

Ascension

Trustees' Annual Report (TAR) 2024

**Report and Accounts for the Parochial Church Council of
The Church of the Ascension, Bitterne Park**

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Ascension

Vision and Values

Vision

To see God's kingdom come to our communities through making and growing whole life followers of Jesus.

Values

We are a warm and welcoming community, rooted in the good news of Jesus Christ, hungering for the in-filling, presence, and empowerment of the Holy Spirit, and seeking to love the world in the name of Jesus. Therefore, we value:

Encountering Jesus

Our highest, greatest privilege and deepest joy is to have a relationship with Jesus. It is this relationship with Him that defines our lives. We are called to be His disciples, follow Him, worship Him, and be shaped by Him. We believe that our lives are changed forever when we encounter Jesus through the Holy Spirit.

Deep community

Church is family where you can find your home. We seek to live generously, practice hospitality, release creativity, and have hearts of compassion. It's a place where we encourage one another to discover and follow God's call on each of our lives.

Loving mission

God is on a mission to reconcile all things to himself. Together we are called to join him in that mission, creatively and prophetically engaging with our local area, and seeing people come to faith and communities thrive.

Welcome

A Year of Transition and Consolidation

Welcome to the Annual Report of Ascension Church in Bitterne Park for 2024! This has been a year filled with change, growth, and the undeniable presence of God at work in our community. We have experienced transitions, welcomed new faces, and continued to build on the strong foundations of the past. I am filled with excitement, gratitude, and expectancy for all that God is doing in and through the Ascension Church family.

A heartfelt thank you to everyone who serves so faithfully across our ministries—in worship, hospitality, welcome, youth and children's work, small groups, prayer, outreach, and many other areas of church life. Your dedication, time, gifts, and financial support make all that we do possible.

Transitions in Leadership

This year brought significant leadership transitions. We said farewell to Marc, Lorna, and Charlie, giving thanks for their faithful service and impact on our church family. At the same time, we have joyfully welcomed new leaders stepping into ministry roles. Andy, Bev, and Lucy have joined us as ordinands, bringing fresh vision and energy, while Sandra has started working part-time alongside Ruth at the Centre of Mission (EDGE). These transitions mark not only change but also new opportunities for growth as we continue discerning where God is leading us next.

Consolidation and Growing Ministry

While change has been a theme, so too has consolidation and growth. We have seen ministries flourish and deepen in exciting ways:

- Children and Youth Ministry: Luke has settled into his role as Assistant Children's and Youth Worker, strengthening our work with young people. Scooch and our partnership with New Community to support the Christian Union at Bitterne Park Secondary School remain vital areas of investment.
- EDGE Hub in Townhill Park: This community hub, launched in partnership with the Diocese and the Church Army, has become a thriving presence, offering support and welcome to many.
- Small Groups: Under Steve Waterton's guidance, small groups continue to deepen in discipleship and community.
- Prayer Ministry: Led by Jacqui Finney and Ginny Balchin, our prayer ministry has expanded. In September, we launched a 6:30 am prayer time in collaboration with New Community Church—an encouraging step in our commitment to seeking God together.
- Leadership Development: We have begun a pilot leadership course to equip and encourage more church leaders and their staff.

Ongoing Mission & New Milestones

Despite transitions, our commitment to our mission remains steadfast. Partnerships with Southampton City Mission, the Marketplace in Townhill Park, and the NHS social prescribers' team have continued to support those in need.

Finance

We are deeply grateful for the generosity of our congregation, which enables us to continue our mission. However, financial sustainability remains a priority. We are actively exploring ways to increase income through giving, hiring out our hall, and other initiatives. Encouraging growth in financial stewardship is key as we seek to ensure a strong and sustainable future.

Looking Ahead

The future is filled with promise! We are excited about plans to develop an evening service, a pastoral care team, CAP Money courses, and a ministry for older people. As we look ahead, we do so with great expectancy, knowing that God is leading us. Our vision remains clear: to see God's kingdom come to our communities through making and growing whole-life followers of Jesus.

As we continue to encounter Jesus, build deep community, and engage in loving mission, let us step forward with confidence, trusting in His plans for the year ahead.

I warmly commend this report to you.



Revd Simon Robertson, Vicar

Encountering Jesus

Sunday Services

Throughout 2024 we have continued to gather, in person and online, to worship together. We believe we are changed through these opportunities, whether in praise and sung worship, preaching, prayer or Eucharist, at home or at Ascension, God is at work.

On Sundays, we have continued to offer two distinct services each week. A quieter, more formal, **9.00am Eucharistic service** and a **10.45am service** which is more informal and contemporary and has specific provisions for children and young people. In addition, we have continued to offer monthly **evening services** of praise and prayer. Our **Edge+ service** in Townhill Park continues to meet fortnightly. The church family continues to grow steadily across all services, in depth and in numbers.

