



ANNUAL REPORT

THE PARISH CHURCH OF
ST JOHN, RAVENHEAD

For the year ending December 2023



Crossley Road, WA10 3ND



stjohnsravenhead.org.uk

**St. John the Evangelist, Ravenhead,
Crossley Road, St Helens WA10 3ND.**

**Annual Report and Financial Statements of the Parochial Church Council
for the year ending 31st. December 2022.**

Incumbent:

Revd Gareth Banton

Team Clergy:

Revd Helen Coffey (Team Rector)

Revd Sonya Doragh (Team Vicar)

Revd Gregor Stewart (Team Curate) until March 28th

Banks:

HSBC Bank Plc

33 Ormskirk Street St Helens Merseyside

WA10 2SZ

CCLA, Church of England Deposit Fund, 85 Queen Victoria Street, London

Independent Examiner:

Rev'd. A. A. Clements, MA, ACIB, FCIE

15 Carleton Road, Chorley PR6 8TQ

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Administrative Information

St. John's Church is situated in Crossley Road, St Helens. It is part of the Diocese of Liverpool within the Church of England. The correspondence address is St John's Church, Crossley Road, St Helens, WA10 3ND.

Under the terms of section 3 of the Parochial Church Councils (Powers) Measure 1956 the Parochial Church Council (PCC) is a body corporate and currently excepted from registration with the Charity Commission.

PCC members:

Incumbent:

Revd Gareth Banton Team Vicar (Chair)

Team Clergy:

Revd Helen Coffey Team Rector until Sept 2023

Revd Sonya Doragh Team Vicar

Revd Gregor Stewart Team Curate until March 2023

Churchwarden

Mr John Ingham

Reps Deanery Synod:

Vacant

Vacant

Vacant

Elected members:

Mrs Angela Davies

Mrs Val Ingham

Mrs Elizabeth Johnson

Mr Peter Johnson

Mrs Christine Fenney

Mrs Elizabeth Carney (PCC Secretary)

Mrs Sarah Garnett

Mr James Thomas (Treasurer)

Mrs Judith Thomas

Mrs Wendy Mousdell (Safeguarding Officer)

Structure, Governance and Management

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. All Church attendees are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and stand for election to the PCC. The Standing Committee of the PCC is the only committee required to be in existence by church law and

has the power to transact the business of the PCC between meetings, subject to ratification of the PCC. The members of the Standing Committee are: Revd Gareth Banton, both Churchwardens, Mrs Joy Light and Mrs Sheila Lancaster. This Committee met as and when necessary during the year.

Induction Training

All PCC members elected for the first time and any others who have been re-elected to the PCC after an absence of sometime are supplied with copies of the minutes of the previous PCC meeting. In service training is provided where and when appropriate. A copy of the short e-book "A PCC members guide" is available for anyone who wishes to read it.

It is considered that all PCC members and any others who could be understood to be 'managers' in the activities and affairs of the Parish of St. John's Church, Ravenhead are deemed to be 'fit and proper' persons under the terms of the Finance Act 2010.

Aim and Purposes

The PCC is aware of the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit in 'The Advancement of Religion for the Public Benefit' and have regard to it in their administration of the Parish.

The PCC believes that, by fulfilling its responsibility to work together with the incumbent and to co-operate in all matters of concern and importance for the promotion of the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical, it provides a benefit to the public by:

- Providing resources and facilities for public worship, pastoral care and spiritual, moral and intellectual development, both for its members and anyone who wishes to benefit from what the Church offers;
- Promoting Christian values, and service by members of the Church in the Parish to its community, to the benefit of individuals and society as a whole.

Achievements and performance

There are 83 parishioners on the Church Electoral Roll.

Objectives and Activities of the year 2023

The PCC met on six formal occasions during 2023. We also had an informal 'away day' with PCC members from our other Team Churches and corresponded, occasionally making decisions by email.

At the start of 2023 our PCC meetings focused on some of the financial difficulties we were facing and how to continue tackling and challenging it.

Decisions have been taken and the situation has improved thankfully. Another large point of discussion was the deanery pastoral reorganisation (which is now set to come into effect on May 1st 2024). Towards the end of 2023 our business focused on the appointment of a team administrator, and our new Team Vision.

Financial Review

At the end of 2023 the wealth of the Parish was 15,395 in the current account at HSBC. The deposit account with CCLA (Church of England Funds Management) was at £5000.

The Parish has paid the Parish Share in full for 2023. This is due in large part to the very generous gift of St James with St Matthews parish paying £10,000 of our parish share bill. This prevented the charity from becoming insolvent. Our financial situation has improved since then, and we finished the year with a deficit of -£2,525. The PCC has been considering a range of measures to tackle our deficit, thanks all our regular givers and donors, and encourages all members to routinely review their financial offerings, as part of their discipleship. One positive and recent development (as of April 2024) is that we have begun reclaiming gift aid from the last few years, which will also help our financial situation. Particular thanks is given to Mrs Angela Davies for her hard work getting the church up to date with our tax reclaim.

Risk Assessment

The PCC recognises that in relation to 'Risk Assessment', risk is defined as 'the threat of any action or event which will adversely affect an organisation's ability to achieve its objectives and execute its strategies'. It also accepts that the term 'risk' can include any circumstances that may, or do, have an adverse effect, and is wider than financial matters. 'Risks' relate not only to the negative consequences of a threat, but also to the impact of not taking advantage of opportunities.

The PCC recognises it requires a practical Health and Safety Policy covering activities for both the church and its surrounding grounds. This is reviewed on a regular basis. An Accident Book is maintained.

The contents and obligations of the Equality Act 2010 and the 2018 General Data Protection Regulation are known and complied with to the best of the PCC's ability. The PCC is aware of its responsibilities in respect of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 in its requirement to carry out a fire

assessment to identify any possible dangers and risks, to take action to minimise the risks and to create a plan to deal with any emergencies, and also to write up and keep a record of its findings and to review its assessment annually. The PCC has appointed the Churchwardens to be the responsible persons to put these things into operation.

There is a Safeguarding Policy in place in respect of children and vulnerable adults. Checks have been and are made with the Disclosure and Barring Service in respect of persons dealing regularly with young people and vulnerable adults. The PCC's appointed officer for this is Mrs Wendy Parkinson. Whilst it is impossible to eliminate all risks and their consequences, efforts are constantly made to minimise such occurrences.

Reserves Policy

The PCC seeks to retain (for current and emergency expenditure) the equivalent of three month's running costs (approximately £15000) to meet the everyday costs of running the parish with remaining funds being invested in the CCLA deposit account. Our current account currently stands at approximately this amount, with a small amount of money still kept in the CCLA fund.

Future Plans

When planning our activities for the year, we have considered the Commission's guidance on public benefit and, in particular, the supplementary guidance on charities for the advancement of religion. In particular, we state on our Charity Commission profile, that we offer "spiritual instruction through services and bible studies for members and general public, also offer access to community ventures through St Johns Centre."

Approved by the PCC on

and signed on their behalf by

Wednesday 17th March 2024



Rev Gareth Banton

Receipts for the year ending December 31st 2023

General Fund Receipts and Payments Account.					
	Unrestricted	Designated	Restricted	Total	Total
Receipts	2023	2023	2023	2023	2022
	£	£	£	£	£
Voluntary Income					
Tax Efficient Planned Giving	17,598			17,598	10,480
Other Planned Giving	1,280			1,280	6,605
Collections at Services	12,115			12,115	3,693
All other giving/Vol. Receipts	3,333	1,527		4,861	1,405
Gift Aid Recovered					nil
GASDS recovered	-				nil
Total Voluntary Receipts					22,183
Fundraising Activities	444			444	3,318
Investment Income				-	133
Church Activities				-	3,148
P.C.C Fees				-	25,118
Trading Activities	23,579			23,579	29,266
Other Receipts	-			-	1,500
Total Receipts	58,348	1,527		59,876	55,399

