



Diocese of Liverpool

The Parish Church of St Michael, Aughton

Annual Report of the Parochial Church Council

For the year ended 31st December 2024

St Michael's Church, Aughton.

The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of

St Michael, Aughton, Liverpool

Registered Charity No 1128623



WELCOME

Dear friends,

It has been encouraging to see both congregations attend worship in one another's churches, including the Messy Church for young families in St Michael's, and the monthly Benefice Services including Harvest, Rogation and Palm Sunday. In 2024 we also hosted the Cluster of Churches as we met on the Parish Field in Bickerstaffe for Pentecost, an event we are repeating this year. The fellowship of the Church continues to be blessed by those in both churches organising hotpot suppers, concerts, bingo, bridge afternoons to name but a few. The annual Christmas lantern parade at St Michael's increases in number each year.

In November 2024, a number of us from St Michael's attended the 'Leading Your Church into Growth' (LYCIG) conference with church delegates from the Cluster. Since the conference, the delegates have been mentored by Rev Neil Short and have led special PCC meetings passing on what we have learned. The hope is that members of Bickerstaffe Church will attend a future conference. The principles of LYCIG are simple. We are encouraged to give equal attention to our Prayer, Presence, Proclamation and Persuasion as a church in the parish and be bolder in inviting people to church worship and church events. The Worship, Fellowship and Mission of the church gives us purpose, but at times we can neglect the mission of the church, which risks our future. LYCIG helps us to correct the balance and encourages us all to get involved in St Michael's and Holy Trinity's growth. Below is the LYCIG prayer, which I invite you to use and be challenged by.

God of Mission,
Who alone brings growth to your Church,
Send your Holy Spirit to give Vision to our planning,
Wisdom to our actions,
And power to our witness and Joy to our worship.
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

Thank you for all your support in both churches and may God bless us all in His mission.

Andrew

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

St Michael's Church, Church Lane, Aughton, Ormskirk L39 6SB.
Official correspondence to The PCC Secretary, Parish Office, at the above address.

Members of the PCC are either *ex-officio* or elected by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) in accordance with the Church Representation Rules. During 2024 the following served as members of PCC:

Incumbent: Revd Andrew Housley (*Chairman, ex-officio*)

Reader: Mr Bill Glennon (*ex-officio*)

Wardens: Margaret Ellams (*ex-officio*)
 Pam O'Brien (*ex-officio*)

Treasurer: Mr Anthony Bearon (*co-opted*)

Secretary: Mr James Parsons (co-opted)

Deanery Synod representatives:

Mr Jeff Smith, Mr James Parsons, Mr Graham Williams (ex-officio)

Elected representatives:

Bryan Cross, Ray Hampson, Jane McEvoy, and Janet Smith – elected 2022 to 2025.

Adrian Ball, Elizabeth Makepeace, Brenda Moss, and Joyce Turner – elected 2023 to 2026.

Peter Fogden, Denis O'Brien, Alan Thompson and Fiona Whalley – elected 2024 to 2027.

Observers:

Mr Peter Fogden (H&S Officer)

Mr Brian DeVonald (Assistant PCC Treasurer)

Bankers: Santander Bank, Bridle Road, Bootle L30 4GB.

Independent Examiner: Mr D.S. Thomson, 32 Windermere Crescent, Ainsdale, Southport, PR8 3QS.

Architects: Anthony Grimshaw Associates, 6 Bridgeman Terrace, Wigan, WN1 1SX.

Day to day management and control of the Church is exercised by the Rector and Wardens: The Rev Andrew Housley, Mrs Margaret Ellams and Mrs Pam O'Brien, contactable via the Parish Office on 01695 424457.

STRUCTURE, MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE

St Michael's PCC operates under the Parochial Church Council Powers Measure 1956. The PCC is registered with the Charity Commission – no. 1128623.

OTHER RELATED TRUSTS

Aughton United Charities, registered charity number 247409, the Rector is a Trustee.

Vanbrugh and Tempest Almshouse Charity Trust, registered charity number 227244, four members of the PCC and one other church member are trustees.

St Michael's VC CE Primary School, the incumbent, one PCC member and one other church member are Foundation Governors.

APPOINTMENT TO THE PCC

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.

COMMITTEES

The PCC operates through two sub-committees, which meet as required between full meetings of PCC:

Standing Committee – required by law, it transacts the business of the PCC between its meetings, subject to any direction given by the full Council. Membership of the Standing Committee is the Rector, the Churchwardens, the Treasurer, the Secretary and two elected PCC members - in 2024 these were: Mr Denis O'Brien and Mr Jeff Smith.