Prayer

Prayer ministry continues to be an integral part of the life of our Church. During the 10:45 service our Prayer Ministry Team, identified by coloured lanyards, consistently gather around the coffee area to offer prayer during ministry time. We have recently been challenged by the Bishop of Winchester to ask God for 'more' and it is such a joy to see more people coming forward for prayer. Please keep coming forward - we love praying for you! Recently some individuals from outside of church have approached us for prayer support and members of the Prayer Ministry team have met them to offer prayer. Alpha has also opened up new opportunities to pray for guests.

We continued to hold prayer walks around the parish over 2024. We have a sense that our prayers have softened the ground for God to work in people's hearts and that our prayers are continuing to have a meaningful impact on our community. Please do continue to consider praying simple prayers such as 'Come Holy Spirit; we welcome You here' for your neighbours as you walk/drive around where you live and work.

Since September we have gathered with our brothers and sisters from Central Hall at 6:30am on a Wednesday morning to worship and intercede for our city. We have been joined by other churches too and it's so wonderful to see a visible demonstration of church unity, united by a love for Jesus and a desire to see the Holy Spirit move and God's Kingdom come in Southampton.

Jacqui and Ginny have met with the team to review the ministry area and hope to do some further discussion and training in 2025.

Life Events

There were nine **baptisms** held during 2024. There were two **funerals** held in our church, and a further one conducted by our team at a Crematorium. There were five interments of ashes in Ascension's **Garden of Remembrance**.

Alpha

In 2024 we had the joy of running an Alpha course again. This was a wonderful opportunity for people to meet, build community and relationships, and ask questions about faith. We've seen a broad spectrum of backgrounds and had great discussions! With your prayers and support we hope to continue this work in 2025.

The Rising Generation

We continue to have a third of our worshipping community comprising our **Sunday Children's and Youth work**. During these sessions we stress the importance of children having a personal encounter with Jesus as well as how He speaks to us through the bible. As in previous years, the children have a full programme that involves role-play, drama, worship, games, object lessons, a craft. Our heart is to see children and young people grow in their relationship with Jesus, walking in the fullness of his plan for their lives, knowing who He says they are and sharing that faith with those around them. We have **27 volunteer helpers** and were excited to run a training day for them last year which enabled us to improve the quality of what we provide. My heart has always been to build family, for children and young people to know that they are unconditionally loved and accepted and important to the body of Christ. One way we do this is by acknowledging **each child's birthday** with a small gift and card. At Christmas, each young person receives a gift and card with a **prophetic word** from the Prophetic community. Parents as well as young people feedback how wonderful this is.

It has been lovely to see our relationship with **local schools** and children grow. We currently see around 900 children three times a year and some of these come to church independent of their parents.

Last year, the increase in our youth group led to the formation of an **older youth group** both on a Sunday morning and a Weekday evening, we began with around eight young people and this number has more than doubled over the last year with some of our older youth taking a leadership role (one of them will run a **youth Alpha course**). They have also volunteered to run a **quiz night** to raise money for a **local charity**.

It has been exciting to see the kids grow in worship and prayer, engaging with the Sunday morning worship in the main service and their own groups. We are very excited to develop our **youth worship band** with the aim of seeing young people more actively involved in wider church ministry.

'Scooch', our **drop in for Bitterne park secondary school** continues to see growth in both numbers and relationship. Each week we see around 100 students each week and is a wonderful addition to the work in **Christian Union** at the Secondary school which has been growing rapidly with pupils bringing their non-Christian friends. The Christian Union has also grown rapidly with children bringing their unchurched friends, we recently had to move rooms as our numbers had doubled. It has also been a privilege to be invited into the school to speak on different **panels at BP Secondary** with other religious leaders across the city, enabling young people to ask questions about our faith and views.

As well as our youth family's surf trip to Devon, we have also continued to work together with Highfield, St James in the Park and Community Church, as founding members, to host **YouthFest**, both a Winter addition and summer camp for young people across nine different churches across the city. The numbers have continued to grow as well as the anticipation of what God will do.

Our annual **Light Party** was a great success, with around 300 people from the local community attending and many of the youth helping to run it. This year was a 'Land of Snow and Ice' theme. With ten different craft stations and ten activities, children were especially delighted by the nine-metre snow igloo maze and snow cave, as well as the Narnia wardrobe and snowball gauntlet. It was also great to see so many of the dads in the community getting involved in a tug-of-war!

Because children, families, and the wider community are so interconnected, we also try to develop relationships with families. For example, a low-cost **wreath-making workshop** before Christmas for 160 people was a wonderful opportunity to come together, 'pause' and chat and creatively celebrate the festive season. It is a time for people in the community to get together and many say it is the beginning of their Christmas.