Payments Made for the Year Ending 31st December 2023

	2023				
	Unrestricted	Designated	Restricted	Total	Total
Payments	2023	2023	2023	2023	2022
	£	£	£	£	£
<u>Church Activities</u>					
Mission Giving and Donations				-	440
Parish Share	28,473			28,473	39,131
Salaries, wages and honoraria	9,269			9,269	19,866
Clergy and Staff Expenses	2,697			2,697	249
Church running expenses	2,393			2,393	2,422
Church repairs and maintenance	3,893			3,893	1,467
Church Building Insurance	3,573			3,573	3,785
Church Utility Bills	11,388			11,388	7,678
Cost of Trading	714			714	210
<u>Total Payments</u>				62,401	75,408
Excess of Receipts over Payments				- 2,525	- 20,009
Accountancy Adjustment					1,759
Deficit / Surplus after Adjustment				- 2,525	- 18,250
Bank Account as at 1st. January 2023				17,920	36,170
Bank Account as at 31st. December 2023				15,395	17,920

Statement of Assets and Liabilities Page

Statement of Assets and Liabilities as at 31st. December 2023.					
<u>Monetary Assets</u>					
	General	Designated	Restricted	Total	Total
	Unrestricted			2023	2022
	£	£	£	£	£
HSBC	13,868	1527		15395	4920
CCLA	5,000			5000	13000
Sub Total	18,868	1527		20395	17920
Cash in Hand	-				1272
Total	18,868	1527		20395	19192

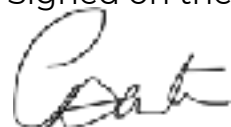
The Financial Statements of the PCC have been prepared in accordance with the Church accounting regulations using the Receipts and Payments basis.

The following assets are recognised but not necessarily valued in the Statement of assets and liabilities: moveable church furnishing held by the church wardens on special trust for the P.C.C and which require a faculty for disposal.

The expenses paid to clergy may include a small material portion which relates to their function as P.C.C members. No other payments made to P.C.C members for being members of the P.C.C.

Approved by the P.C.C by correspondence on **Tuesday 12th March 2024**

Signed on their behalf by



Rev Gareth Banton



Mr James Thomas

Accounting Policies for the PCC of the Parish of St. John the Evangelist, Ravenhead

The financial statements of the PCC have been prepared in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations 2006 using the Receipts & Purchases basis.

Funds

General funds represent the funds of the PCC that are not subject to any special restrictions regarding their use and are available for application to the general purposes of the PCC. These include funds designated for a particular purpose by the PCC.

The accounts include monetary transactions, assets and liabilities for which the PCC can be held responsible.

They do not include the accounts of other Church groups that owe an affiliation to another body, nor those that are informal gatherings of Church members.

Subject to the above, receipts and payments include income as received and expenditure when irrevocably paid.

Statement of Assets and Liabilities

The following assets are recognized but not necessarily valued in the Statement of Assets and Liabilities:

- Movable church furnishings held by the churchwardens on special trust for the PCC and which require a faculty for disposal.
 - Land and buildings held on behalf of the PCC.
 - Other fixtures, fittings and office equipment where the PCC is free to dispose of such assets without faculty and where the original cost exceeded £1,000.
- Investments held beneficially by the PCC.

The following assets are recognized and a monetary value given as part of the description in the Statement of Assets and Liabilities:

- Amounts owing from the Inland Revenue where a formal claim has been made.

Any other amounts owing to the PCC including church hall lettings and insurance claims.

Legacies where formal notification of entitlement and amount has been received by 31st December by the PCC.

Closing bank balances as shown in the receipts and payment account.

The following liabilities may be recognised in the Statement of Assets and Liabilities:

Outstanding fees owed to the Liverpool Diocesan Board of Finance

Any Any loans or overdrafts advanced to the PCC

Any arrears of Diocesan Parish Share

Creditors for goods or services where the supply has been received and invoiced by 31st December.

(Awaiting Independent Examiners Certificate.)

Narrative Reports

Worship Report

Please note that averages below reflect 'ordinary' Sundays. Sundays with a christening or a special festival are not included as they inflate our averages.

FIGURE 1

Total Attendance 2023 (11am Service)

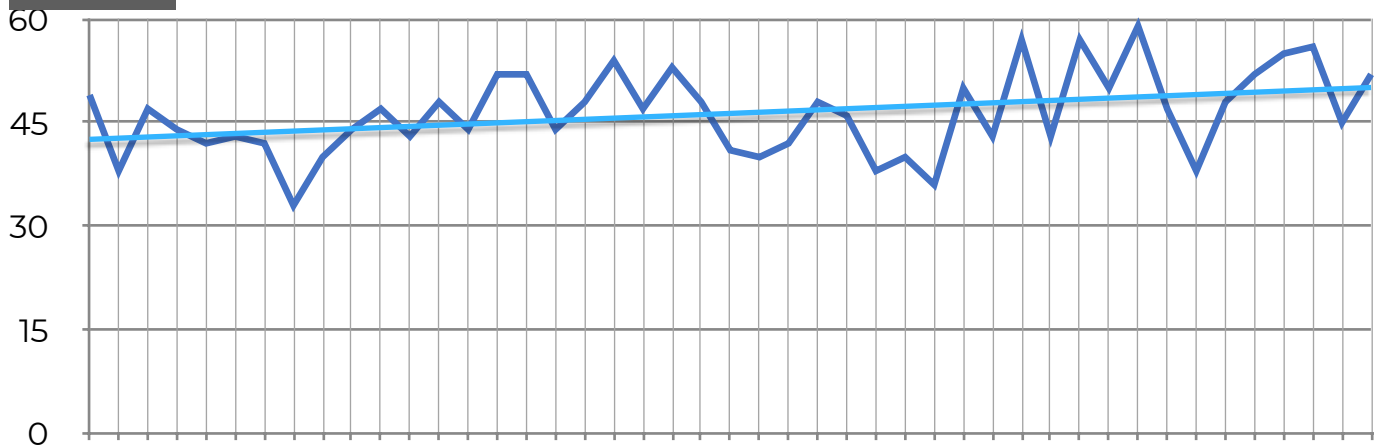


FIGURE 2

Three Yearly Comparison (11am Service)

Year	Adults	Children
2021	21	1
2022	28	7
2023	35	12

FIGURE 3

2021, 2022, 2023 Attendance (11am)

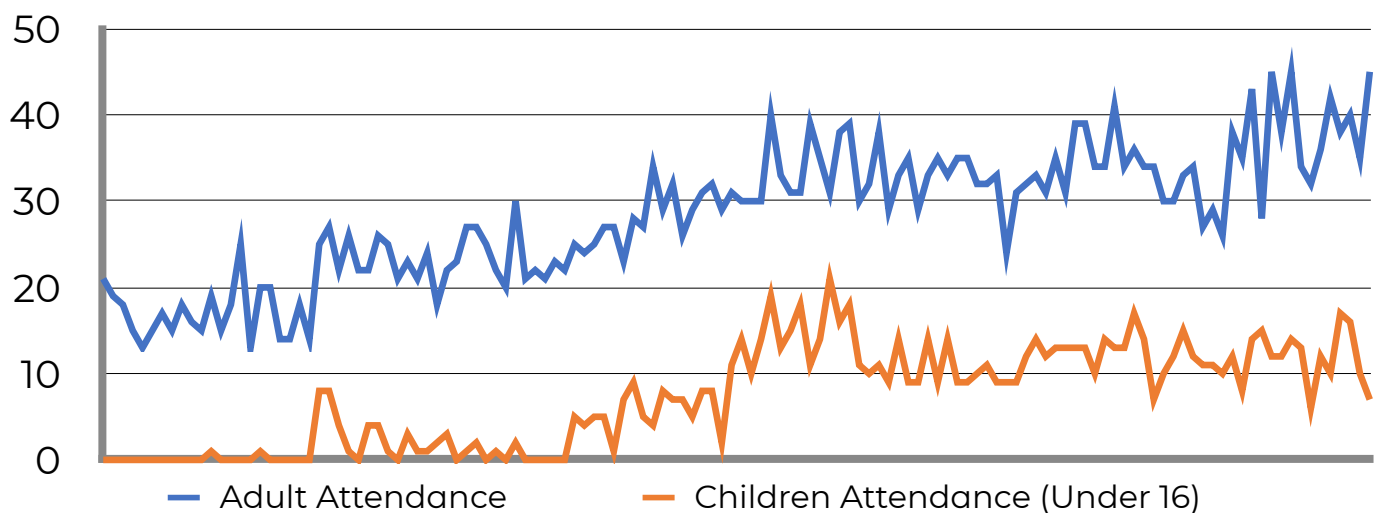
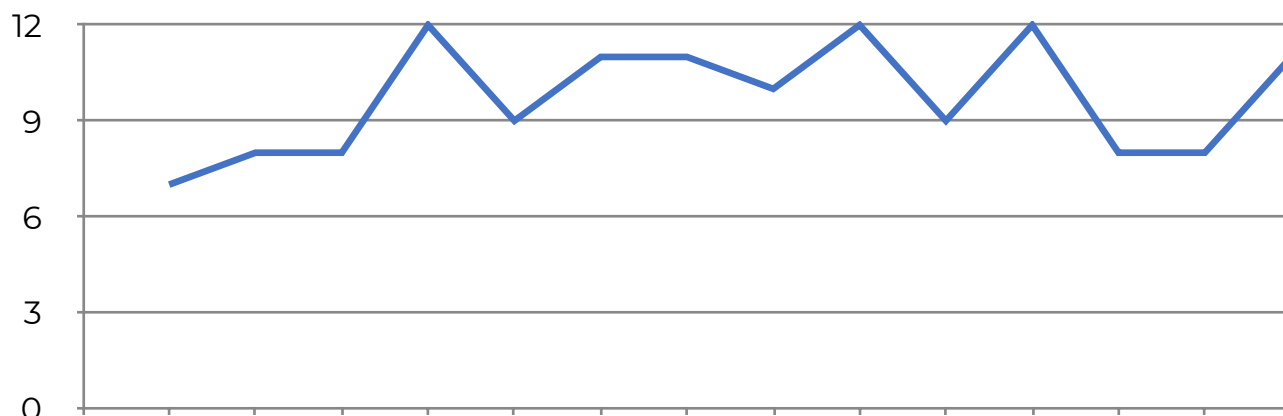


