



**St Lukes**  
Community Spirit



# ANNUAL REPORT

**THE PARISH CHURCH OF  
ST LUKE, ECCLESTON**

For the year ending December 2023



Knowsley Road, WA10 4PU



[stlukeeccleston.org](http://stlukeeccleston.org)

## REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

St Luke's Church Eccleston, St Helens. The parish is part of the Diocese of Liverpool and its official correspondence address is:-

St Luke's Church  
 Knowsley Road, Eccleston, St Helens, Merseyside, WA10 4PU.  
 Tel No 01744 21173  
 Vicar Email address: - garethrbanton@gmail.com  
 Administrator email address: - admin@ecclestonteam.org

The Liverpool Diocesan Board of Finance acted as Custodian Trustee for the inalienable property of the church.

For the period 1<sup>st</sup> January 2023 until the date of approval of this report, the following people served as members of the Parochial Church Council:

Clergy	Rev H Coffey*	Team Rector	Retired Sept 2023
	Rev G Banton*	Team Vicar	
	Rev Sonya Doragh*	Team Vicar	
Lay Readers	Miss D.L. Wright*	Lay Chair Deanery Synod Rep	Appointed April 2023 DSR 3 years
	Mr D Thorpe*	Deanery Synod Rep	Appointed April 2023 DSR 3 years
Churchwardens	Mrs L Rose*	Treasurer	Appointed April 2023
PCC	Mr J Crosby		Appointed April 2023
	Mrs K Grant		
	Mrs D Kelly		
	Mr T Kelly		
	Miss A Hayes		
	Mr M Hughes		Appointed April 2023
	Mrs L Llewellyn		
	Mrs J Moore		Retired April 2023
	Mrs K Sawyer*	PCC Secretary Deanery Synod Rep	Appointed April 2023 DSR 3 years
	Mr P Anderson	Assistant Treasurer	Co-opted member

Ex-Officio members are indicated by \*

The following have responsibility roles: -

Safeguarding Officer: Miss. D.L. Wright  
 Electoral Roll Officer: Mrs J Thorpe  
 Gift Aid Secretary: Mrs. J Griffiths MBE

Team Vicar: - Rev Gareth Banton, St Johns Vicarage, Crossley Road, St Helens, Merseyside.  
Tel No: - 07444 811428. Email:- [garethbanton@gmail.com](mailto:garethbanton@gmail.com)

Bankers: - Royal Bank of Scotland, Bolton Customer Service Centre, PO Box 2027 Parklands, De Havilland Way

Independent Examiner: - Mr. P. Horton, c/o St Luke's Church, Knowsley Rd, St. Helens.

Architect: Peter Williamson, Associate Director for Condry Lofthouse Architects, 24 Derby Road, Liverpool, L5 9PR

## **STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT**

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) operates under the Parochial Church Councils (Powers) Measure 1956 and the Church Representation Rules as at 2017.

The PCC is a corporate body established by the Church of England. The PCC operates under the Parochial Church Council Powers Measure and is a charity currently accepted by order from registration with the Charity Commission.

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. All church members are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and stand for election to the PCC. The PCC meets on a monthly basis with the exception of January, August and December.

Day to Day management of the church is exercised by the Standing Committee, the only committee required by law. It has the power to carry out PCC business between PCC meetings and considers strategic issues which may affect the church.

Member of the Standing Committee are:-

Miss D L Wright (Lay Chair)

Mrs L Rose (Church Warden)

Mrs K Grant (PCC Member) – retired May 2023

Mr J Crosby (PCC Member) – appointed May 2023

Rev H Coffey (Team Rector) – retired September 2023

Rev G Banton (Team Rector)

### **Related Parties:**

Queen's Park Primary School, St. Helens – the Priest-in-Charge of St Luke's Church, Eccleston is an ex-officio member of the school governors. This was Rev. Helen Coffey, Eccleston Team Rector (Retired Sept 2024) and Kate Sawyer as a Foundation Governor.

Individual PCC members receive external training as and when deemed necessary by the PCC. Training may include trustee responsibilities, basic health and safety, risk assessment and management and Safeguarding procedures.

### **Financial Risk:**

An annual budget is prepared to ensure short term viability. Actual results compared with the budget are reported to the PCC at every meeting. The investments held by the PCC are only made in low-risk funds approved for charity use. All assets are insured and levels reviewed annually. The PCC has approved internal controls for annual accounts, cash and cheques handling are implemented.

## **Compliance with Law and Regulation:**

The Diocesan Safeguarding guidelines (Parish Safeguarding Handbook - Promoting a safer church) have been adopted by the PCC. The PCC have the ultimate responsibility for all aspects of Safeguarding at St. Luke's. Safer Recruitment procedures are followed as directed by the Liverpool Diocesan Safeguarding team and all appointments need to be referred to Rev. Helen Coffey, the Team Rector.

The Diocesan policy gives clear guidelines for procedures to follow regarding recruitment. It also gives clear guidance to follow in the event of a Safeguarding issue.

The Diocese use an online system for DBS checks and all those in positions requiring a check have gone through this process. These are renewed regularly.

All leaders and helpers in groups involving Children and/or Vulnerable Adults are required to complete a confidential internal information form, following the diocesan 'Safer Recruitment' guidelines and procedures.

All PCC members have undergone an online DBS check.

Readers are required to complete Diocesan Safeguarding training and St. Luke's Readers have either completed the training or are due to attend training in the near future.

The PCC continues to be diligent in monitoring legal compliance and changes to legislation.

## **AIMS AND PURPOSE & OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES**

The general functions of the PCC are stated within section 2 of the Parochial Church Councils (Powers) Measure 1956.

St. Luke's Parochial Church Council (PCC) has the responsibility of co-operating with the incumbent, in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish, the whole mission of the church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. The PCC is also responsible for the maintenance of the Church & Community Centre, Knowsley Road, St Helens.