Last year we also ran a Parenting workshop with Lorraine Lee a parenting consultant and family psychologist.

It was also lovely at Christmas to be present in '**Christmas in the Triangle**' running a craft table and chatting to parents and children was a real privilege and it is lovely to see those inter-church relationships deepen.

Jo Szedlak, Children & Youth Worker

EDGE (Every Day God Encounters)

The **Church Army Southampton Centre of Mission** in Bitterne Park has had another eventful year. Ruth Hills continues as the Lead Evangelist and Sandra Philip joined her as part time Pioneer Evangelist in June and has settled well into the EDGE community.

The Tuesday morning **EDGE Disciples**, are a wonderful small group that meets to grow in faith and understanding of what it means to walk with Jesus, and to share a bible study and discussion. It has been fun to watch people go from sitting on the edge of the group, pretending they weren't listening, to becoming engaged participants. It is also beautiful to see how the ladies are growing in discernment, confidence, and love for one another.

EDGE+ continues to meet on alternate Sunday afternoons and have recently moved to the Hub. The number attending has dropped, as people have moved out of the area, but it is a warm, friendly, Jesus centred gathering. We have games and craft each time we meet, with an accessible Jesus story and a simple meal eaten together.

We have a **Stay and Play** session each week at the Hub, which attracts a regular group of mums and carers. A place for tots to play together and the adults to share experiences and concerns, while enjoying a hot drink and some homemade cake!

Sandra has also introduced the **Breakfast Club** on Saturday mornings, which is extremely popular with the locals. A very good, cooked breakfast is served every week.

Following on from last year's successful **EDGE Summer Fun event**, which we held particularly for the many families were not able to get away, we decided to repeat the event on the Green. We had loads of cake, thanks to all who donated, drinks, craft, face-paints, very silly games and best of all a pop-up petting farm and unicorn rides. Families came with picnics, and we were blessed with wonderful weather.

Another highlight of the year was the Christmas **Tree of Hope** event. The tree in front of the Hub was lit up with hundreds of lights and transformed into a Tree of Hope, decorated with the hopes and dreams of the community. Lights were strung along the shop fronts, shining the joy and love Jesus brings into the darkness. Sandra led an excellent event of festive singing, shared memories of past Christmas's in Townhill Park and the hope Jesus brings. All washed down with mulled wine and party food!

We are so grateful for the hard work and generosity of our wonderful volunteers, cake bakers, and all those who support and pray for the community of Townhill Park, and the amazing things God is doing there. We look forward to an exciting and productive year ahead!

Ruth Hills, Lead Evangelist

Deep community

Newcomers

We have had the pleasure of welcoming 46 new people this year who have joined us here at Ascension. This has been across the whole breadth of our community, from the 9:00 service to Edge+, in our youth and children's groups, and our 10:45 congregation. To celebrate this, we have held two Newcomer Meals over 2024 – a wonderful opportunity to share a meal with and get to know new members of our community. We are delighted with how Jesus is bringing people to us, and we would love to see this continue.

Small Groups

Small groups continue to be foundational for us at Ascension as they were in the early church. Despite the busyness of life and the pressures that we commonly face we choose to make time in our week to gather together with others and encourage one another.

When St. Paul wrote his letter that we know as Ephesians, he summed up for me the purpose of small groups.

'So we will no longer be infants tossed back and forth by the waves and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. Instead speaking the truth in love we will in all things grow up into him who is the head, that is Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament grows and builds itself up in love as each person does its work.' Ch 4:11-14

In the busyness of life, we can easily neglect our faith without realising it. Our weekly gatherings help us enormously to maintain a fixed reference point; Truth is not negotiable, it is fixed, it is absolute, God doesn't change but we can. We need to be anchored in our faith, fixing our thoughts and eyes to Jesus. We are all aware that we are living in the information age, and we have to filter that information as so much of it is not reliable. We come back again and again to the Lordship of Jesus Christ and the authority of his word the Bible.

This past year we have seen one new group established and the merging together of two groups into one. All our groups except one are currently at full capacity. We have two daytime groups and six evening groups. We are very grateful for all the leaders who serve us and use their gifts in pastoral care and teaching. Recently they were prayed for at the 10:45 service and commissioned for their work this year. Please continue to remember them in your prayers and pray also that the Lord will raise up new leaders to accommodate our growing church family.

Steve Waterton, Small Group Co-ordinator

Ladies Group

The highlight of 2024 for the [Ascension Ladies Group](#) was a catered "ladylike" afternoon tea and celebration cake to mark our 50 years as a group.