FIGURE 4**Total Attendance 2023 (8.30 BCP Service)****FIGURE 5****Life Events (Three Year Comparison)**

Year	Funerals (inc Crem Only)	Weddings	Baptisms
2021	19	1	6
2022	15	1	7
2023	10	1	8

You'll see from the data above that overall, attendance at worship is increasing, which continues the trajectory we've been on since returning from the pandemic. Growth at our 11am service has been really encouraging, as we have now returned to pre-pandemic numbers, but we've grown back younger with more children and young families. 8.30am BCP services are held on fourth Sundays and major festivals (there were 14 throughout 2023). Attendance at these is smaller but remains steady.

Sunday attendance is just one marker of a church's health, but it is an important one, as Sunday mornings are the primary way we express our togetherness, our unity, and the main way in which we worship God together. We live in a time when many churches are declining, some are stable and few are growing. The fact that we have grown consistently for a few years is to be commended and it is a testimony to our common life as a community that people visit and feel able to return.

The data for life events is, in my opinion, unremarkable. Funerals are below the number for previous years, which reflects a national trend away from church funerals and toward secular, humanist or civil celebrants. Weddings are rare at

St John's but have remained consistent at one per year, and baptisms were slightly busier in 2023 than previous years.

Vicars Report

Well, what can I say about 2023? It was a whirlwind, loads of good things happened and we 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 continued to grow gently and steadily in 2023 (see statistics above). I'm so grateful for everybody who is involved in helping make sure Sundays are a success. Whether you lead worship, do readings or lead prayers, count the money, assist with Kid's Church, arrange flowers, welcome people or serve refreshments, I'm so grateful. 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.

When 2023 began we were in a really precarious position financially as a church, having reached the very end of our reserves and still running a sizeable deficit. Fortunately, St James with St Matthews offered to pay for three months of our monthly parish share payments (approximately £10,000). This was tremendously generous, and a testimony of how our team of churches are committed to each others' flourishing. This gave us breathing room while we made some more cuts and raised income. Sadly one of the decisions we had to make was to make our community centre caretaker redundant in June. The final six months of the year were significantly better than the first, and we finished the year with a deficit circa £2500 which is an enormous improvement from the previous year. We continue to be mindful of our finances, as some months we make a loss and some a small profit. As our finances stabilise, I feel the time is right to carefully invest once more in our building and the church grounds in places where it is looking tired or neglected.

We did a number of bigger events throughout the year, in addition to our regular activities. We held a successful Spring and Christmas fair, each raising a good sum of money but perhaps more importantly bringing people through the doors and raising our profile in the community. We hosted a Strawberry Tea in July, for our team church members which helped generate a little extra

income as well. We held a Rock and Roll night in November which was booked out and a real success. Thank you to all the volunteers who made these events possible.

Our regular ministries continued their important work week in and week out. You can read their reports below for more detail. One new team-wide ministry began in September: our new Schools Ministry Team. Made up of people from across the churches we help facilitate events and worship in school and in our church buildings for 3 of our local schools. As a church we continue to enjoy a good relationship Thatto Heath Primary School. I sit as Vice-Chair of the governing body, and regularly visit the school for assemblies and to help with the R.E Curriculum. In July 2023, the school made a commitment to ensure that every academic year group, gets it own special visit to the church every year, in addition to visiting for the school-wide Christmas and Easter services. The opportunities the school offers us to reach into our community is significant. And every visit and every assembly helps the children feel more at home in our church, and lays good foundations to build upon.

There are some key priorities for St Johns going forward. We need to continue to strive for financial health, and maintain our building so it is fit for the future. But more importantly we need to keep investing in the young people who are part of our community, ensuring that provision is given to them for each stage of life. God has brought many young families into our church family, and we want the children's relationship with Jesus to develop and grow, even as they grow and mature. Kid's Church has proven a big success with primary school-aged children but we need to begin considering provision for older children and teenagers, or we risk neglecting their spiritual needs.

Wardens Report

The fabric of the church is in reasonable condition although there has been some repairs to the church to contend with and some roof work included in that. There is still work to be done to the fabric of the church but we are currently planning some work to the outside grounds in order to level off the hill at the back of the church so it can be a more useable space.

Numbers attending church services have been growing during the past year with new people coming to worship at St. Johns, also which is great to see, we are seeing more children coming to Kid's church. The PCC made a decision to hold meetings bi-monthly and this seems to be working well. From 1st May the Fit for Mission project will legally come into being this means that St. Johns

along with St. Lukes and St. James who decided not to join will form a team which is currently known as the Eccleston Team. This means that after the 1st May we will be able to advertise for a team vicar and the team churches are currently preparing their parish profiles ready for when we do that. During last year Revd Helen Coffey moved on to a new role and this meant that Gareth was left as the only vicar in the team. This of course has increased the workload for Gareth but the laity are helping as much as possible. Looking forward we pray that we will see St. Johns grow and any partnership with the other churches locally will be a strong one and will be to the glory of God.

John Ingham

Finance Statistics

As you can see from the finance report above, and the statistics below, our financial position improved through 2023, but we still have a little way to go before we are able to break even.