When planning the objectives for the year, the PCC gave consideration to the Charity Commission's guide on public benefit.

## **Mission and Outreach Support**

Due to the financial situation and the large deficit during the year, the PCC decided that only 5% of the regular income during the year would be distributed to our missionary partners and charities instead of the usual 10%.

The distribution as follows: -

		<i>(figures in brackets relates to FYE 2022)</i>
CMS (Eric & Sandra Reed)	£530	(£1,385)
CPAS	£135	(£345)
Bible Society	£135	(£345)

SGM Lifewords	£135	(£345)
St Helens Street Pastors	£266	(£695)
Tear Fund	£400	(£1,040)
United Christians Broadcasting	£135	(£345)
Hope from Above (Tim & Carol Derbyshires)	£266	(£695)
Hope Centre	£530	(£1,385)
Simeons	£135	(£345)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£2,667</b>	<b>(£6,925)</b>



### **Vicar's Report:**

2023 was quite the year for St Luke's. Lots of good things have happened, and we also faced some real challenges as well. Please see the 'Eccleston Team' report which outlines some of the larger events that transpired on a team level.

On Sundays we have continued to grow gently and steadily in 2023 (see statistics below). I'm so grateful for everybody who is involved in helping make sure Sundays are a success, from leading worship to preaching, to bible reading or leading prayers, to assisting with Kid's Church, to arranging flowers to welcoming and serving refreshments. All our individual acts of service contribute to making Sunday mornings enjoyable, friendly and glorifying to God. There's also a number of people doing roles quietly in the background, from gardening, to managing our finances, to safeguarding. All of these are a service not just to church but to God, and again I express my thanks for all that people offer.

The start of 2023 was also the start of our Kid's Church, which has enjoyed a good first year. A good number of families now enjoy and rely on weekly provision for their children on a Sunday morning. There are so many obstacles to surmount to simply attend church with small children, but being able to offer something reliably week in and week out makes it that much easier for young families to come, relax and feel at home and supported in our church family. I am so grateful to all our volunteers, and especially Julie who coordinates the team, who all give a great deal of time and effort in their preparation and delivery, and of course also sacrifice time that would otherwise be spent being nurtured themselves in the morning worship.

When 2023 began we had to make the necessary decision to close the community centre because of a number of floods and roof collapses. The process of drying, mending and repairing the centre took the entirety of 2023 and part of 2024. It has been frustratingly slow at times for various reasons (such as the insurance company setting the timescale for examination and repair works) and also personal bereavement meaning one contractor we were dealing with had an extended time off work. Throughout it all, our Warden Lorraine has worked really hard calling, emailing and negotiating with the insurance company and various contractors. She has been supported by others with particular tasks and so I thank her and all those who've been involved. At the time of writing the critical works are essentially completed, though there are further improvements we will wish to make to the centre when we are able to financially.

In terms of finances, our church faces a significant ongoing deficit. Our reserves are running quite low and so we need to increase income and reduce expenditure sharply if we're to continue to be solvent and sustainable. Doing our utmost to increase use of the community centre is going to be key to achieving that. Of course, as disciples of Jesus, we know that financial giving to the church is one way in which we worship God, and is also an important part of our discipleship. The PCC are



incredibly grateful to the financial gifts the congregation provide, no matter how large or small. I urge all out members to regularly review their financial giving.

The PCC dedicated a significant amount of their time in 2023 to learning and exploring teaching from the organisation 'Leading Your Church into Growth' (LYCIG). I'm grateful to Diane Wright and Tom Kelly for the time and dedication they each have given to the journey. As a PCC, and as a church, it has been clear to me that people want to see the church change and grow. Change is always hard, and it often comes slowly but our church family have proven themselves patient with slow change, but also flexible with sudden change (such as service time changes!) Church growth is an ongoing, ever-present goal that we pray for, and trust God for. And as you can see from the stats we have been enjoying a period of growth. Can I please encourage all our church members to join with our PCC in regularly praying the prayer for growth, found at the end of this report.

Our regular ministries and groups have continued throughout 2023. We are far from a 'Sunday-only' church community, with a Monday toddler group, a Tuesday coffee morning, a Wednesday food pantry, a hobby hub, a monthly Men's fellowship group, and weekly home groups. My thanks to all who held lead or assist in these vital midweek ministries.

### **Eccleston Team Report**

As a team we've responded to these changes to the best of our ability. I'm proud of how our churches are faring at the moment, holding our own and even growing in the face of difficult circumstances.

I didn't ever envision becoming the sole vicar in a team of churches but that's how events have transpired. It's been challenging, (at times extremely so) but I've been supported by so many of our members and volunteers in a variety of different ways, for which I'm truly grateful. Our willingness to work together as a team has made ministry possible in a variety of different ways, big to small.

Some of the significant events affecting our team throughout 2023 were as follows:

- As the year began, two of our parishes (St James with St Matthews, and Christ Church) were engaging in the Fit For Mission (FFM) process, and two churches (St John's, and St Luke's) were not. For those who do not know, Fit for Mission is the name of a Diocese-wide strategy to convert deaneries into single larger parishes, to reduce governance and increase missional energy. Early in the year, on the 15th January, the PCC of St James with St Matthews had lengthy discussions and after prayerful consideration decided to withdraw from the FFM process. Their reasons were outlined in a statement which is available upon request.
- In March we said farewell to our Team curate, Rev Gregor, who moved to Blackburn Diocese to serve in the Fellfield Team of churches. A team leaving service was held for him at St Luke's.
- Shortly afterwards, Rev Helen our Team Rector announced that she would be leaving the Eccleston team, after a period of study leave to take up a post in the Winwick Deanery.
- Also, in March our Deanery Synod was presented with the formal proposal for pastoral reorganisation in our deanery. As part of this the churches in our team (as well as two other churches not engaged in FFM) were presented with three different options for how clergy would be deployed in our churches. It was decided by the synod that 2.4 clergy were to be allocated across the 5 parishes and there were three options outlined for how to share that allocation. None of which were deemed acceptable by our parishes, (or our parishes patrons). It was decided that we would conduct a separate process by which we determine how best to deploy clergy in our churches.