Fabric Committee – has delegated power to address fabric issues in the Church and Church Hall. Membership in 2024 was Peter Fogden (Chair), Margaret Ellams, Pam O'Brien, Jane Rigby, Brian Devonald, Bryan Cross, Denis O'Brien and Will Thorpe.

PCC members receive regular instruction and advice on their roles as Trustees, on health and safety issues, risk assessment and management, and on child and vulnerable adult protection procedures, from the relevant PCC officers.

THE ELECTORAL ROLL presented to the Annual Meeting in 2024 recorded the names of 148 people, of whom 46 were non-resident in the parish. A new Electoral Roll will be required in 2025.

OBJECTIVES - St Michael's PCC has the responsibility of co-operating with the Rector in promoting the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social, and ecumenical in this parish (PCC (Powers) Measure 1956). It is responsible for the maintenance of the Church and Church Hall in Church Lane, Aughton. St Michael's is a broad and welcoming church that seeks to provide a spiritual home for all who seek God in Jesus Christ.

We proclaim the Gospel of Christ according to the doctrines and practices of the Church of England, as part of the worldwide Anglican Communion of churches. We worship the one true God, enjoy, and share the fellowship of all our members and friends, and aim to live out the commandment to "love our neighbour as ourselves" through practical care and concern for those in our community.

REPORTS FROM CHURCH GROUPS AND ACTIVITIES

1. Wednesday Fellowship

Fellowship continues to meet on 1st and 3rd Wednesday of each month with a varied programme of speakers. Topics including bee keeping, spring flowers, Liverpool Cathedral, Lancashire Dialect and Royal Jewels. Members also lead meetings, and we have movie matinee and coffee and chat afternoons. Speakers have asked for donations to Liverpool Cathedral, SAFFA, St Helens Ramblers and Child Sudden Death Syndrome. We continue with our annual Trussel Trust Christmas donation and Child Sponsorship. New members and occasional visitors are always welcome.

Janet Glennon

2. Sunbeams

Sunbeams Baby and Toddler Group began in 2021 and continues to thrive. We meet in the church hall on a Wednesday morning during term time and we continue to have around thirty families on our books. On an average week we can have up to twenty children with their carers who are a mixture of Mums, Dads, and Grandparents. We always have a varied range of activities and games and upcoming we hope to be able to make use of the Forest School area in St. Michael's School for one of our sessions. Art and craft are a real highlight of the session particularly with the carers! We acknowledge and promote the Christian festivals, and it was good to welcome some families to the services on Christmas Eve, Mother's Day, and Easter Day. One of our Sunbeam parents works for Guide Dogs so in March our Lent appeal was a sponsored walk/pram push around the area. We raised £267 for this charity which was gratefully received.

Special thanks are due to Irene Rowe who makes and serves our drinks and to Helen Brookes who travels from Liverpool to be our helpers at Sunbeams and are a vital part of the team. We would also like to extend

a warm welcome to any of the St Michael's Church community who might like to help or visit Sunbeams on either a regular or ad hoc basis.

Messy Church is an activity-based worship session which takes place on the second Sunday of every month. This too is gaining in popularity and there are some regular attenders, although still not many Sunbeams families yet. We pack a lot into an hour session with activities, bible stories, songs, snacks and craft. Now that the refreshments are served in church after the 9.30am service, we can extend our session if needed.

As the same for Sunbeams, we will always welcome any of the St. Michael's Church community who might like to help at Messy Church.

Margaret Ellams & Pam O'Brien

3. Friends of St Michael's Church

At a recent PCC Meeting it was agreed to refurbish the vestry toilet in Church, to be funded by the Friends. This ensures the Church, and its surroundings remain in excellent condition, as they have done for 1000 years. The Friends help the Church building to be preserved and celebrated for future generations and for it to stand as a witness to God in Aughton.

No funding comes from the Church of England, so it is the sole responsibility of the PCC. The bedrock of the Friends income is the annual membership subscription of £25, paid on 30th June by Standing Order or Cheque.

Funds in 2024 were boosted by activities organised during the year, including a talk by Martin Jones who had done extensive research into the part played by horses in the First World War. Donations were given to the British Legion. Lady Ann Dodd recalled happy memories of Ken and the Exhibition in progress at Liverpool Museum. The award winning Skelmersdale Brass Band gave the Christmas Concert, and a £500 Donation was given them to support their efforts in providing musical opportunities for young people. Two Bridge Drives of 20 tables enjoyed Afternoon Tea and a Raffle. (Over £1400 was raised for each event). On 29th September we celebrated our Patronal Festival of St Michaels and All Angels.