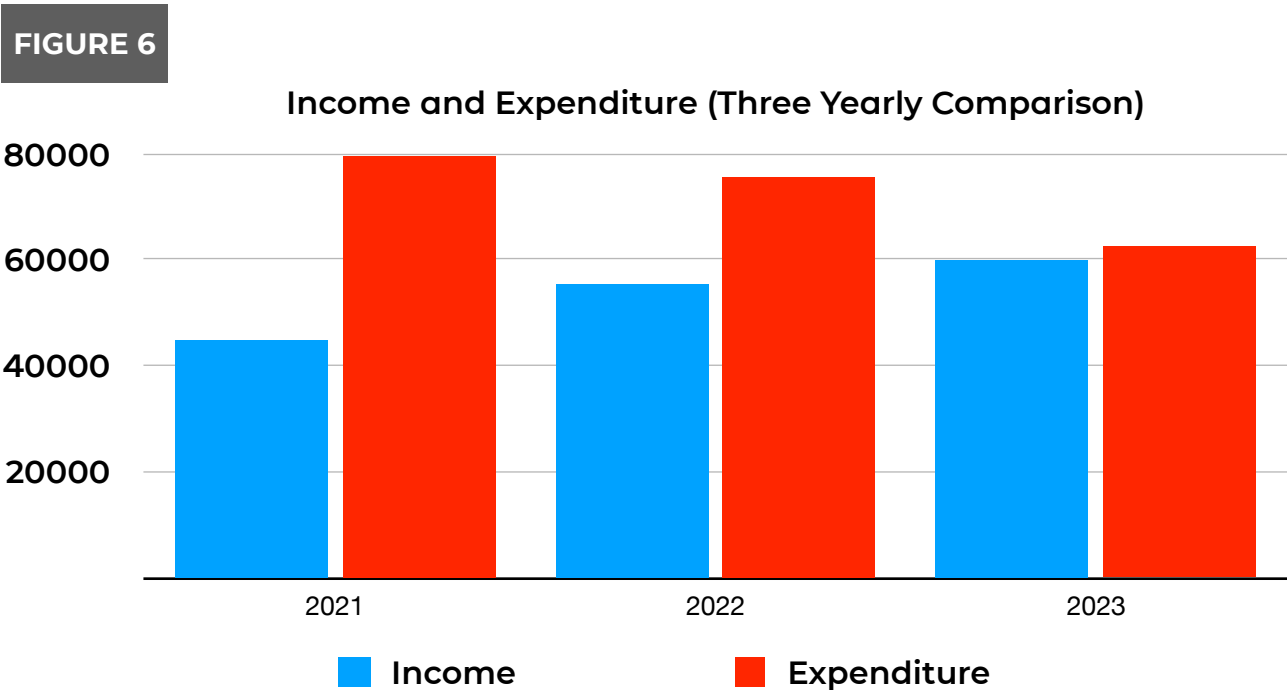


FIGURE 7

	2021	2022	2023
Income	£45040	£55399	£59876
Expenditure	£79369	£75550	£62401
Profit/Loss (£)	-£34329	-£20151	-£2525

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 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 goals:

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.

Our PCC's will meet again in 2024 to continue to think about our next set of priorities and making further steps on the road to becoming the team of churches God calls us to be.

Throughout 2023, God has been faithful to us. We've seen growth in some areas of our churches life, our service to our community and a good number of people have come to faith, and began their journey of keeping Jesus at the centre.

We trust that God's faithfulness towards us will continue in 2024, holding on to these verses (Ephesians 3:20-21) as we do so:

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

Deanery Synod Report

Deanery synod only met on a few occasions through 2023, but the primary meeting was held in March, during which we discussed and debated a paper proposing the pastoral reorganisation of the deanery into a larger single parish (the Fit For Mission proposal), and a number of other parishes who had chosen not to be part of the Fit For Mission programme. It was decided that the parishes (ours included) that were not part of FFM, would begin their own discernment with regards to how their clergy allocation would be distributed across the churches.

Groups and Activities

Kid's Church Report

This past year we have welcomed new families and said goodbye to others who have moved away. Over the past year we have enjoyed many stories, games and creative activities together. Some memorable moments have been our Faith Questions series which helped the children (and adults) explore some of the big and small questions of our Faith; we've followed the lectionary and joined up with our adult church family for a "Back to school" series looking at the book of James and how we might treat others.

Kids church made us all proud when they pulled off another fantastic Nativity service, sharing the message of hope with many people who attended. It was

lovely to see some families who attend toddler groups and other churches come along and join in with the service! Each year that nativity is a wonderful service our Kids Church put together and I am sure it will be a joyful experience this coming year too!

We've ended the past year by looking at discipleship and what it means to follow Jesus, celebrated Easter together and we are now exploring the fruits of the spirit on the run up to our annual Pentecost Party! I know St Johns are very grateful for the children and for the wonderful adults who help teach, guide and support the children on their faith journey; including adults who muck in with crafts, tidy up and have fun with the children in the games. Thank you all!

April Banton

Toddler Group

This year we have seen Toddler In grow as a group. We've said goodbye to some of our families as children head to nursery or school, but we have also welcomed a large number of new families who have become regulars! In the past 6 months we have seen a growing number of grandparents become very engaged in the group, helping tidy up, sing the songs and do our story actions! We are also incredibly grateful for Victoria, a toddler group mum, who prepares a sensory activity for the children each week following our curriculum. What a gift! We have seen some changes within our team; Ann, Jude E and Andrea have left the group this past year. We have also welcomed Sue C to the team this year! Please do pray for our team as we manage this change in helper numbers and for God to provide more support from our church and the group; we are in need of befrienders - helpers who are willing to chat with the adults who come to group, get to know them, offer support and a listening ear. If you're interested in becoming a befriender then please speak to April Banton. The past year at Toddlers we have explored the story of Moses and the Exodus, we have also enjoyed stories about Jesus - looking at his birth, his miracles, his stories and his death and resurrection. This term the children will be exploring the early church and the fruits of the spirit. Please pray for seeds of faith in the hearts of the children and their grown ups. There will also be copious amounts of toast, biscuits and singing this coming year too!

April Banton

Schools Ministry Team

Our Schools ministry team formed in September 2023, and has members from across the team of churches. We've preparing, been coordinating, organising, leading and enjoying many events and services involving our local schools. We've done things in the schools themselves, and also in our church building.

It's incredibly rewarding, and our team has a variety of gifts and skills to draw from.

Young at Heart

The Young at Hear group meet every Monday 1pm till 3pm and is a group for the older members of the community. We enjoy a number of activities on our weekly get togethers including quizzes, play your cards right, beetle drive, bingo, live entertainment and occasional speakers, also we enjoy refreshments and lots of laughter and chatting.

Members pay a £1.00 per week membership which pays for their refreshments, prizes and special events they also allow us to make donations to the church on a monthly basis which helps with heating and other costs.

Some members have said that they look forward every week to the group meeting as sometimes it's the only time they get to come together with other people, have been able to make new friends and again have found a warm place to be in the winter months.

We have around 30 members on the books most of whom come every week, the age range is from 50 to the oldest member who is 95 and attends every week. The members come from as far away as Marshalls Cross and as close as Crossley Road.

In the past year we have enjoyed a day out in Southport and a Christmas meal at the Bull and Dog hotel where we enjoyed carol singing as well as good food. We also had a Christmas party in the centre with live music, a quiz and entertainment.

We have found it a privilege to be able to celebrate members birthdays and other times of celebration. Our future plans include an afternoon tea and another Christmas meal out. A big thank you goes to the volunteers who make this group happen and work hard to ensure that members have a good time when they are with us.

John, Val and Betty.

Tea and Toast

The toast and coffee morning is held each Thursday at 10am until 12noon and serves tea, coffee and toast to those who attend. There is no charge for this but people do make donations towards the costs. There is an average of 20 people attend each week and they are made up of members of St. Johns church, visitors from other churches in the team and unchurched members of the local community who make up about half of the attendee's. This gives us a great opportunity to reach out to the local community and to introduce them to the love of Jesus through our service.

Tuesday Bible Study

The Bible Study meets every Tuesday at 10.30am in the Memorial Hall at St. Johns. We have an average of 12 people attending and contributing to our studies and discussions. We have studied various books and topics throughout the year from both the old and new testaments. We started the year by looking at what worship means to us as Christians and found references in a number of books that helped us to understand what different forms worship can take. Some of the books we have looked at has been 1 Peter, Jeremiah, James and a number of the Psalms finishing the year off with a study of Psalm 119 which took us 3 months to complete but held a wealth of information and instruction for all of us. We have enjoyed our journey through 2023 and have been able to consider different issues that have surfaced through our studies, There is something special about meeting together as a group to study and learn more about God and His way and how best we can apply that to our everyday lives.

Thursday House Group

Thursday house group began meeting in the vicarage in April 2022, and we've looked at and explored many different topics, themes and stories in the Bible, from Hebrew words, to the theme of priesthood throughout the Bible, to short epistles in the New Testament. One thing we've been doing a lot of is working our way through the Chosen, a t.v series currently being created, which is an imaginative dramatisation of the lives of the disciples. We've just started watching, discussing and reading around season four, which is really exciting.