- In May, Helen celebrated her final Sunday service in the Ecclestone Team and began her study leave. At this point Rev Gareth as Team Vicar, became the sole clergy person for the three parishes. A leaving service was held for Helen and Tony in September when she had completed her sabbatical.
- In September a new 'Schools Team' was established. We are inspired by the words from Psalm 78: "we will not hide these things from our children, but we will tell the coming generation the glorious deeds of the Lord, and the wonders he has done." The team is comprised of volunteers from each of our churches, who help facilitate worship and educational events and services for children in our churches, and within three of our local school. It has worked really well,
- In October our PCCs met together to begin discerning a shared Team Vision, acknowledging that we needed to continue on the journey of working together closely, sharing our resources and supporting one another. Our team vision is articulated (and has subsequently been shared with churches in 2024) in the form of three aspirations:

Our vision is to be a team that:

1. Puts Jesus at the centre of all we do.
2. Serves our community in meaningful ways.
3. Provides faith opportunities for all age groups.

At our October meeting we also highlighted some short term achievable goals to work towards together, all of which at the time of writing we have completed or made good progress with. These were:

To produce one vision statement for the whole team.

To employ a shared team administrator.

To have one shared web presence.

To cooperate together on social events.

To gather older children from across the churches for a social event, and begin to explore what a 'team youth ministry' might look like.

Throughout 2023, God has been faithful to us. We've seen growth in some areas of our churches lives, and we trust that the same will be true for 2024.

*Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think. Glory to him in the church and in Christ Jesus through all generations forever and ever! Amen.*

*Rev Gareth Banton – Team Vicar*

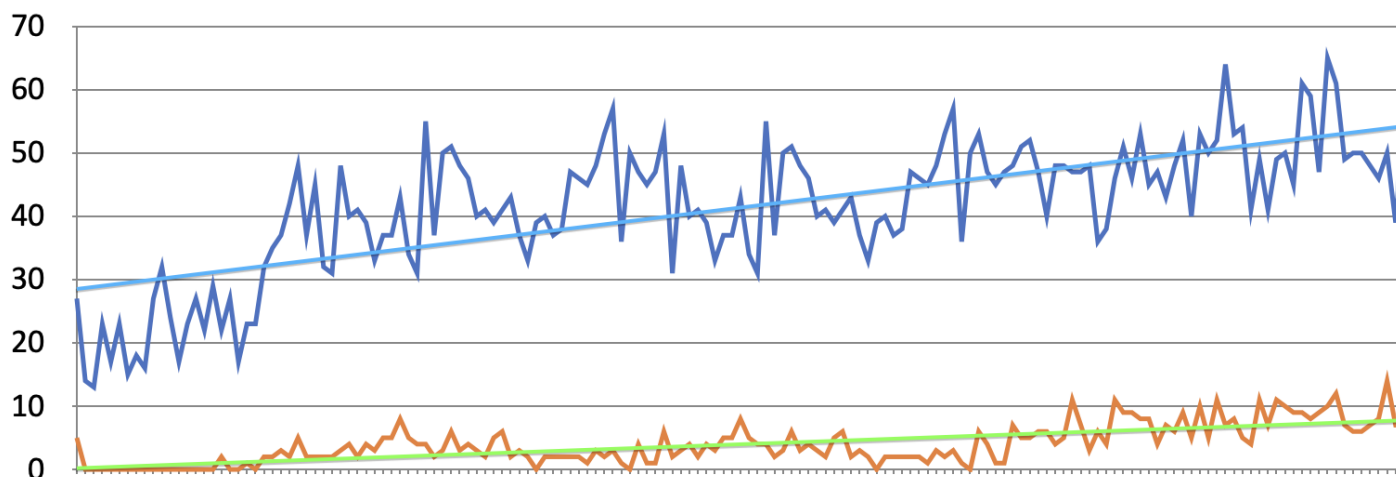
## **ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE**

The PCC is delighted with its achievements set out in the previous and following section. The following section highlights the areas of activity and performance

The electoral roll (April 2022- 107) is now 112 people, 66 of whom are non-resident in the parish. During the year 6 people have joined and 1 are deceased.

Worship: - This average attendance over the year was 49 adults and 7 children. This is just based on 'ordinary Sundays 'and doesn't take into consideration major festivals and baptism services which can artificially boost our numbers. The chart below shows attendance on ordinary Sundays throughout the last three years. The blue line represents adult attendance, and the orange line represents children's (under 16s) attendance. The straight lines are linear trendlines.

**Attendance 2021 and 2022 and 2023**



We average 2 connections on Zoom each Sunday. We have continued to provide a 'Zoom 'service for all the churches in the Ecclestone Team. This is later uploaded onto our YouTube channel.

We held 9 baptism services during the year. 6 funeral services were held at church, and we held 3 at the crematorium. There were no wedding services and 1 wedding blessing.

We have a small team of church family members who make handmade gifts for our baptism children to mark the occasion of Welcoming them into the church family and for the adults we give them a Bible.

## **Church Buildings**

As reported last year we had to close the community centre due to a water burst from burst pipes. In January we met up with the insurance assessor to see if we could proceed with the insurance claim logged in December. We were given the approval and the repair work started in March and took to July before it was signed off by us and the insurance company.