Jean Parker

4. Church Fabric Report

(1) General Maintenance

Gutters, hoppers and downspouts were inspected and cleaned out as required. The south end hopper became badly blocked and was cleared by A1 All Clear.

(2) Toilet Refurbishment

The toilet walls were tiled and the ceiling painted. Thanks to 'The Friends' for financing this project and a church member for donating a substantial quantity of tiles.

(3) Vestry Roof Repairs

In April flashing from the vestry roof was stolen. The damage was made good, and the toilet roof was repaired at the same time.

(4) Lightning Conductors

The lightning conductors, which protect the church's electrical systems from lightning strikes, were tested and

found to be satisfactory.

Graveyard Report

The grass areas in the churchyard are tended to by a Contractor and continues to perform to a high standard. Members of the congregation and parish maintain the flowerbeds and the 'Garden of Rest'. More volunteers to assist in this work are always needed. West Lancashire BC remove green waste via two brown bins and general waste in a green bin. Many graveyard visitors continue to be confused as to what constitutes green waste. Part of a pine tree, which was leaning on the wall near the 'Garden of Rest' was cut down.

Inspections and Servicing

The central heating boiler was serviced and tested for gas safety. The fire extinguishers were tested and serviced as required. Portable appliances were tested by BES, no faults were reported. Ladders were inspected every three months. The annual asbestos inspection was completed. Every Thursday the church is prepared for Sunday services by a team of eight church members to ensure the church is always presented at its best.

5. Church Hall Fabric Report

(1) Wi-fi Connection

A network was installed so that the church internet connection was made available for use in the Hall. This facility has benefited church members and is an additional attraction for those hiring the Hall.

(2) Intruder Alarm

A new alarm system was installed in June. Every key holder now has a unique entry code. The new system has been working well.

(3) Movement Sensor

A replacement unit was fitted at the entrance to the 'Ladies' to ensure the lights turn on and off.

Inspections and Servicing

The central heating boilers were serviced and tested for gas safety. The fire extinguishers were tested by Fire Reliant and serviced or replaced as required. Portable appliances were tested by BES, no faults were reported. Ladders were inspected at three monthly intervals. Fire alarm 'break glass' points were tested at regular intervals together with the emergency lighting network.

A brown bin licence was purchased from WLBC to enable leaves and other green waste to be disposed of. A grey bin for general waste, a blue bin for recyclable bottles etc and a green bin for paper and cardboard are also emptied by WLBC.

On behalf of the PCC, we would like to thank everyone who assists in running the Hall.

During the last year we were saddened by the sudden loss of David Snape who had served on the committee for a considerable time. His expertise and wisdom will be greatly missed.

Peter Fogden

PP Fabric committee

Members of committee are: - Margaret Ellams, Pam O'Brien, Jane Rigby, Brian Devonald, Bryan Cross, Denis O'Brien, Will Thorpe & Peter Fogden.

Receipts & Payments

	Unrestricted	Designated	Restricted	Endowment	Total	Prior year total
Receipts						
Donations and legacies	74,868	92,655	21,370		188,894	92,328
Income from charitable activities	8,533		770		9,303	12,779
Other trading activities	12,561		1,894		14,455	14,792
Investments	1,201	192	1,841		3,235	1,736
Other income	5		290		295	2,033
Total income	97,169	92,848	26,165		216,183	123,668
Payments						
Raising funds	523				523	673
Expenditure on charitable activities	108,810		13,448		122,259	123,587
Other expenditure						
Total expenditure	109,334		13,448		122,782	124,260
Net income / (expenditure) resources before transfer	(12,165)	92,848	12,717		93,401	(592)
Transfers						
Gross transfers between funds – in	10,414	3,843	11,275		25,532	
Gross transfers between funds - out	(6,572)	(7,686)	(11,276)		(25,533)	
Other recognised gains / losses						
Gains/losses on investment assets	6,439		(6)		6,433	
Gains on revaluation, fixed assets, charity's own use						
Net movement in funds	(1,883)	89,005	12,712		99,835	5,780
Reconciliation of funds						
Total funds brought forward	88,920	3,651	316,237¹	12,000	420,808	415,028
Total funds carried forward	87,039	366,455¹	55,150	12,000	520,645	420,809

¹ In 2023 accounts, the fixed value of the church hall (£274k) was included in Restricted Funds. This is now included in Designated Funds.