Gareth



ANNUAL REPORT

THE PARISH CHURCH OF
ST JOHN, RAVENHEAD

For the year ending December 2023



Crossley Road, WA10 3ND



stjohnsravenhead.org.uk

**St. John the Evangelist, Ravenhead,
Crossley Road, St Helens WA10 3ND.**

**Annual Report and Financial Statements of the Parochial Church Council
for the year ending 31st. December 2022.**

Incumbent:

Revd Gareth Banton

Team Clergy:

Revd Helen Coffey (Team Rector)

Revd Sonya Doragh (Team Vicar)

Revd Gregor Stewart (Team Curate) until March 28th

Banks:

HSBC Bank Plc

33 Ormskirk Street St Helens Merseyside

WA10 2SZ

CCLA, Church of England Deposit Fund, 85 Queen Victoria Street, London

Independent Examiner:

Rev'd. A. A. Clements, MA, ACIB, FCIE

15 Carleton Road, Chorley PR6 8TQ

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Administrative Information

St. John's Church is situated in Crossley Road, St Helens. It is part of the Diocese of Liverpool within the Church of England. The correspondence address is St John's Church, Crossley Road, St Helens, WA10 3ND.

Under the terms of section 3 of the Parochial Church Councils (Powers) Measure 1956 the Parochial Church Council (PCC) is a body corporate and currently excepted from registration with the Charity Commission.

PCC members:

Incumbent:

Revd Gareth Banton Team Vicar (Chair)

Team Clergy:

Revd Helen Coffey Team Rector until Sept 2023

Revd Sonya Doragh Team Vicar

Revd Gregor Stewart Team Curate until March 2023

Churchwarden

Mr John Ingham

Reps Deanery Synod:

Vacant

Vacant

Vacant

Elected members:

Mrs Angela Davies

Mrs Val Ingham

Mrs Elizabeth Johnson

Mr Peter Johnson

Mrs Christine Fenney

Mrs Elizabeth Carney (PCC Secretary)

Mrs Sarah Garnett

Mr James Thomas (Treasurer)

Mrs Judith Thomas

Mrs Wendy Mousdell (Safeguarding Officer)

Structure, Governance and Management

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. All Church attendees are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and stand for election to the PCC. The Standing Committee of the PCC is the only committee required to be in existence by church law and

has the power to transact the business of the PCC between meetings, subject to ratification of the PCC. The members of the Standing Committee are: Revd Gareth Banton, both Churchwardens, Mrs Joy Light and Mrs Sheila Lancaster. This Committee met as and when necessary during the year.

Induction Training

All PCC members elected for the first time and any others who have been re-elected to the PCC after an absence of sometime are supplied with copies of the minutes of the previous PCC meeting. In service training is provided where and when appropriate. A copy of the short e-book "A PCC members guide" is available for anyone who wishes to read it.

It is considered that all PCC members and any others who could be understood to be 'managers' in the activities and affairs of the Parish of St. John's Church, Ravenhead are deemed to be 'fit and proper' persons under the terms of the Finance Act 2010.

Aim and Purposes

The PCC is aware of the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit in 'The Advancement of Religion for the Public Benefit' and have regard to it in their administration of the Parish.

The PCC believes that, by fulfilling its responsibility to work together with the incumbent and to co-operate in all matters of concern and importance for the promotion of the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical, it provides a benefit to the public by:

- Providing resources and facilities for public worship, pastoral care and spiritual, moral and intellectual development, both for its members and anyone who wishes to benefit from what the Church offers;
- Promoting Christian values, and service by members of the Church in the Parish to its community, to the benefit of individuals and society as a whole.

Achievements and performance

There are 83 parishioners on the Church Electoral Roll.

Objectives and Activities of the year 2023

The PCC met on six formal occasions during 2023. We also had an informal 'away day' with PCC members from our other Team Churches and corresponded, occasionally making decisions by email.

At the start of 2023 our PCC meetings focused on some of the financial difficulties we were facing and how to continue tackling and challenging it.

Decisions have been taken and the situation has improved thankfully. Another large point of discussion was the deanery pastoral reorganisation (which is now set to come into effect on May 1st 2024). Towards the end of 2023 our business focused on the appointment of a team administrator, and our new Team Vision.

Financial Review

At the end of 2023 the wealth of the Parish was 15,395 in the current account at HSBC. The deposit account with CCLA (Church of England Funds Management) was at £5000.

The Parish has paid the Parish Share in full for 2023. This is due in large part to the very generous gift of St James with St Matthews parish paying £10,000 of our parish share bill. This prevented the charity from becoming insolvent. Our financial situation has improved since then, and we finished the year with a deficit of -£2,525. The PCC has been considering a range of measures to tackle our deficit, thanks all our regular givers and donors, and encourages all members to routinely review their financial offerings, as part of their discipleship. One positive and recent development (as of April 2024) is that we have begun reclaiming gift aid from the last few years, which will also help our financial situation. Particular thanks is given to Mrs Angela Davies for her hard work getting the church up to date with our tax reclaim.

Risk Assessment

The PCC recognises that in relation to 'Risk Assessment', risk is defined as 'the threat of any action or event which will adversely affect an organisation's ability to achieve its objectives and execute its strategies'. It also accepts that the term 'risk' can include any circumstances that may, or do, have an adverse effect, and is wider than financial matters. 'Risks' relate not only to the negative consequences of a threat, but also to the impact of not taking advantage of opportunities.

The PCC recognises it requires a practical Health and Safety Policy covering activities for both the church and its surrounding grounds. This is reviewed on a regular basis. An Accident Book is maintained.

The contents and obligations of the Equality Act 2010 and the 2018 General Data Protection Regulation are known and complied with to the best of the PCC's ability. The PCC is aware of its responsibilities in respect of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 in its requirement to carry out a fire

assessment to identify any possible dangers and risks, to take action to minimise the risks and to create a plan to deal with any emergencies, and also to write up and keep a record of its findings and to review its assessment annually. The PCC has appointed the Churchwardens to be the responsible persons to put these things into operation.

There is a Safeguarding Policy in place in respect of children and vulnerable adults. Checks have been and are made with the Disclosure and Barring Service in respect of persons dealing regularly with young people and vulnerable adults. The PCC's appointed officer for this is Mrs Wendy Parkinson. Whilst it is impossible to eliminate all risks and their consequences, efforts are constantly made to minimise such occurrences.

Reserves Policy

The PCC seeks to retain (for current and emergency expenditure) the equivalent of three month's running costs (approximately £15000) to meet the everyday costs of running the parish with remaining funds being invested in the CCLA deposit account. Our current account currently stands at approximately this amount, with a small amount of money still kept in the CCLA fund.

Future Plans

When planning our activities for the year, we have considered the Commission's guidance on public benefit and, in particular, the supplementary guidance on charities for the advancement of religion. In particular, we state on our Charity Commission profile, that we offer "spiritual instruction through services and bible studies for members and general public, also offer access to community ventures through St Johns Centre."

Approved by the PCC on

and signed on their behalf by

Wednesday 17th March 2024



Rev Gareth Banton

Receipts for the year ending December 31st 2023

General Fund Receipts and Payments Account.					
	Unrestricted	Designated	Restricted	Total	Total
Receipts	2023	2023	2023	2023	2022
	£	£	£	£	£
Voluntary Income					
Tax Efficient Planned Giving	17,598			17,598	10,480
Other Planned Giving	1,280			1,280	6,605
Collections at Services	12,115			12,115	3,693
All other giving/Vol. Receipts	3,333	1,527		4,861	1,405
Gift Aid Recovered					nil
GASDS recovered	-				nil
Total Voluntary Receipts					22,183
Fundraising Activities	444			444	3,318
Investment Income				-	133
Church Activities				-	3,148
P.C.C Fees				-	25,118
Trading Activities	23,579			23,579	29,266
Other Receipts	-			-	1,500
Total Receipts	58,348	1,527		59,876	55,399

Payments Made for the Year Ending 31st December 2023

	2023				
	Unrestricted	Designated	Restricted	Total	Total
Payments	2023	2023	2023	2023	2022
	£	£	£	£	£
<u>Church Activities</u>					
Mission Giving and Donations				-	440
Parish Share	28,473			28,473	39,131
Salaries, wages and honoraria	9,269			9,269	19,866
Clergy and Staff Expenses	2,697			2,697	249
Church running expenses	2,393			2,393	2,422
Church repairs and maintenance	3,893			3,893	1,467
Church Building Insurance	3,573			3,573	3,785
Church Utility Bills	11,388			11,388	7,678
Cost of Trading	714			714	210
<u>Total Payments</u>				62,401	75,408
Excess of Receipts over Payments				- 2,525	- 20,009
Accountancy Adjustment					1,759
Deficit / Surplus after Adjustment				- 2,525	- 18,250
Bank Account as at 1st. January 2023				17,920	36,170
Bank Account as at 31st. December 2023				15,395	17,920

Statement of Assets and Liabilities Page

Statement of Assets and Liabilities as at 31st. December 2023.					
<u>Monetary Assets</u>					
	General	Designated	Restricted	Total	Total
	Unrestricted			2023	2022
	£	£	£	£	£
HSBC	13,868	1527		15395	4920
CCLA	5,000			5000	13000
Sub Total	18,868	1527		20395	17920
Cash in Hand	-				1272
Total	18,868	1527		20395	19192

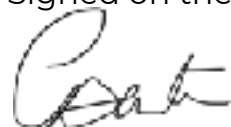
The Financial Statements of the PCC have been prepared in accordance with the Church accounting regulations using the Receipts and Payments basis.