The PCC took the decision whilst the centre was closed to see what other refurbishment work could we do and afford from our reserves. The decision was made to paint the areas not covered by the insurance work and to replace the floor coving in the centre which was the original laid when the centre was built in the 1980's and in places started to become a health and safety risk. Also, the original internal fire doors and toilet doors to be replaced due to holes in the doors and wear and tear over the years.

The outstanding painting not covered by the insurance claim was completed in July following PCC approval.



Following obtaining quotes, PCC approval and a faculty approval, work started on the flooring in August and took longer than expected due to the Owner of the business deal with the sudden death of his father who was joined Owner of the business, delays in supplies delivery and Covid also affecting the staff, eventually all the flooring was completed at the beginning of November. Regarding the doors quote where obtained during Nov-Jan for approval of the PCC in the new financial year.

In September during the annual gas safety check for the heating boilers in church and the Community Centre a total of 4. One of the boilers which cover the church was condemned due to the parts required for repair now being obsolete, The other 3 of the boilers in repairs. The 2 boilers covering the Community Centre only require minor repairs and were operating quickly. The 2<sup>nd</sup> boiler covering church ended up with major parts require and eventually after 6 weeks started to work. The PCC have been advised to start planning for new boilers for the church heating systems in the near future.

In Nov/Dec due to amount of rain the Tower roof as started to leak again. We are overdue a quinquennial inspection. On checking the last report, the Inspector was unable to inspect the roof and advise a safely harness to be installed. The PCC are looking into this ready for the next inspection due to take place in 2024. In the meantime, a water pump has been temporarily installed to pump the water out of the loft area under the tower roof whilst we wait the Inspection to take place and advise what work needs to be undertaken.

The fire extinguishers were serviced in June.

The PCC would like to thank the volunteers who clean the church regularly, flower arrangements in church and look after the gardens around church throughout the year.

## **Staffing**

From September 2023 on behalf of Christ Church we employ a caretaker for their community centre. This employment will be transferred when Christ Church legally moves from the Eccleston Team to the larger parish of Church St Helens expected to happen May 2024.

There are many volunteers who fulfil roles at St Luke's in a variety of ways. There are too many to name individually and if we had to pay for this work, it would cost us thousands of pounds. During the year a number of volunteers due to personal issues have had to step back on the work they do for the church and we especially like to Thank them for the many years of serving in their ministries. The PCC are truly thankful and appreciative to all the people who serve the Lord in St Luke's and within the Eccleston Team in whatever role that is.

## **PASTORAL SUPPORT**

### **Whatsapp Prayer Group - Co-Ordinator Stina & Dave Foxford**

Eccleston Team Prayer Group is more than a set group of people. It continues to 'meet' via WhatsApp and Prayer times which are on 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of the month, and we welcome prayer requests and anyone to join us. WhatsApp Prayer is only about half an hour from 8pm and follows ready prepared Prayer Guide, which is also accessible through the Team's 'Being Church' email. The format of the WhatsApp Prayer time consists of two worship songs, a short reflection and variety of prayer pointers.

It is impossible to say how many people take part in the WhatsApp Prayer time. Some people join in real-time whilst others use the Prayer Guide on their own at a more convenient time. However, we do know that there are people who enjoy the Prayer time regularly and are not just from our Eccleston Team of churches. So, we could say that this modern style of prayer group works, but we do not think that it should be entirely a replacement of face-to-face prayer groups. We 'met' twenty times during the year and had a summer break in August and an extended Christmas break.

Our topics of prayer were: Our families & ourselves, Clergy & leadership, our Church family, C of E, Ukraine & Ukrainians, Living costs crisis, Ethiopia, NHS and social services, Turkey – Syria earthquake, Persecuted Christians, Young people & suicide prevention, our link schools, Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh, Easter, Street Pastors, Children's activities, APCMs, PCCs, Church wardens, Diocese representatives, the Coronation, Sudan, Eccleston Team marriage course, Thy Kingdom Come – project, Environment, Armenia, Church growth, India, School exams, St. Helens town, North Korea, County lines in St. Helens, Rev. Helen and Tony Coffey & Eccleston Team, Schools Ministry, Morocco (earthquake), Libya (severe flood), Anti- Slavery Day, Alternative events to Halloween, Israel – Hamas war, International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church (IDOP), Remembrance Sunday, Advent time & Christmas season.

Clearly, we prayed a lot and for many issues and many people.

Thank you very much to everyone who has taken the time and effort to stand in prayer with us! It is invaluable and makes a big difference in people's lives.

## **COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES**

### ***"Teddies"* Toddler Group – Team Leader Julie Parry**

Teddies has been in Church last year. We have had more room but there have been practical restrictions also.

Our numbers have been regularly hitting 45 families. This includes a lot of regulars and quite a few new families.

Due to heating problems during Oct/nov we unfortunately had to close for about six weeks. At Easter, end of Summer term and Christmas we have a party and hired soft play equipment which the children love.

Thanks to the volunteer who come every week help to set up and clean up after the session and help during the time with craft activity and listen to adults.

### **5<sup>th</sup> Eccleston St Luke's Brownies – Leader Brown Owl Gill Crosby**

The Spring term started in January in unusual surroundings as we had to make our home in the Jubilee lounge, due to the hall being out of action. We didn't mind, as it was only for a few weeks! We tailored our activities to the smaller space and got on with our new badge work – Wellbeing. We looked at mindfulness, diet, and the ways we can feel good about ourselves. In February we joined other girls from Merseyside at Huyton Sports Village for Thinking Day to explore more about Lord Baden Powell, and his Sister Agnes and his wife Olave, who formed the "Rosebuds" the former name of "Brownies".

We also realised that the Brownie pack at St. Luke's had been running for 50 years on the 17<sup>th</sup> of March, so we had a little celebration as it just happened to fall on a Monday! during which we were delighted to have the new girls make their promises and we awarded badges from the Autumn term. Some lively singing for the parents complemented the evening.

