400 households in Wilmington and is published online with notification in the Wilmington Residents Facebook pages. We strive to achieve an editorial balance that reflects the role of St Michael’s Church, together with items of general interest to Parish residents, including historical articles, biographies and the activities of local groups. Extra copies of the magazine are placed at the back of the church. Church members living outside the local area are encouraged to purchase copies.

Coffee Pop In

Coffee Pop In is held in the Church between 10.00 and 12.00, every Tuesday. The idea is for people in the local community to pop in for tea/coffee and homemade cakes. Some people bring their grandchildren and we welcome residents from Sonya Lodge and Farrell Court. More people seem to be staying for the full two hours and some seem reluctant to go home! It's encouraging that Coffee Pop In is continuing to be so popular and fulfilling a need in the community. People who are not regular church attenders receive a warm welcome from the church family who want everyone to feel at home. It is also enjoyable for our team, who work really well together and are always ready to help each other.

St Michael’s Craft Group

Craft Group has continued to meet on Tuesdays. Our membership consists of church members and friends. It is a lovely time of fellowship with the common interest in anything crafty. Deep friendships have been formed and everyone enjoys the informal set up. There is no obligation to attend every week. For any further information, please contact me.

The Mission Task Group

This group meets several times a year to learn more about and to consider the ongoing support that St Michael’s offers to the chosen charities. Currently these charities are:-

Christian Solidarity Worldwide works to support people across the world who are being persecuted for their faith.

Porchlight helps people in Kent with problems of homelessness, poverty, mental health issues.

High Hopes for Children is a local charity operating in Uganda and Moldova which aims to enable children suffering a disability to access education.

Wycliffe Bible Translators brings the word of God to all nations in their own languages.

Christian Aid supports communities with diverse needs, especially after natural disasters, both financially and practically.

Chemba Church in Kondo Diocese, Tanzania

St Michael's has had a link with this church since 2007 and has supported building work as well as aiming to foster good relationships with local pastors and people.

The group also arranges for the provision of shoeboxes to be sent across the world at Christmas time via the charity, **Samaritans Purse**.

Conversations on Christian Life

The monthly Pop-Up Conversation initiative, launched at the end of 2022, continues to thrive. The group provides an open and safe space, after the 10.30am church service, in which to explore Christian engagement with contemporary issues. There is a core of regular participants who welcome new contributors, including those who come to discuss a particular topic or whenever they can, as published in church services and notices. Conversations draw on the rich diversity of experience of those who worship at St Michael's, exploring topics such as how we should care for God's awesome creation and social justice work that is modelled on Christ's ministry on earth.

THE PCC'S ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT

Introduction

The accounting team meets termly with the Vicar to enhance communication and teamwork. Expense Plus remains as the accounting package.

Financial Review

The financial review is based upon the accounting period 1st January to 31st December 2024 on a Receipts and Payments basis.

Reserves Policy

The PCC continues to adopt the policy of aiming to ensure that three months of general expenditure is kept aside as a contingency in any one financial year.

The sum required for 2024, based upon expenditure in 2023, amounted to £32,000 and the year began with only £30,000. However as expenditure in 2024 was greatly reduced the sum required was only £25,000. The year ended with a healthy £31,000 in the Reserves Fund which gives the PCC a reasonable buffer if expenditure increases again in 2025.

Comparisons with 2021/2022/2023

Total Receipts in Unrestricted Funds

2021 £104,791
2022 £110,177
2023 £119,477
2024 £129,214 IMPROVED

Total Receipts in Restricted Funds

2021 £50,434
2022 £73,788 (significant donation of £15,000)
2023 £58,863
2024 £57,585 STABLE

Total Receipts in ALL Funds

2022 £183,965
2023 £178,340
2024 £186,799 IMPROVED (Reduced if £10,000 donation excluded)

Total Expenditure from Unrestricted Funds

2021 £105,935
2022 £105,577
2023 £128,840
2024 £102,110 DECREASED (primarily due to the reduced cost of utilities and the suspension of the Parish Share)

Total Expenditure from Restricted Funds

2021 £38,038
2022 £59,361
2023 £64,960
2024 £56,566 DECREASED

Total Expenditure in ALL Funds

2022 £164,938
2023 £193,800
2024 £158,676 DECREASED

Excess of Receipts over Payments

2022 + £19,027

2023 - £15,460

2024 +£28,123 IMPROVED

Comment

2023 was an extremely challenging year with the General Fund ending the year with a £6,836 deficit and the total funds available to the PCC being much reduced at £78,495. In addition a significant majority of those monies were ring fenced in Restricted Funds and in particular the Youth Minister Fund (39,032/78,495 or 49.7%). If reserve monies are regarded as unavailable other than in extreme circumstances the result was that at least 88% of resources were unavailable for day to day use.

The expectation as reported last year was that 2024 was likely to be equally challenging and this proved to be the case over the first half of the year despite a reduction in utility costs. It was as a result of a projected major overspend in the General Fund, by mid-year, that the PCC had to take the decision to suspend the Parish Share payments to the Diocese for the last five months of the year.

This prudent, albeit difficult, decision allied to a substantial donation and reduced expenditure elsewhere resulted in a much improved position.

The General Fund ended the year with a surplus of £21,862 with the total funds increased to £106,618.

A much smaller proportion of the funds, although still sizeable, are now ring fenced in Restricted Funds. The Youth Minister Fund now only comprises 39.3% of total funds (41,865/106,618) although if reserves are included only 67.4% are still unavailable for day to day use or projects.

The PCC is now in a position to allocate the surplus in the General Fund to other areas of expenditure as it sees fit bearing in mind that there will still be a pressure on the General Fund due to the reinstatement of the Parish Share payments from January 2025.