We continue to meet most 1st and 3rd Fridays of the month from 2pm in the Ascension cafe space and have had a selection of talks including on hearing dogs, local history, the city's parks, the poems of Pam Ayres and the history of the jigsaw puzzle together with updates on the church's work with the children and young people and at Townhill Park following which we raised £300 to be used for equipment etc at the EDGE Hub. Other meetings were social events with quizzes, games, craft, tea and friendly conversation and we would always welcome new members to join us, get in touch with the office or Frances Samphire to find out more.

Men's Ministry

Throughout 2024 we held monthly [Men's Breakfasts](#). These have been a wonderful opportunity for the men within our church and community to join us for breakfast together with a talk from a guest speaker. We have also held various other social events aimed specifically at the men in our congregation. If you would like to know more about this or how to get involved, please do get in touch with the office.

Social Events

We have enjoyed running [social events](#) again this year – creating opportunities for the whole church family to unite socially or worship together creatively. We held our annual Volunteer's Thank You BBQ, various all-church picnics and, of course, our Christmas Party which saw 86 of us eating, dancing and bouncing together! As well as socialising together, we also worshiped together at special services, a particular highlight being our stripped back Maundy Thursday service and meal, where we reflected on Jesus' last supper as we worshiped and ate together. If you would like to get involved in helping at events such as these in the future, please do get in touch with the office.

Loving mission

Ascension Running Community

Started in 2019, [Ascension Running Community](#) is still out running in all weathers with people from our local community. We are currently maintaining our weekly 5km community social #RunAndTalk activity as well as a term-time Friday morning 'School Run' - a gentle run in Riverside Park followed by coffee at Woodmill café. Our aim is to promote good health and wellbeing through running together (by encouraging people to be active, to meet with our welcoming and friendly runners and also enabling conversations about mental health and wellbeing). Our group sizes have decreased since 2021 and 2022 but we still have a number of committed regular runners and old friends who join us when they are able to. We are always keen to invite new people to join us and are training some new run leaders to support the continuation (and development) of our activities.

Anna Gordon, Run Leader

Community Café and Social Prescribing

In 2024 we have continued to host a drop in café each Tuesday afternoon, in partnership with the NHS Social Prescribers from Living Well Practice – “My Time to Chat”. This is a wonderful opportunity to meet people, build community and access other healthcare services for wider needs. We'd love to see more people getting involved, attending, and considering serving as part of the team at this amazing outreach opportunity!

Townhill Christmas Presence

Once again, we were able to run the **Townhill Christmas Presence** where families, identified as being most in need, were gifted special presents for their children, making sure that no family was forgotten. Through the amazing generosity of our congregation this project ensured that 80 families had gifts they would otherwise not have been able to afford,

Ruth Hills, Lead Evangelist

GrACE

GrACE (Greening Ascension's Community and Environment Steering Group) continues to provide information, encouragement and tips to Church members to reduce their carbon footprint (i.e. use less fossil fuels), appreciate God's creation, and live more simply so that others (human and throughout nature) may simply live.

During 2024, we ran a series through Lent with weekly posters, both online and displayed in the Worship Space, on topics that related to the environment and that were useful, money-saving or just plain fun.

Many Church members helped sow some seeds, which were later planted out into the flower beds in the grounds, for all to admire.

Ascension Gardeners worked in tandem with the contract gardeners to keep the compost bin rotation going and using the compost when it was ready; maintaining the 'wild' area along the hedge behind the car park; and weaving more green waste into the small dry hedge units that mark the edge of the wild area.

We continue to have a litter pick around the church grounds on the 1st Sunday of the month and have also organised occasional litter picks around Townhill Park Green.

We supported those who did the sponsored Ride and Stride in September by asking for Ascension to be registered as a participating church, and our cyclists raised funds for Ascension and Hampshire Historic Churches Trust.

Helen Pain, GrACE Group Co-ordinator

Market Place and Basic Clothing Bank

We continue to partner with Southampton City Mission and others to run the **Market Place** initiative from the community centre in Townhill Park. The aim of the Market Place is to offer “choice and dignity through a personal selection of discounted, quality, fresh, refrigerated, and frozen food products to supplement people's weekly shopping.” They are also intended to be small, welcoming communities offering all the health and wellbeing benefits of regular contact with a supportive network of peers and friends. Additional support is offered by having regular visits and workshops by other charities and agencies such as Social Prescribers, Debt Advice and Mental Health nurses.

We also continue to provide a venue for the weekly **Basic Clothing Bank**. Numbers continue to be high, due to the ongoing cost of living crisis. This year we clothed people 1,938 times. Clients continue to be from mixed backgrounds: single parents, couples, families, unemployed, refugee, homeless, retired, part-time, and full-time workers; those referred in because of a tragic life event, because of addiction or mental health struggles and those who are just not coping financially in the current climate. We continue to have regular clothing donations, which allows us to ensure there is a wide selection of clothing available for the clients. As always, it continues to be a privilege to operate this free service and welcome people into the space with dignity, respect and warmth.