During this term Girl Guiding Head Quarters announced new branding for the whole movement which was more in keeping with the digital era, so we got a new Brownie identity logo and a new Girl Guiding logo.

We also made Mother's Day cards and gifts, and Easter cards and baskets before we broke up for Easter.

The summer term started with the realisation that the hall would still be out of action for some considerable time so again we had to choose wisely what activities could be done within the space. Our new badge work this term was "Take Action". We looked at our environment; including a fact-finding mission to Taylor Park, and how we could change small things to make a difference. This theme also went well with a project, Hannah Davies (Rainbow Owl), wanted to do from the Wildlife Trust. "30 Days Wild" was a get out and look at nature project for the month of June, the Brownies really enjoyed this and the best bit was that the girls could earn yet another badge to add to their collections!

For the first time in 3 years, on the 28<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup> April, we were able to go on a pack Holiday to our local Brownie house. There was much planning and excitement in the build up and the holiday was a great success. The theme was Whinnie the Pooh and there were lots of crafts to make and things to experience. Sue Brindley (Brown Owl) enjoyed crafting with the girls, Helen Brindley (Snowy owl) kept everything ship shape, while myself (Tawny Owl) and Hannah Davies (Rainbow Owl) seemed to spend most of our time in the kitchen as food disappeared as fast as we served it! A great time was had by all and we arrived home very tired but with wonderful memories.

A scorching hot Saturday in June saw myself and 8 Brownies board a coach to Scarisbrick camp site for the day. The theme was "The Seaside" and the organisers had done a fantastic job. We had donkeys, a beach, circus tricks to learn, a Punch and Judy show, stalls, bungee swings, which the girls loved, and a mesmerising giant bubble maker which kept the girls amused for most of the afternoon which was welcomed because I was sitting wilting in the heat by this time. The coach home was very hot and we were all glad to get off it, but another great day of memories was made.

Just before the end of term we were invited to a Guide Leader's farm in Cronton, we spent the evening learning how to make a camp and how to build a fire safely, how to strike a match and finally we got to make popcorn and smores (toasted marshmallow between 2 chocolate digestives). We all went home tired and smelly from the smoke.

Unfortunately, Sue Brindley (Brown Owl) had some major health issues during the summer term and the decision was taken that she should step back and that her daughter Helen Brindley would join the leaders on a more permanent basis, and that myself; Gillian Crosby should take up the position of Brown owl. With the help of the Vicar, Gareth, we had a lovely service in church to celebrate both 50 years of Brownies at St. Luke's and Sue's 45 years in Guiding and to say thank you but not quite goodbye to her.

The next day we had our promise ceremony and badge night, where more new girls made their promise, we had three Brownies presented with their Gold awards, the highest award a Brownie can get, and I was officially introduced to parents as the New Brown Owl and Helen became Tawny Owl.

Autumn term rolled round all to soon and it was my turn to take the helm and do the planning etc. we had a very busy term. We welcomed 6 new girls in September and a new Young Leader: Ranger, Riley Parry (Snowy Owl). Our badge work was "Know Myself" which was ideal for breaking the ice and using the theme to get to know each other.

In November we went to Scarisbrick camp site a second time for their “Winter Sparkle”, a crisp bright cold morning saw us having mock snowball fights, playing games in the woods, dancing with the Snow Queen, visiting the stalls and having lunch round the campfire. It was a lovely morning and over all too soon.

In December we had our Christmas party which was Movie themed, and we also went to Park side Care Home, Prescott Road and sang a selection of carols and Christmas songs and met one of our old Brown Owls Joan Massey who was thrilled to see us. It nicely rounded off our 50<sup>th</sup> year.

Gill Crosby, Helen Brindley, Hannah Davies (Unit Leaders)  
Sue Brindley (Occasional leader), Riley Parry (Young Leader)

## **Food Pantry – Co-ordinator Jean Moore**

Following the flood in the church centre, the food pantry has operated from the main church building throughout 2023. We have 25 volunteers, some of whom are church members and others from the community. One of members is a sixth-former at Cowley and another came to us through the Local Authority ESOL service as a way for her to improve her English. (She speaks far better English than we speak Spanish!).

When we moved into the church, we used to get about 40 pantry members visiting the pantry each week, now we average about 65 visits per weeks but we have had several weeks where there have been over 70 visits and our record number was 86. In order to make sure that we can provide enough food for everyone to have a choice, we have limited our membership numbers to 150. If we have applications that would take us above this number, these people are placed on the waiting list until a place becomes available. Currently, we have 134 members.

We have been able to keep the cost of a weekly visit to £4 because we have been successful in applying for grants which we have used to subsidise the cost for our members. We also, give free shops to people who arrive at pantry in crisis. Our members come from a variety of different backgrounds:- working; unemployed; pensioners; refugees etc. Whatever their circumstances, all of the people who visit the pantry are very grateful for the support that they are receiving through the pantry.

Thanks to the generosity of church members, we were able to give each child, whose parents visit the pantry, an Easter egg last Easter. In May, we invited pantry members to join us at the Big Lunch that we held to celebrate King Charles’ coronation. The event was held on the church car park and we were very grateful for the good weather that the Lord provided and to church members for the contributions of food that they provided. Several of our pantry members took up the invitation to join us and told us afterwards that they had had a lovely time. At Christmas, we received a grant from St. Helens and Halton VCA which we put towards making up a hamper of Christmas food for our members. We were partnered with Lidl, King Street for the Neighbourly toy appeal and this meant that we were able to give each child a Christmas gift. Also the generosity of church members, meant that we were able to give each child a selection box. When asked after Christmas had they had an enjoyable Christmas, one of members who has a large family replied:- “Thanks to you all here, we did”. This kind of comment, made all the hard work in putting it all together worthwhile.