The following assets are recognised but not necessarily valued in the Statement of assets and liabilities: moveable church furnishing held by the church wardens on special trust for the P.C.C and which require a faculty for disposal.

The expenses paid to clergy may include a small material portion which relates to their function as P.C.C members. No other payments made to P.C.C members for being members of the P.C.C.

Approved by the P.C.C by correspondence on **Tuesday 12th March 2024**

Signed on their behalf by



Rev Gareth Banton



Mr James Thomas

Accounting Policies for the PCC of the Parish of St. John the Evangelist, Ravenhead

The financial statements of the PCC have been prepared in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations 2006 using the Receipts & Purchases basis.

Funds

General funds represent the funds of the PCC that are not subject to any special restrictions regarding their use and are available for application to the general purposes of the PCC. These include funds designated for a particular purpose by the PCC.

The accounts include monetary transactions, assets and liabilities for which the PCC can be held responsible.

They do not include the accounts of other Church groups that owe an affiliation to another body, nor those that are informal gatherings of Church members.

Subject to the above, receipts and payments include income as received and expenditure when irrevocably paid.

Statement of Assets and Liabilities

The following assets are recognized but not necessarily valued in the Statement of Assets and Liabilities:

- Movable church furnishings held by the churchwardens on special trust for the PCC and which require a faculty for disposal.
 - Land and buildings held on behalf of the PCC.
 - Other fixtures, fittings and office equipment where the PCC is free to dispose of such assets without faculty and where the original cost exceeded £1,000.
- Investments held beneficially by the PCC.

The following assets are recognized and a monetary value given as part of the description in the Statement of Assets and Liabilities:

- Amounts owing from the Inland Revenue where a formal claim has been made.

Any other amounts owing to the PCC including church hall lettings and insurance claims.

Legacies where formal notification of entitlement and amount has been received by 31st December by the PCC.

Closing bank balances as shown in the receipts and payment account.

The following liabilities may be recognised in the Statement of Assets and Liabilities:

Outstanding fees owed to the Liverpool Diocesan Board of Finance

Any Any loans or overdrafts advanced to the PCC

Any arrears of Diocesan Parish Share

Creditors for goods or services where the supply has been received and invoiced by 31st December.

(Awaiting Independent Examiners Certificate.)

Narrative Reports

Worship Report

Please note that averages below reflect 'ordinary' Sundays. Sundays with a christening or a special festival are not included as they inflate our averages.

FIGURE 1

Total Attendance 2023 (11am Service)

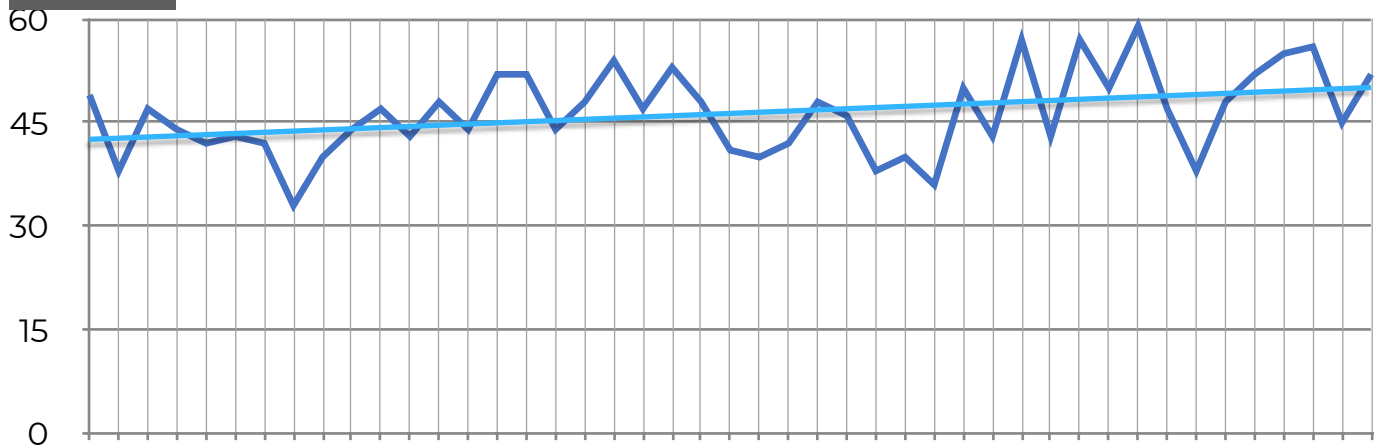


FIGURE 2

Three Yearly Comparison (11am Service)

Year	Adults	Children
2021	21	1
2022	28	7
2023	35	12

FIGURE 3

2021, 2022, 2023 Attendance (11am)

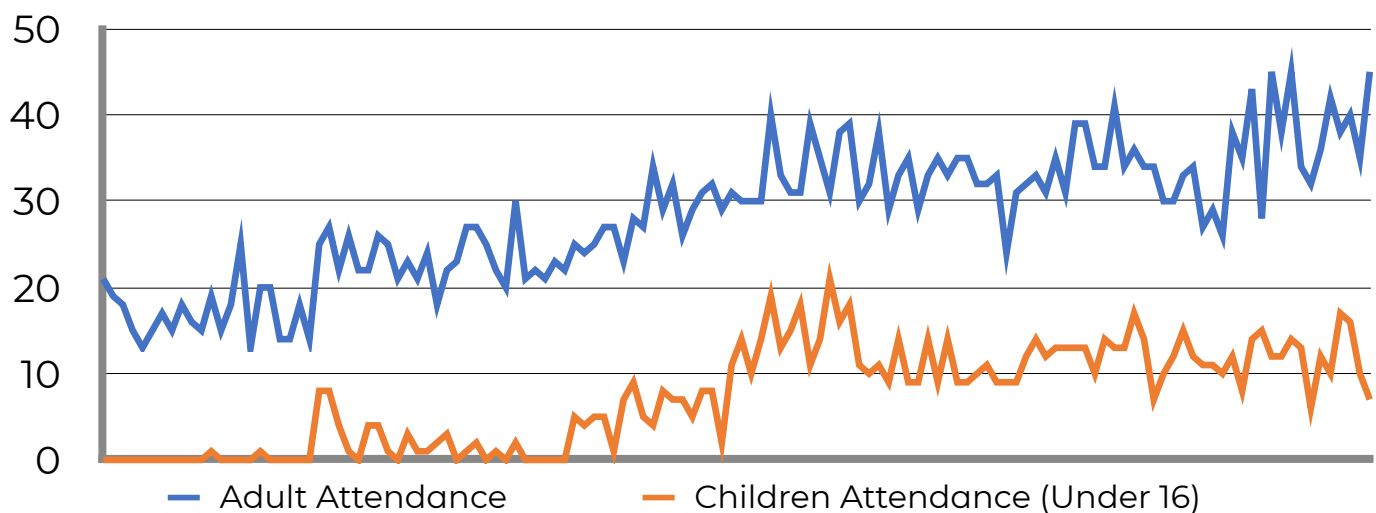
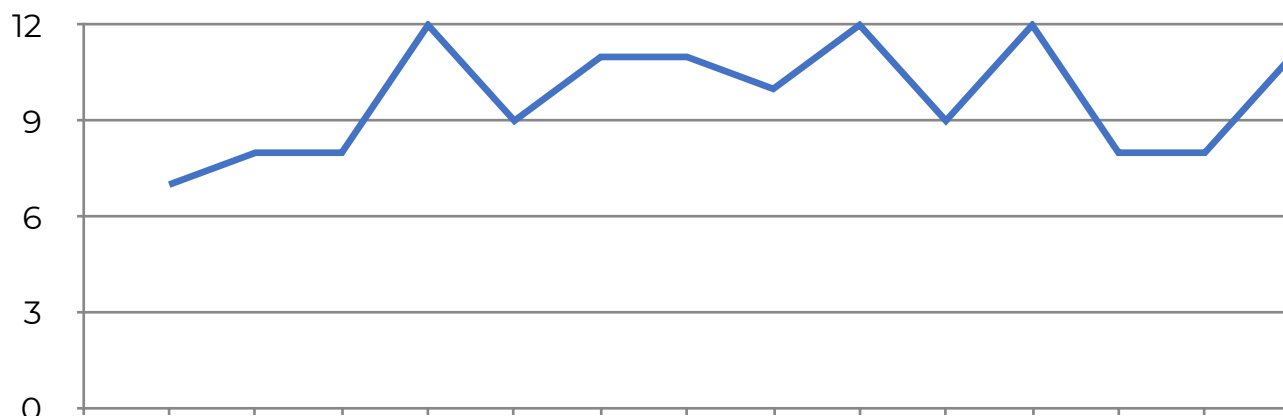