We continue to collect food donations to pass on as well.

CAP Money Course

In 2024, three members of our congregation underwent training to run **Christians Against Poverty (CAP) money courses**. In November we ran our first course to help people understand their finances and how to budget going forward. We started small with a group of 8 of us at Townhill Park, and we hope to run a 2nd course after Easter in 2025

Windows Community Art Group

This year the **Windows Community Art Group**, a welcoming painting group offering supportive tutoring across a variety of water-based media, has adopted a new name to reflect our evolving structure and financial arrangements. While the group operates independently of Ascension, we continue to value and support the wider mission of the church. This longstanding partnership reflects a shared commitment to serving both the local and wider community.

Over the years, groups like the Windows Community Art Group have been widely recognised for their contribution to wellbeing. Jenny's background as a lay minister and spiritual director has deepened this aspect of the group, creating a space that nurtures both creativity and emotional resilience.

We are deeply grateful to the church for the continued use of Grace Hall for our weekly sessions and for hosting our Annual Exhibition. In 2024, we were thrilled to raise an additional £1,400 for Cancer Research UK through the exhibition – a wonderful celebration of community generosity and artistic expression.

Dave Hewitt – Tutor (Painting)
Jenny Hewitt – Tutor (Wellbeing)

Facilities

The ongoing care of our building has continued to be a priority this year as we work through our annual building maintenance schedule based on our latest Quinquennial Report. In 2024 we completed extensive repairs and maintenance to all our flat roofing, ensuring the building remains watertight. We carried out essential repair work to both our organ loft and several roof beams repairing damage caused by water ingress. The PCC would like to extend our thanks to our Architect Tim Sage for his ongoing advice and support, and to Steve Waterton for the many repairs and maintenance completed over the year.

Personnel

2024 saw some changes to the staff team. We said goodbye to Revd. Marc Allez and Revd. Lorna Allez in June as they moved to St Marks in Shirley for Marc to take on the role of priest in charge. We also said goodbye to our ordinand Charlie Gibbs who left in October to finish his training at another local parish. We are grateful to Marc, Lorna and Charlie for their time with us here at Ascension.

In August, Anna Gordon stepped down from her role as Parish Administrator. Anna, however, continues to serve at Ascension as our Running Community Co-Ordinator. We are grateful to Anna for all she achieved whilst in the role and for her continued commitment to the Ascension Running Community.

In July, we welcomed Sandra Philips to the Ascension Staff Team. Sandra joins us as a Church Army Evangelist, based primarily at Townhill Park. In September, we welcomed three new ordinands to our team here at Ascension. Andy Milligan, Bev Price and Lucy Hoyes, will serve here at Ascension whilst studying for ordination. Finally, we were also joined in September by Tim Nutt as our new Parish Administrator.

Revd Peter Goodall continues to serve as our Associate Minister with us part-time, and Simon continues to lead us as the vicar alongside his shared role of Joint Area Dean.

As ever, our staff here at Ascension are supported by those who serve on teams, without which we would be unable to carry out even a fraction of what we do. We would like to take this opportunity to thank every member of our congregation who serves with us here at Ascension.

Financial Review

2024 has been another good and stable year for us financially. We have seen a steady increase in regularly giving which is wonderful and has meant we have relied less on our savings to cover our day-to-day costs. Income from hall hirings is up, but sadly we have lost a number of regular customers so we expect a downturn in 2025. There is a plan to focus on increasing this area of income. We still own and rent out the house at 25 Lacon Close, and this also provides a good income. Our medium-long term investment value is stable, but we have had to withdraw a large amount of capital to cover the costs of the structural repairs to the church.

Overall expenditure was in line with our planned budget and the Parish has met all of its routine commitments including salaries, and the Diocesan Common Mission fund.

I'd like to thank the staff team for being prudent with their expenditure and generally keeping to the agreed budget.

Reserves policy

It is PCC policy to maintain reserves equivalent to three months' running costs at £27,000.

It is our policy to invest the short-term investment fund balances with the CCLA Church of England Deposit Fund, and the remainder in the CCLA Church of England Investment Fund. Our financial policies and procedures have been updated and approved by the PCC.

Tim Nutt, Treasurer

Structure, governance, and management

The Parochial Church Council (PCC)

The **Parochial Church Council (PCC)** is a corporate body established by the Church of England. The PCC operates under the Parochial Church Council Powers Measure and is a Registered Charity. The PCC members are responsible for making decisions on all matters of general concern and importance to the parish including deciding on how the funds of the PCC are to be spent. The full PCC met in person 7 times during 2024 with the Standing Committee meeting a further 4 times.