We continue to invite pantry members to come to Church events whenever we can. On a personal note, I would like to thank all the volunteers for all their hard work during the past 12 months and wish them well as they continue to provide this valuable service to our community in 2024.

## **Tea and Toast – Co-ordinator Lorraine Rose, Julie Parry & Lorna Llewellyn**

During 2023 we have continued to operate from the Jubilee Lounge at the back of church. We only closed for 1 week between Christmas and the New Year.

We now have a few regulars who come each week. A mixture of ages from young to old, New friendships have been made and we have seen people just pop in because they are passing and saw the church doors open. On occasions we had people who are homeless call in for a warm drink/food and to get warm. We have some clothing/ food ready to eat around the Pantry and we see if we can find anything for them and check they are aware of the support available from other organisations. At times we had people who come in who just want a listen ear and to pray with them.

We will continue to serve God and try encourage more people in the community to call in.

## **Hobby Hub – Co-ordinator Sarah Murphy**

We have enjoyed a happy and successful year at Hobby Hub. As many of you know, the group was started by Susan Stewart to enjoy and share crafting skills. It is open to all [ both men and women] within the Eccleston Team of churches and beyond. Susan left the group in March 2023 when Gregor moved to be Team Vicar of another parish and Sarah Murphy then became the nominated contact and key holder for the group.

We are going from strength to strength and have approximately between 15 and 20 people who attend on a regular basis. We meet from 7-8.30 in the church lounge. Members contribute a 50p-£1 donation each week which we pass onto church as a contribution to milk and overhead costs. We have a variety of crafts on display from our members, from needle felting, crochet, colouring to lego and modelling. We also have noticed that we all benefit from the supportive and friendly nature of the group. A regularly used Whatsapp group ensures we can keep in touch with each other and check in with absent members. We also enjoy a cuppa, chat and a biscuit of two together!

We look forward to continuing to add to our membership in the next year.

## **St Luke's Indoor Bowls – Co-ordinator Alan Cresswell, Allan Taggart & Charles Johnson**

At the beginning of 2023 our bowlers were devastated to hear of the water damage in the Church Centre, which meant that our bowls venue would be out of action for some time. Fortunately, we were rescued by our friends at St James' with St Matthew's who allowed us to use St Matthew's hall on Thursday afternoons.

Their mats were so good that we acquired them when we finished the indoor season in March and they have been a great addition to our facilities at St Luke's now that we are back "home". Unfortunately, the contours of the floor at St Luke's are still a mystery which Hercule Poirot, Miss

Marple and Philip Marlowe would all fail to solve and we are still challenged by the unexpected paths which our bowls choose to follow.

Nevertheless Alan, with his bag of balls from which we have to pick a number to decide our mats and bowling groups, and the excellent refreshments (Tunnock's tea cakes and caramel wafers – thanks Bev!) do more than enough to make up for this. All are welcome to come along and join us when we start again in October.

## **St Luke's Men's Group – Co-ordinator Alan Cresswell, Charles Johnson & Allan Taggart**

Once again we had a very successful series of monthly meetings in the Black Bull. We had a wide range of topics. Ben Bolton-Maggs spoke very entertainingly about his experiences as a medic on an expedition to the peak of Mount Kilimanjaro and Jean Chambers told us about her work as a nurse in Northern Canada. Yvonne Taylor spoke about her Polish mother's ordeal doing forced labour during the second world war, whilst David Thorpe's focus was a little closer to home as he told us of his work in the Liverpool Diocese Education Department. We were pleased to welcome back Phil Davidson as he continued his attempts to convince the petrol heads about the advantages of electric cars (he really needs to speak to some of our wives as they make big decisions like which car to buy).

We played snooker at St James'; we had our bowls night at Prescott and Odyssey; and we had a Christmas event jointly with the ladies from the Hobby Hub (thanks to the ladies for allowing us to join them, and thanks to Ron for the music and to Lorraine for the game of Consequences – what happens at the Christmas do stays at the Christmas do!).

Thanks to all who have attended our meetings and who have given so generously when speakers asked for a donation to charity. This generosity was also evident when we had to pay a small fee to the Black Bull for the use of the function room and when we had to bring refreshments for the Christmas event. As a result of this financial demand from the Black Bull we have had to find another venue, but more about that will be in next year's report.

Finally I must mention that some ladies have expressed regret that they cannot attend the Men's Meeting. It is unfortunate, but apart from the fact that we don't have to give birth to our children, attending the Men's Meeting is possibly the only advantage to being born male !

## **FINANCE**

Regular giving and donations decreased by just over 8%, compared to the same for 2022, whereas our regular commitments (gas, electricity, water, insurance, etc) have increased by 40% during the year, with the bulk of this increase being due to the combined increase in gas and electricity costs of 81%.

Our Parish Share contribution for 2023 was maintained at more or less the same level as 2022.

Although people joined the Parish Giving Scheme when it was initially launched, the uptake of this did not continue through 2023.



Payments associated with the vicarage have remained consistent compared to 2022, although they now do only account for the telephone line and broadband connection.

All other costs associated with the vicarage (i.e., council tax, water rates, etc.), which were incurred because it was occupied by Rev Gregor Stewart and his family during his Curacy, are now accounted for separately under the 'curacy costs' line and are paid for by the 4 churches of the Eccleston Team as shown in the 'curacy income' row under the income section. The rent of the vicarage is covered by a curacy grant from the Liverpool Diocese. This income and expenditure ceased when Rev Gregor completed his curacy in March with any overpayments from the other churches returned.

A large one-off maintenance cost was incurred during 2023 for the replacement of the flooring throughout the church centre, this was paid for from the 'Church Upgrade Fund' which is from the investment income from the restricted fund..