FIGURE 4**Total Attendance 2023 (8.30 BCP Service)****FIGURE 5****Life Events (Three Year Comparison)**

Year	Funerals (inc Crem Only)	Weddings	Baptisms
2021	19	1	6
2022	15	1	7
2023	10	1	8

You'll see from the data above that overall, attendance at worship is increasing, which continues the trajectory we've been on since returning from the pandemic. Growth at our 11am service has been really encouraging, as we have now returned to pre-pandemic numbers, but we've grown back younger with more children and young families. 8.30am BCP services are held on fourth Sundays and major festivals (there were 14 throughout 2023). Attendance at these is smaller but remains steady.

Sunday attendance is just one marker of a church's health, but it is an important one, as Sunday mornings are the primary way we express our togetherness, our unity, and the main way in which we worship God together. We live in a time when many churches are declining, some are stable and few are growing. The fact that we have grown consistently for a few years is to be commended and it is a testimony to our common life as a community that people visit and feel able to return.

The data for life events is, in my opinion, unremarkable. Funerals are below the number for previous years, which reflects a national trend away from church funerals and toward secular, humanist or civil celebrants. Weddings are rare at

St John's but have remained consistent at one per year, and baptisms were slightly busier in 2023 than previous years.

Vicars Report

Well, what can I say about 2023? It was a whirlwind, loads of good things happened and we 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 continued to grow gently and steadily in 2023 (see statistics above). I'm so grateful for everybody who is involved in helping make sure Sundays are a success. Whether you lead worship, do readings or lead prayers, count the money, assist with Kid's Church, arrange flowers, welcome people or serve refreshments, I'm so grateful. 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.

When 2023 began we were in a really precarious position financially as a church, having reached the very end of our reserves and still running a sizeable deficit. Fortunately, St James with St Matthews offered to pay for three months of our monthly parish share payments (approximately £10,000). This was tremendously generous, and a testimony of how our team of churches are committed to each others' flourishing. This gave us breathing room while we made some more cuts and raised income. Sadly one of the decisions we had to make was to make our community centre caretaker redundant in June. The final six months of the year were significantly better than the first, and we finished the year with a deficit circa £2500 which is an enormous improvement from the previous year. We continue to be mindful of our finances, as some months we make a loss and some a small profit. As our finances stabilise, I feel the time is right to carefully invest once more in our building and the church grounds in places where it is looking tired or neglected.

We did a number of bigger events throughout the year, in addition to our regular activities. We held a successful Spring and Christmas fair, each raising a good sum of money but perhaps more importantly bringing people through the doors and raising our profile in the community. We hosted a Strawberry Tea in July, for our team church members which helped generate a little extra

income as well. We held a Rock and Roll night in November which was booked out and a real success. Thank you to all the volunteers who made these events possible.

Our regular ministries continued their important work week in and week out. You can read their reports below for more detail. One new team-wide ministry began in September: our new Schools Ministry Team. Made up of people from across the churches we help facilitate events and worship in school and in our church buildings for 3 of our local schools. As a church we continue to enjoy a good relationship Thatto Heath Primary School. I sit as Vice-Chair of the governing body, and regularly visit the school for assemblies and to help with the R.E Curriculum. In July 2023, the school made a commitment to ensure that every academic year group, gets it own special visit to the church every year, in addition to visiting for the school-wide Christmas and Easter services. The opportunities the school offers us to reach into our community is significant. And every visit and every assembly helps the children feel more at home in our church, and lays good foundations to build upon.

There are some key priorities for St Johns going forward. We need to continue to strive for financial health, and maintain our building so it is fit for the future. But more importantly we need to keep investing in the young people who are part of our community, ensuring that provision is given to them for each stage of life. God has brought many young families into our church family, and we want the children's relationship with Jesus to develop and grow, even as they grow and mature. Kid's Church has proven a big success with primary school-aged children but we need to begin considering provision for older children and teenagers, or we risk neglecting their spiritual needs.

Wardens Report

The fabric of the church is in reasonable condition although there has been some repairs to the church to contend with and some roof work included in that. There is still work to be done to the fabric of the church but we are currently planning some work to the outside grounds in order to level off the hill at the back of the church so it can be a more useable space.

Numbers attending church services have been growing during the past year with new people coming to worship at St. Johns, also which is great to see, we are seeing more children coming to Kid's church. The PCC made a decision to hold meetings bi-monthly and this seems to be working well. From 1st May the Fit for Mission project will legally come into being this means that St. Johns

along with St. Lukes and St. James who decided not to join will form a team which is currently known as the Eccleston Team. This means that after the 1st May we will be able to advertise for a team vicar and the team churches are currently preparing their parish profiles ready for when we do that. During last year Revd Helen Coffey moved on to a new role and this meant that Gareth was left as the only vicar in the team. This of course has increased the workload for Gareth but the laity are helping as much as possible. Looking forward we pray that we will see St. Johns grow and any partnership with the other churches locally will be a strong one and will be to the glory of God.

John Ingham

Finance Statistics

As you can see from the finance report above, and the statistics below, our financial position improved through 2023, but we still have a little way to go before we are able to break even.

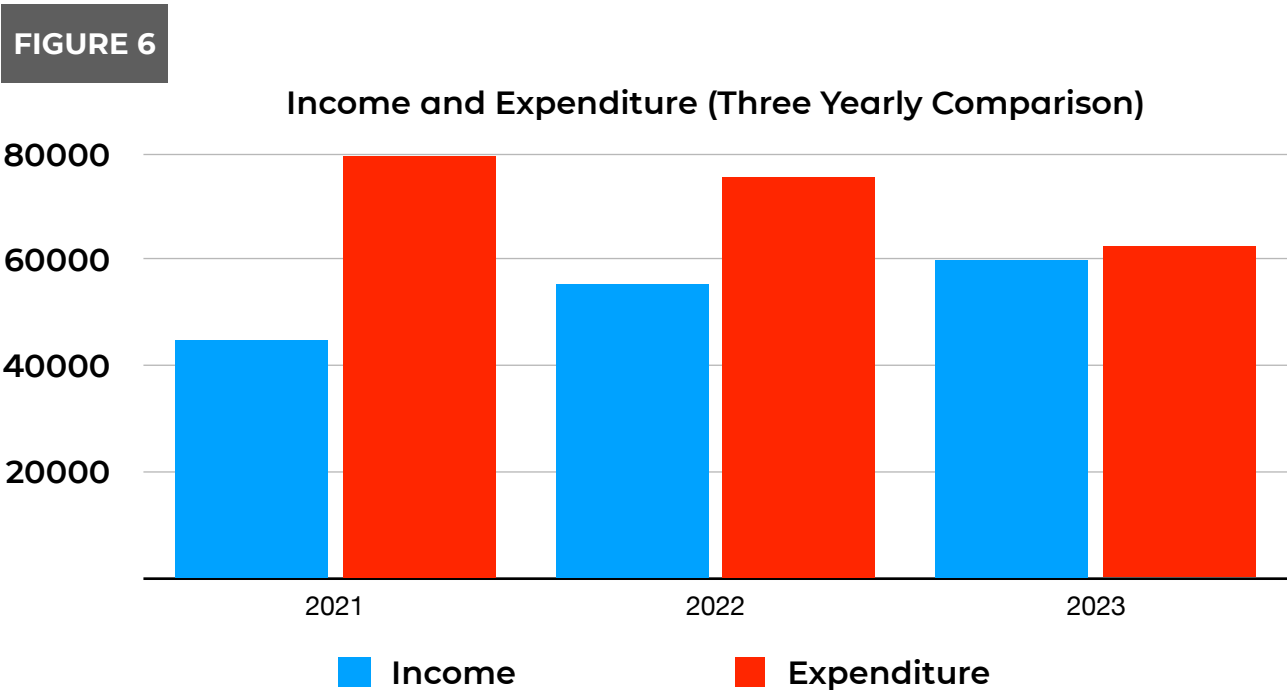


FIGURE 7

	2021	2022	2023
Income	£45040	£55399	£59876
Expenditure	£79369	£75550	£62401
Profit/Loss (£)	-£34329	-£20151	-£2525

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 Eccleston 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 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 goals:

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.