At the 2024 APCM, Andy Gordon and Loz Foskett agreed to continue in their roles as Church Wardens and were duly appointed. Tim Nutt agreed to continue in his role as treasurer and was duly appointed. There were two PCC members who stepped down after completing their terms of service: Rosemary Haughton and Alex Walker.

The elections of their replacements were conducted as set out in the Church Representation Rules and John Finney, Christopher Allcock and Susan Lancashire were all appointed to the PCC. Craig Gallen and Steve Alexander were duly appointed as Deanery Synod representatives and PCC members.

We would like to thank all who served on the PCC during 2024. For full details of the current PCC members please see back page.

Attendance and Electoral Roll

The average **weekly attendance**, at Ascension, counted during October 2024, was 133 adults and 52 children at our Ascension Services, and 10 adults and 14 children at our EDGE+ service. We continue to offer a live YouTube broadcast of our 10:45 service, with an average of 35 views per week during the same period.

All those who attend our services are encouraged to register on the **Electoral Roll** to enable them to vote for the PCC membership and to stand for election themselves. The electoral roll has been prepared in accordance Church of England rules. At the APCM on 28th April 2024 the number on the electoral roll was declared at 113.

Anna Gordon continued as the Electoral Roll Officer within her role as Parish Administrator, which passed over to Tim Nutt when he took over the role in September 2024.

Deanery Synod

The Synod met on three occasions during 2024. Presentations topics included the work of Safe Families charity, links with the Church in Myanmar, and getting Grants. Archdeacon Jean attended the May Synod and gave an introductory talk about her work. In October the Synod passing a motion related to National Financial Support for Church Buildings, which was then forwarded to Diocesan Synod. The Synod received regular updates on clergy movements and feedback from Deanery Representatives on Diocesan Synod.

Safeguarding

The **Safeguarding** of children and vulnerable adults continues to be a priority at Ascension. We have continued to comply with section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Disciplinary Measure 2016 (duty to have due regard to the House of Bishops' guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults).

Over 2024 we have continued to work through the Parish Safeguarding Dashboard to ensure that we are compliant with all safeguarding regulations and best practice.

Becca Bartlett stepped down from the role of Safeguarding Officer in the summer of 2024 and Andy Gordon has taken over this role on a temporary basis.

Any Safeguarding concerns can be reported to safeguarding@ascensionsouthampton.co.uk

Administrative information

The Church of the Ascension is on Thorold Road, Bitterne Park, Southampton SO18 1HZ. It is part of the Diocese of Winchester within the Church of England.

The correspondence address is

The Parish Office, Ascension Centre, 1 Thorold Road, Bitterne Park, Southampton SO18 1HZ.

We continue to Bank with National Westminster Bank, and our Independent Examiner is Jonathan Marchant.