Further large maintenance costs were also incurred during 2023 for the repairs to the boilers for both the church and the centre and also for repairs to the water pipes and tanks within the centre which had caused the flooding issues.

We have received a total of £9,983 in tax recovery from regular and donations income. This is higher than during 2022 as tax recovery has been received for a total of 13 months, which included the end of 2022. Also, a large donations was received in November 2022 which was gift aided.

Income from hall lettings was only slightly higher than that in 2022, although the centre was out of use for the majority of the year as most of the community groups utilised the church building instead of the centre..

We have received investment income totalling £2,079 from the bequest investment fund, which is available for the PCC without any restrictions. This was lower than that received in 2022 as some funds had been withdrawn from the investment funds to cover the additional expenditure.

Performance of Investments from the fund accounts held with the Central Board of Finance from the sale of the school have been good with dividend payments and interest achieving £2,123 which is available to the PCC for restricted items.

## **FINANCIAL REVIEW**

At the end of the year, between the main deposit and current accounts there was a total of £12,254 available as general funds.

The market value of the investment fund from the bequest donations, which is available to the PCC without any restrictions, was £46,792 as a total of £40,000 had been withdrawn from this fund during the year. There was also a further £1,014 in restricted funds which are available for the PCC to use for restricted purposes.

## **Agent Transactions**

The PCC acted as a financial agent for the following people / organisations: -

- Liverpool Diocese - £1,772.00 was received in regards to Assigned Fees for weddings and funerals from the wedding couples and funeral directors which has been forwarded to the diocesan board of finance
- Fundraising events were organised for DEC Appeal, MacMillan Cancer Care (Coffee Morning) and Tear Fund (Harvest Service and Big Quiz) which raised £264.03, £395.46 and £197.00 respectively and these have been forwarded to the organisations concerned.

## **Plans for the Future**

We will continue to work with the other churches and develop relationships within the Eccleston team, developing and supporting best practices, worshipping styles and new ideas across the Team. Together we will continue working towards our vision to be a team of churches that:

1. Puts Jesus at the centre of all we do.
2. Serves our community in meaningful ways.
3. Provides faith opportunities for all age groups.

We will continue to pray for our church, trusting God for growth.

God of Mission  
who alone brings growth to your Church,  
send your Holy Spirit to give  
vision to our planning,  
wisdom to our actions,  
joy to our worship  
and power to our witness.  
Help our church to grow in numbers,  
in spiritual commitment to you,  
and in service to our local community,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

## **DECLARATION**

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above.

Signature



Full Name: - Rev. Gareth Banton

Position: - PCC Chair

Date: - 23rd April 2024

**The Parish Church of  
ST LUKE, ECCLESTON**

**Financial Statement for the year ending 2023.**

*Knowing Jesus, Growing in Jesus, Showing Jesus to others*

**PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF  
St Luke's, Ecclestone  
FINANCIAL STATEMENT  
For the year ended 31 December 2023  
Receipts & Payments Account**

	Unrestricted funds £	Designated funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
<b>Receipts</b>					
<b>Voluntary receipts</b>					
<b>Regular Giving</b>					
Planned Giving - Gift Aid	22,139			22,139	23,489
Planned Giving - Parish Giving Scheme	5,793			5,793	6,920
Planned Giving - Other	4,095			4,095	4,570
Loose Plate Collections	4,488			4,488	4,220
Tax Recovered - Gift Aid	9,983			9,983	5,760
Tax Recovered - Gift Aid on Small Donations in memoriam				0	0
members' payments		1,757		1,757	1,828
grants	684			684	1,500
other donations	2,377	277		2,654	3,202
special appeals				0	0
				<b>51,594</b>	<b>67,600</b>
<b>Receipts from activities for generating funds</b>					
refreshments	426			426	328
copy printer income	5			5	7
hall lettings	5,703			5,703	5,587
other income (incl cards)	692			692	1,454
				<b>6,825</b>	<b>7,376</b>
<b>Receipts from Church activities</b>					
PCC Fees	1,608			1,608	3,679
Donations from Verger				0	0
				<b>1,608</b>	<b>3,679</b>
<b>Receipts from investments</b>					
Bank & CBF interest/dividends	1,997		2,281	4,279	5,083
				<b>4,279</b>	<b>5,083</b>
<b>Other receipts</b>					
Weekend income / outings				0	0
Insurance claim	2,584			2,584	0
Curacy Income		-412		-412	11,238
				<b>2,172</b>	<b>11,238</b>
<b>St Luke's Pantry Income</b>					
Grants		4,350		4,350	12,210
Donations		3,705		3,705	1,697
Members Payments		13,126		13,126	9,398
Other Payments		216		216	419
				<b>21,397</b>	<b>23,724</b>
<b>Total Receipts</b>	<b>62,575</b>	<b>23,019</b>	<b>2,281</b>	<b>87,875</b>	<b>118,699</b>

**PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF**  
**St Luke's, Ecclestone**  
**FINANCIAL STATEMENT**  
**For the year ended 31 December 2023**  
**Receipts & Payments Account**