Our PCC's will meet again in 2024 to continue to think about our next set of priorities and making further steps on the road to becoming the team of churches God calls us to be.

Throughout 2023, God has been faithful to us. We've seen growth in some areas of our churches life, our service to our community and a good number of people have come to faith, and began their journey of keeping Jesus at the centre.

We trust that God's faithfulness towards us will continue in 2024, holding on to these verses (Ephesians 3:20-21) as we do so:

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

Deanery Synod Report

Deanery synod only met on a few occasions through 2023, but the primary meeting was held in March, during which we discussed and debated a paper proposing the pastoral reorganisation of the deanery into a larger single parish (the Fit For Mission proposal), and a number of other parishes who had chosen not to be part of the Fit For Mission programme. It was decided that the parishes (ours included) that were not part of FFM, would begin their own discernment with regards to how their clergy allocation would be distributed across the churches.

Groups and Activities

Kid's Church Report

This past year we have welcomed new families and said goodbye to others who have moved away. Over the past year we have enjoyed many stories, games and creative activities together. Some memorable moments have been our Faith Questions series which helped the children (and adults) explore some of the big and small questions of our Faith; we've followed the lectionary and joined up with our adult church family for a "Back to school" series looking at the book of James and how we might treat others.

Kids church made us all proud when they pulled off another fantastic Nativity service, sharing the message of hope with many people who attended. It was

lovely to see some families who attend toddler groups and other churches come along and join in with the service! Each year that nativity is a wonderful service our Kids Church put together and I am sure it will be a joyful experience this coming year too!

We've ended the past year by looking at discipleship and what it means to follow Jesus, celebrated Easter together and we are now exploring the fruits of the spirit on the run up to our annual Pentecost Party! I know St Johns are very grateful for the children and for the wonderful adults who help teach, guide and support the children on their faith journey; including adults who muck in with crafts, tidy up and have fun with the children in the games. Thank you all!

April Banton

Toddler Group

This year we have seen Toddler In grow as a group. We've said goodbye to some of our families as children head to nursery or school, but we have also welcomed a large number of new families who have become regulars! In the past 6 months we have seen a growing number of grandparents become very engaged in the group, helping tidy up, sing the songs and do our story actions! We are also incredibly grateful for Victoria, a toddler group mum, who prepares a sensory activity for the children each week following our curriculum. What a gift! We have seen some changes within our team; Ann, Jude E and Andrea have left the group this past year. We have also welcomed Sue C to the team this year! Please do pray for our team as we manage this change in helper numbers and for God to provide more support from our church and the group; we are in need of befrienders - helpers who are willing to chat with the adults who come to group, get to know them, offer support and a listening ear. If you're interested in becoming a befriender then please speak to April Banton. The past year at Toddlers we have explored the story of Moses and the Exodus, we have also enjoyed stories about Jesus - looking at his birth, his miracles, his stories and his death and resurrection. This term the children will be exploring the early church and the fruits of the spirit. Please pray for seeds of faith in the hearts of the children and their grown ups. There will also be copious amounts of toast, biscuits and singing this coming year too!

April Banton

Schools Ministry Team

Our Schools ministry team formed in September 2023, and has members from across the team of churches. We've preparing, been coordinating, organising, leading and enjoying many events and services involving our local schools. We've done things in the schools themselves, and also in our church building.

It's incredibly rewarding, and our team has a variety of gifts and skills to draw from.

Young at Heart

The Young at Hear group meet every Monday 1pm till 3pm and is a group for the older members of the community. We enjoy a number of activities on our weekly get togethers including quizzes, play your cards right, beetle drive, bingo, live entertainment and occasional speakers, also we enjoy refreshments and lots of laughter and chatting.

Members pay a £1.00 per week membership which pays for their refreshments, prizes and special events they also allow us to make donations to the church on a monthly basis which helps with heating and other costs.

Some members have said that they look forward every week to the group meeting as sometimes it's the only time they get to come together with other people, have been able to make new friends and again have found a warm place to be in the winter months.

We have around 30 members on the books most of whom come every week, the age range is from 50 to the oldest member who is 95 and attends every week. The members come from as far away as Marshalls Cross and as close as Crossley Road.

In the past year we have enjoyed a day out in Southport and a Christmas meal at the Bull and Dog hotel where we enjoyed carol singing as well as good food. We also had a Christmas party in the centre with live music, a quiz and entertainment.

We have found it a privilege to be able to celebrate members birthdays and other times of celebration. Our future plans include an afternoon tea and another Christmas meal out. A big thank you goes to the volunteers who make this group happen and work hard to ensure that members have a good time when they are with us.

John, Val and Betty.

Tea and Toast

The toast and coffee morning is held each Thursday at 10am until 12noon and serves tea, coffee and toast to those who attend. There is no charge for this but people do make donations towards the costs. There is an average of 20 people attend each week and they are made up of members of St. Johns church, visitors from other churches in the team and unchurched members of the local community who make up about half of the attendee's. This gives us a great opportunity to reach out to the local community and to introduce them to the love of Jesus through our service.

Tuesday Bible Study

The Bible Study meets every Tuesday at 10.30am in the Memorial Hall at St. Johns. We have an average of 12 people attending and contributing to our studies and discussions. We have studied various books and topics throughout the year from both the old and new testaments. We started the year by looking at what worship means to us as Christians and found references in a number of books that helped us to understand what different forms worship can take. Some of the books we have looked at has been 1 Peter, Jeremiah, James and a number of the Psalms finishing the year off with a study of Psalm 119 which took us 3 months to complete but held a wealth of information and instruction for all of us. We have enjoyed our journey through 2023 and have been able to consider different issues that have surfaced through our studies, There is something special about meeting together as a group to study and learn more about God and His way and how best we can apply that to our everyday lives.

Thursday House Group

Thursday house group began meeting in the vicarage in April 2022, and we've looked at and explored many different topics, themes and stories in the Bible, from Hebrew words, to the theme of priesthood throughout the Bible, to short epistles in the New Testament. One thing we've been doing a lot of is working our way through the Chosen, a t.v series currently being created, which is an imaginative dramatisation of the lives of the disciples. We've just started watching, discussing and reading around season four, which is really exciting.

Gareth

Independent Examiner's unqualified report to the members of the P.C.C. of St. John the Evangelist Church, Ravenhead, in respect of the Financial Statements for the year ended 31st. December 2023 as set out on pages 7 to 9 as attached to this document.

Respective responsibilities of the P.C.C. and the examiner.

The P.C.C. members acting as the charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for the 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 the Independent Examiner's statement.

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions given by the Charity Commission and the guidance published in PCC Accountability (The Charities Act 2011 and the P.C.C.), 5th edition). An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with these records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from the trustees concerning such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required for 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 material matter has come to my attention which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act, or
- the accounts do not accord to the accounting records.

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

Signed. *Alan A Clements* , Date 29th. April 2024
Name Revd. A. A. Clements

Fellow Association of Charity Independent Examiners.

Address 15 Carleton Road, Great Knowley, Chorley PR6 8TQ

ACIE PCC CC32