Financial Review – 2024

Overview

2024 finances were similar to 2023, with the notable exception of one very generous unrestricted legacy and other restricted legacies. At a high level:

- Operational deficit £12k – see the Unrestricted column in sections Error: Reference source not found and Error: Reference source not found
- Restricted funds increase £12k – see restricted funds total on the 2nd page of section Error: Reference source not found
- General Fund operational deficit offset by
 - o Allocate £3.6k legacies carried forward from 2023 to General Fund
 - o Investment gain of £6k on Aberdeen bond
- Unrestricted legacy £92k
- As a result of changing to a new system, the detailed reporting of income/expense categories differs.

Income from church hall lettings was £12k. Expenditure on the church hall was £13k including utilities and church buildings manager salary. For 2025, the hall rental hourly rate has been increased to £16.50 for regular bookings and £20 for one-off events. The church buildings manager is responsible for managing the hall rentals including opening and closing the hall, and for cleaning of both buildings in conjunction with the church cleaning team.

The Diocese are taking numerous steps to address the financial health and sustainability of the diocese. As part of this, the parish share for 2025 reduces by £10k to £65k. A key means of enabling this reduction was removing further contribution to Deanery Mission & Growth Funds. Whether this reduced level of Parish Share remains for 2026 and beyond depends on many factors, particularly the success (or not) of a funding request to the national church's Diocesan Investment Programme.

As we enter 2025, regular donations have reduced by ~£600 per month, offsetting most of the reduction in parish share. Over the next 5-10 years, ~£2,000 per month of regular donations may need replacing by new donors to enable the parish to continue paying its Parish Share. If donations do reduce by this amount progressively over 5 years, then 2030 will end with an annual loss of £25k and an accumulated loss of £90k (not accounting for inflation).

Reserves Policy

Based on <https://parishresources.org.uk/the-pcc-as-a-charity/managing-reserves/sample-reserves-policies/>

To hold in cash the equivalent of two months general running costs (£20k). To retain the investment bond capital value (£65k) such that capital gains can help offset future operating losses. To create a Mission Opportunities fund of £10k. To reserve £10k for new windows and carpet in the church hall. The PCC will decide how to use the remaining £75k. This policy will be reviewed in twelve months' time.

Grants to others

The church donated £200 to Churches Together in Ormskirk District, and £104 to Campaign Against Living Miserably.

Agent Transactions

The PCC acted as Financial Agent for the following people/organisations:

- Liverpool Diocesan Board of Finance re Clergy Fees.
- Fees for Bell Ringers, Organists and Grave Diggers at Weddings / Funerals.
- Bickerstaffe Holy Trinity for shared cost of rectory council tax & water and other miscellaneous expenses (£2k)
- Compassion for sponsorship of 4 children (£2k)
- Special collections for Children's Society (£700), C.A.L.M. (£100), Cancer Research (£100).

Independent Examiners 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 any matters of concern.*
- *Confirm that I have no conflict of interest and have no connection with the PCC of St Michael Aughton.*

Basis of independent Examiner's statement

My examination is carried out in accordance with general Directions given by the Charity Commission.

An additional examination compared to 2023, took the form of a comprehensive review with the appropriate personnel, of the new diocese accounting system structure, and therefore a high-level review of appropriate accounting coding, checks on appropriate brought forward balances into said system, and further initial review of prior year analysis and accuracy (as stated in bullet point 5 of the 'overview').

It is worth noting that my access to the Diocese accounting system was restricted to transaction listing only. Over and above what is mentioned above, this was sufficient to sample check 2024, and to reach a satisfactory conclusion.

In that respect, I expect the transition to the new system to be an asset to the church in terms of the transparency aligning to the diocese.

In general, a review and sample check of the accounting records kept by the PCC and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records was undertaken.

It included consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts requiring explanations from the PCC, and as stated in the overview of the accounts.

A question with regards to the valuation of the only Fixed Asset, and inherently material to the accounts, was raised with the Diocese who provided a satisfactory response for 2024.

It will be pertinent upon myself to review the documentation underlying the asset value and aligning to the Diocese response, in future years.

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 matters have come to my attention which give me cause to think that:

- *Accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act*
- *Accounts do not agree with the accounting records.*

Independent Examiner: Mr. D. S. Thomson
32 Windermere Crescent
Ainsdale
PR8 3QS

The Annual Report for the year 2024 was approved by the PCC on 9th March 2025 and signed on its behalf by:

Rev. Andrew Housley.



RECTOR

Mrs Margaret Ellams



CHURCH WARDEN