	Unrestricted funds £	Designated funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
<b>Payments</b>					
<b>Church activities</b>					
Missionary giving	2,668	677		3,344	8,251
Parish share	50,175			50,175	51,035
Working expenses	1,172			1,172	1,593
Vicarage costs	630			630	630
Curacy Costs		612		612	10,723
Wages	354			354	2,410
Church heat/light	7,404			7,404	4,060
Church insurance	2,933			2,933	3,191
Evangelism (incl anniversary)	452			452	822
Church Maintenance	3,398			3,398	18,937
Upkeep of services	368	228		595	332
Equipment	115	927		1,042	515
Copier lease/mtce	1,326			1,326	1,031
Community centre maintenance	7,586			7,586	1,679
Community centre running costs	10,336			10,336	7,976
Weekend accommodation/ outings				0	0
Refreshments	347			347	242
Other working exps	2,285	745		3,029	1,923
Church upgrade works			15,328	15,328	0
				<b>110,064</b>	<b>115,350</b>
<b>St Luke's Pantry</b>					
Fees		1,473		1,473	1,575
Equipment		987		987	2,783
Purchases (Grants)		10,705		10,705	0
Purchases		8,253		8,253	10,895
Other Purchases		214		214	416
				<b>21,632</b>	<b>15,669</b>
<b>Total Payments</b>	<b>91,548</b>	<b>24,820</b>	<b>15,328</b>	<b>131,696</b>	<b>131,019</b>
<b>Excess of Receipts over Payments</b>	<b>(28,973)</b>	<b>(1,801)</b>	<b>(13,046)</b>	<b>(43,820)</b>	<b>(12,320)</b>

**PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF  
St. Luke's, Ecclestone  
STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES  
For the year ended 31 December 2023**

	Unrestricted funds £	Designated funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
<b>Cash Funds</b>					
Bank current account	(4,888)		(894)	<b>(5,782)</b>	<b>(3,031)</b>
Bank deposit account	18,036			<b>18,036</b>	<b>6,116</b>
Community Centre account		10,478		<b>10,478</b>	<b>10,713</b>
Church Board of Finance Deposit Fund				<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
Church Board of Finance Deposit Account (764001)			1,014	<b>1,014</b>	<b>3,588</b>
Fund bank accounts and cash		1,127		<b>1,127</b>	<b>1,669</b>
Total bank current and deposit accounts	<b>13,148</b>	<b>11,605</b>	<b>120</b>	<b><u>24,873</u></b>	<b><u>19,056</u></b>
<b>Investment Assets</b>					
CBF Investment Fund (Old School Sale) (764002) **			41,405	<b>41,405</b>	<b>37,816</b>
CBF Fixed Int Investment Fund (Old School Sale) (764003) **			41,114	<b>41,114</b>	<b>38,802</b>
CBF Fixed Int Investment Fund (Bequest) (764004)	23,134			<b>23,134</b>	<b>50,291</b>
CBF Investment Fund (Bequest) (764005)	23,658			<b>23,658</b>	<b>41,066</b>
				<b><u>129,311</u></b>	<b><u>167,975</u></b>
** Investment Assets were previously managed by the trustees of Greenhalls Ecclesiastical Charity. These have now been transferred to St Lukes Parochial Church Council.					
<b>Other Monetary Assets</b> (all in respect of unrestricted funds)					
Income tax recoverable from HMRC from October - December 2023				<b>1,760</b>	<b>4,435</b>
<b>Liabilities</b> (all in respect of unrestricted funds)					
None				<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

Approved by the PCC on 23rd April 2024 by correspondence.

And signed on their behalf on 26th April 2024 by



Rev Gareth Banton  
Team Vicar



Mr Peter Anderson  
PCC Assistant Treasurer



## NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS:

1. These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations 2006 using the Receipts and Payments basis.
2. The following assets are recognised but are not necessarily valued in the Statement of Assets and Liabilities:  
Freehold land and buildings comprising the Church Centre  
Various items of ICT and audio visual equipment  
Various tables and chairs purchased in 2010
3. The expenses paid to clergy may include a small, immaterial proportion which relates to their function as PCC members.  
No other payments were made to PCC members.

4. The movements in designated funds during the year were:

	<b>b/fwd</b>			<b>c/fwd</b>
	<b>1 Jan 2023</b>	<b>Receipts</b>	<b>Payments</b>	<b>31 Dec 2023</b>
Discretionary fund	<b>366</b>			<b>366</b>
Flower Fund	<b>6</b>	222	228	<b>0</b>
Hospitality	<b>99</b>		99	<b>0</b>
Teddies Tuesday	<b>771</b>	1,812	2,249	<b>334</b>
Luke There	<b>428</b>			<b>428</b>
	<b>1,669</b>	<b>2,034</b>	<b>2,576</b>	<b>1,127</b>

5. Receipts and payments for the Community Centre are included within the PCC accounts but are identified separately as follows:

	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>
Receipts		
Hall lettings	5,703	5,587
Grants	0	0
Contribution from (to) St Luke's Church	12,219	5,748
Total Income	<b>17,922</b>	<b>11,335</b>

Payments		
Community centre maintenance	7,586	1,679
Community centre running costs	10,336	7,976
Centre Cleaning Costs	0	1,680
Total Expenditure	<b>17,922</b>	<b>11,335</b>

6. Movement of monies in investment funds.

<b>Fund</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Balance at</b>	<b>Payments In /</b>	<b>Investment</b>	<b>Balance at</b>
		<b>31.12.2022</b>	<b>(Withdrawals)</b>	<b>Gain (Loss)</b>	<b>31.12.2023</b>
764002	Restricted	37,816		3,589	41,405
764003	Restricted	38,802		2,312	41,114
764004	Unrestricted	50,291	(29,264)	2,107	23,134
764005	Unrestricted	41,066	(20,373)	2,965	23,658
		<b>167,975</b>	<b>(49,637)</b>	<b>10,972</b>	<b>129,311</b>

## Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the Parochial Church Council (PCC) of St Luke's, Eccleston, St Helens on the accounts for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023, as set out on pages 18 to 22 of your Annual Report.

### Respective responsibilities of Trustees and Examiner

The PCC are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. They 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 PCC 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 PCC 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 matter has come to my attention:

- 1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in, any material respect, the requirements:
  - to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act;
  - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act have not been met; or
- 2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed: P. Horton

Date: 20/5/24

IE's Name: PAUL HORTON

address: [REDACTED], ECCLESTON, ST. HELENS WA10 5JA