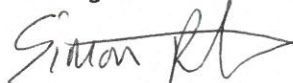
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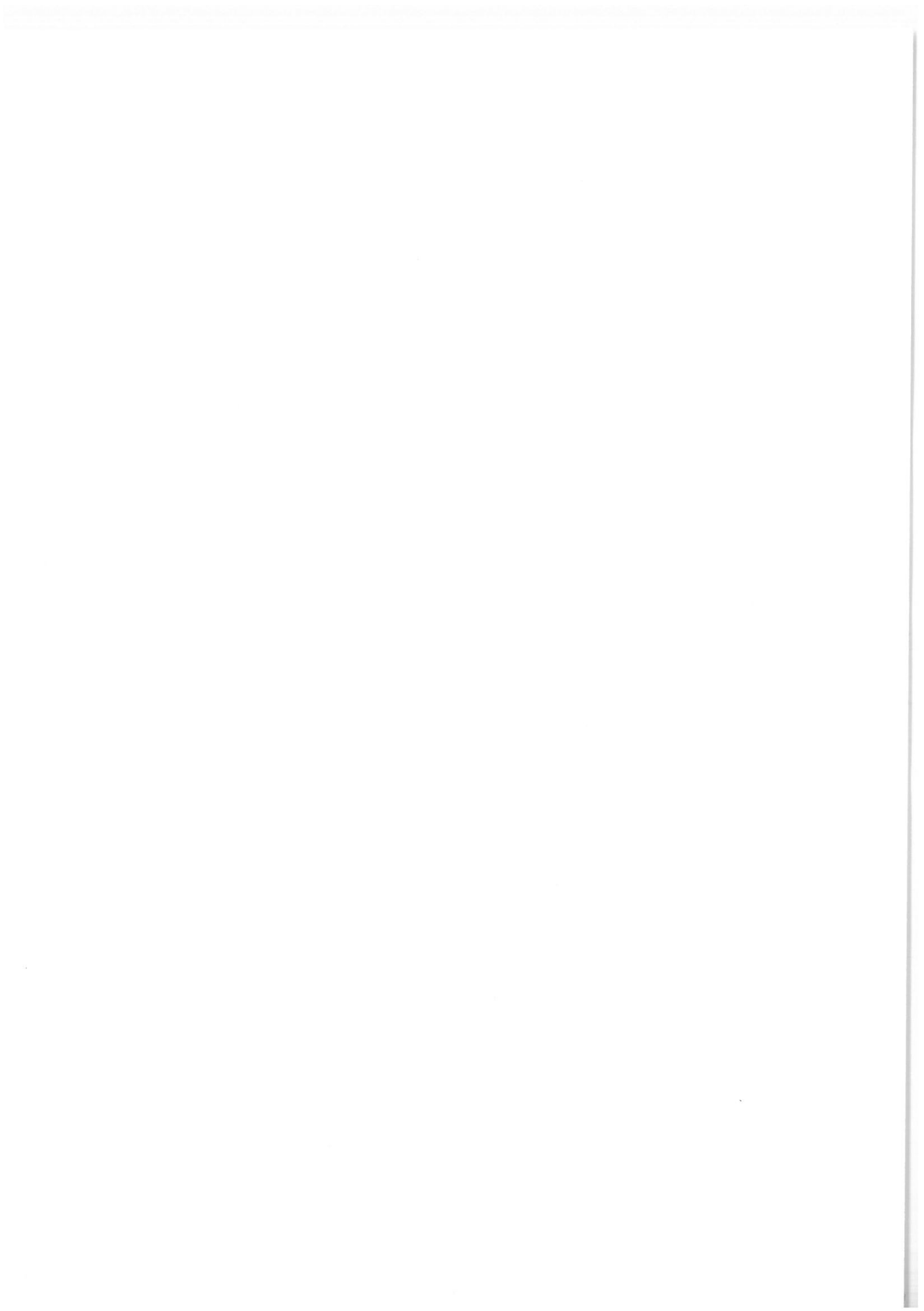
PCC members for April 2024 – April 2025:

Chair	Revd. Simon Robertson
Church Wardens	Andy Gordon, Loz Foskett
Secretary	Lizi Fewtrell
Treasurer	Tim Nutt
Clergy	Revd. Peter Goodall, Revd. Marc Allez (left July 24), Revd. Lorna Allez (left July 24),
Deanery Synod	Sam Nichols, Steve Alexander and Craig Gallen
Ex Officio	Ruth Hills (Licensed Lay Worker)
Other Members	Becca Bartlett, Nneka Igiri, Kevin Reynolds, Sunke Trace-Kleeberg, John Finney, Christopher Allcock and Susan Lancashire

Annual Report approved by the PCC on 17th March 2025

Signed on their behalf by Simon Robertson





Bitterne Park Parish
Statement of Assets and Liabilities
As at: 31 December 2024

	As at 31/12/2024 £	As at 31/12/2023 £
Current assets		
Cash at bank and in hand	35,446.98	29,054.49
CBF Church of England Deposit Fund	2,920.24	2,773.06
CBF Church of England Investment Fund at valuation	874,150.73	971,157.59
Net current assets less current liabilities	912,517.95	1,002,985.14
Unrestricted		
Unrestricted - General fund	862,357.95	952,583.47
Represented by		
Designated		
Designated - Garden of Remembrance	38,339.7	39,051.37
Designated - Tithe	7,350.53	7,350.53
Restricted		
Restricted - Running Club	1,321.85	1,341.85
Restricted - Lift Maintenance	1,500.00	1,500.00
Restricted - Hardship Fund	1,647.92	1,157.92
Total Designated and Restricted Funds	50,160.00	50,401.67
Funds of the church	912,517.95	1,002,985.14
 Total Income	 £167,728	 £169,522
Total Expenditure	£281,172	£200,568

Approved

8th April 2025

Bitterne Park Parish
Receipts and payments
Selected period: 01 January 2024 to 31 December 2024