It should be noted that the balance of the General Fund was reduced to a £2,000 float in early 2025 as a result of reallocating the surplus to other areas of need i.e. Church wall set aside / Quinquennial repairs / Disabled toilet fund and Reserves and so the pressure on the General Fund remains if Expenditure exceeds Income as is the case in early 2025.

Parish Share

The intention of the PCC was to pay £38,340 to the Diocese in 2024, this already being a substantial reduction from the amount suggested by the Diocese, as a result of the 2023 financial position.

Due to a perilous projection mid-year, the Parish Share was suspended after the July payment and only £22,364 was paid by the year end thus saving £15,976. This combined with a substantial donation of £10,000 and reduced costs elsewhere resulted in a significant turnaround in the General Fund.

The PCC has decided to reinstate the payments and intends to pay £25,000 to the Diocese during 2025. It should be noted that as the PCC cannot rely upon one-off significant donations a watchful eye will need to be kept upon the General Fund in 2025 and a review of the Parish Share , either up or down , may be necessary depending on circumstances.

Receipts and Payments

Unrestricted Income was increased in 2024 from £119,477 to £129,214 primarily due to a substantial donation of £10,000 . In the absence of any further significant donations Unrestricted Income effectively remains static which is a concern for the future as there is no guarantee that costs will not escalate as before. If the sizeable donation is excluded Income from ALL sources was slightly reduced which is again a concern for the future.

Unrestricted Expenditure was decreased from a high of £128,840 in 2023 to £102,110 as a result of reduced utility costs and the suspension of the Parish Share. There were no significant changes in other funds and so Expenditure from ALL sources was thus also substantially reduced.

Unfortunately, the PCC cannot necessarily rely upon the continuing reduction in costs in 2025, and beyond, and efforts should continue to be made to increase income via as many channels as possible.

Youth Minister Fund

The funding of the Youth Minister via, in particular, a grant from the Rochester Good Stewards resulted in the Fund remaining extremely buoyant with a balance of £41,865 at year end.

It should be noted that of the total income of £44,834, £34,250 was received as a grant and only £10,584 arose from donations and Gift Aid.

Total expenditure amounted to £43,842 (including the Youth and Children expenses within the General Fund).

The grant is currently due to cease by Spring 2026 which means that the Youth Minister is unsustainable in the long term with existing resources being exhausted by the middle of 2027 at current rates of expenditure and income other than from grants.

The PCC are aware of this and the need for alternative sources of funding and increased giving if and when the existing grant ceases to exist.

Projects Fund

This fund was created in 2023 to hold monies set aside for various works.

Monies from various other funds were transferred to it:

Churchyard Wall Donations £1,150

Repairs Donations £8,108

Three Churches £39

The monies originally transferred from the Disabled Toilet Fund and the Vicarage Internal Maintenance Fund were returned to their original funds as it was felt more appropriate.

The Disabled Toilet project is a major undertaking that will require its own fundraising effort.

The provision of seating at the Lychgate was the most notable 'project' funded during 2024.

Lychgate project

Income Donations £526 (during both 2023 and 2024)

Grant from Wilmington PC £450

Expenditure Seats £980

It should be noted that an additional £16,000 has been transferred from the General Fund surplus in 2024 to the Projects Fund in early 2025 to cover any potential Churchyard Wall and Quinquennial costs.

Away Giving

The PCC supports various charities. The payments in 2024 were :

Christian Aid	£1,052
Porchlight	£1,052
Christian Solidarity Worldwide	£1,052
Wycliffe Bible Translators	£1,052
High Hopes for Children	£1,052
Kondoa	£1,098

Conclusion

2024 has been another extremely challenging year but has ended with the PCC on a better financial footing than at the end of 2023.

However, despite there seeming to be more resources available in 2025, the situation remains somewhat fragile. Income is potentially static, if not falling, and expenses may well increase again due to circumstances outside of the PCC's control. The Parish Share has been reinstated at a slightly higher level than in 2024 but may well not be affordable, depending on circumstances.

The PCC will need to keep a close watch on Income and Expenditure in the first half of 2025.

Monies have, at present, been put aside for various potential works but it remains to be seen whether these are affordable.

The Disabled Toilet project is currently not able to proceed until sufficient further funds are raised to provide for more than the basic first steps regarding planning, etc.

Gift Aid Report for Year Ending 31 December 2024

(Figures in brackets are those for year ending 2023, for purpose of comparison.)

Gift Aid is a government scheme that allows charities to reclaim the basic rate of tax on donations - if you are a taxpayer we can claim 25p of tax for every £1 you donate, at no extra cost to you.

At the end of 2024, we had 44 (47) active declarations, with one new gift aid declaration being signed during the year.

We received £11,410.36 (£12,219.22) in gift aid from the Inland Revenue on donations received during 2024. This includes gift aid received on donations made through the Parish Giving Scheme.

Gift Aid Small Donation Scheme (GASDS)

The GASDS allows us to claim a gift aid style repayment on small cash donations of £30 or less for which we don't hold a gift aid declaration. (For us, this is generally the loose notes and coins in the offering, but also includes planned giving envelope donations where we do not hold a declaration, and anonymous cash donations). We can claim up to £2,000 each tax year. For 2023/24, we were able to claim £1,782.00. By the end of December 2024 we had claimed £1,660 - this will form part of the claim for the 2024/25 tax year. *Gift Aid Secretary, 20 April 2025*

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of St Michael & All Angels Church, Wilmington

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the church for the year ended 31 December 2024.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the church's trustees you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

I report in respect of my examination of the church's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the church as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records.

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

Signed: Nigel Bate, 2025-03-26