	From To	01-Jan-24 31-Dec-24	01-Jan-23 31-Dec-23
General fund (Unrestricted)			
Income			
Donations and Gift Aid			
Alms		3,092	2,936
Freewill Offerings		69,147	78,983
Gift Aid		16,072	16,345
<i>Total Donations and Gift Aid</i>		<u>88,311</u>	<u>98,264</u>
Other trading activities			
Hirings		15066	13606
Lacon Rent		15000	14400
Easter Lilies		-	119
<i>Total Other trading activities</i>		<u>30,066</u>	<u>28,125</u>
Investments			
Dividends		24,550	25,715
<i>Total Investments</i>		<u>24,550</u>	<u>25,715</u>
Other income			
Events		2,737	2,684
Church Army Funding		2,985	-
Fees		2,214	4,575
Wreath Making		2,500	1,710
The Christmas Presence (TCP)		1,699	2,650
Youth & kids subs		1,835	1,718
Youth Weekend		3,280	1,980
Townhill Hub donations		4,789	-
Refunds		30.68	-
Staff Leaving Gift		669.42	-
<i>Total Other income</i>		<u>22,739</u>	<u>15,317</u>
Total income		165,665	167,422
Expenditure			
Building			
Cleaning		8,033	8,097
Electricity		5,941	7,289
Fire Protection		849	474
Gas		8,901	10,594
Insurance		5,856	5,536
Maintenance, fixtures and fittings		82,534	9,322
Parish Phone/Broadband		925	932
Refuse		1,328	865
Water		845	1,297
General			
Marketing		271	699
Bank Charges		388	364
Children and Youth		7,103	6,765
Community Engagement		790	1,216
Deanery Synod Fees		125	75
Equipment		1,807	1,221
Events Social		2,058	1,598
Events Outreach		1,969	2,145
GRACE Group		54	38
Hospitality		1,115	1,224
IT Operations		1,334	3,616
Leader's Lunch		-	284

Licences	1,212	1,153
Music	170	170
Office expenses	1,960	2,068
Real Easter Eggs	-	58
Sanctuary	544	405
Stripe Charges	672	439
Students	42	115
The Christmas Presence (TCP)	1,546	2,284
Townhill Hub	2,447	
Worship Team Expenses	1,035	1,012
Youth Weekend	2,063	1,906
Staffing		
Administrator Costs	10,544	12,612
Children & Youth Worker Costs	29,607	28,379
Curates' expenses	1,387	1,179
Discretionary fund	168	355
Assistant Youth Worker Costs	22,158	12,706
Ops Co-ordinator costs	17,129	16,438
Ordinands' expenses	50	0
Outreach worker's expenses	2,116	3,281
Payroll Costs	414	512
Staff Leaving Gift	681	-
Staff Training	1,230	1,125
Vicar's expenses	474	707
Diocese		
Common Mission Fund (CMF)	46,620	44,664
Fees	1,498	2,419
Total expenditure	277,992	197,637
Excess of Income over Expenditure	-112,327	-30,215
Brought forward balance	19,735	51,312
Transfers to/(from)	120,000	-1,360
Total carried forward balance	27,409	19,735

Garden of Remembrance (Designated) Fund

Income		
Freewill Offerings	—	-
Dividends	1,062	1,046
Total income	1,062	1,046
Expenditure		
Gardening	2,650	1,427
Total expenditure	2,650	1,427
Excess of Income over Expenditure	-1,588	-381
Brought forward balance	781	1,161
Total carried forward balance	-807	781

Hardship Fund (Restricted)**Income**

Freewill Offerings	1000	125
New Wine Support	-	849

Total income	1,000	974
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Expenditure

General Support	510	432
New Wine Support	-	1002

Total expenditure	510	1434
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Excess of Income over Expenditure	490	-460
Brought forward balance	1158	258
Transfers to/(from)	-	1360

Total carried forward balance	1648	1158
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Tithe (Designated) Fund**Expenditure**

Charities	-	-
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Total expenditure	-	-
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Excess of Income over Expenditure	-	-
Brought forward balance	7,350	7,350

Total carried forward balance	7,350	7,350
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Lift-Fund - Lift Maintenance (Restricted) Fund**Income**

Donations and legacies		
Freewill Offerings	—	-

Total income	—	-
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Excess of Income over Expenditure	—	-
Brought forward balance	1,500	1,500

Total carried forward balance	1,500	1,500
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Ascension Running Club (Restricted) Fund**Income**

Takings	-	80
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Total income	0	80
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Expenditure

Courses and training	20	-
Equipment	-	80
Events Outreach	-	-
Salaries	-	-

Total expenditure	20	80
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Excess of Income over Expenditure	-20	0
Brought forward balance	1,341	1,341

Total carried forward balance	1,321	1,341
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There may be minor discrepancies in the totals as the pence are not being shown

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of Bitterne Park PCC

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of The Parochial Church Council Of The Ecclesiastical Parish Of Bitterne Park, Southampton ('the PCC') for the year ended 31 December 2024.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees of the PCC 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 PCC'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 PCC 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: 

Name: Jonathan Marchant

Address: 53 Wood End Way, Chandler's Ford, Eastleigh, SO53 4LN

Date: 8 APRIL 2025

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