

**The Parish of Neston**

Charity No 1129453

**Annual Report  
and  
Financial Statements  
of the  
Neston Parochial Church Council**

**For the year ended 31st December 2023**

**Incumbent  
Fr. Kevin Crinks**

# NESTON PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

## STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

For the year ended 31st December 2023

|                                            |      | Unrestricted Funds | Restricted Funds | Designated Funds | Endowment Funds | TOTAL FUNDS 2023 | 2022           |
|--------------------------------------------|------|--------------------|------------------|------------------|-----------------|------------------|----------------|
|                                            | Note | £                  | £                | £                | £               | £                | £              |
| <b>INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS</b>               |      |                    |                  |                  |                 |                  |                |
| Voluntary Income                           | 2(a) | 78,558             | 5,000            | 0                | 0               | 83,558           | 85,451         |
| Church activities                          | 2(b) | 18,225             | 426              | 600              | 0               | 19,251           | 20,427         |
| Activities For Generating Funds            | 2(c) | 31,482             | 5,058            | 0                | 0               | 36,540           | 33,305         |
| Income From Investments                    | 2(d) | 0                  | 9,917            | 0                | 0               | 9,917            | 4,509          |
| <b>TOTAL INCOME</b>                        |      | <b>128,265</b>     | <b>20,401</b>    | <b>600</b>       | <b>0</b>        | <b>149,266</b>   | <b>143,692</b> |
| <b>EXPENDITURE</b>                         |      |                    |                  |                  |                 |                  |                |
| Raising funds                              | 3(a) | 601                | 0                | 0                | 0               | 601              | 4,096          |
| Church activities                          | 3(b) | 134,873            | 9,727            | 1,222            | 0               | 145,822          | 143,429        |
| Other Expenditure                          | 3(c) | 1,361              | 0                | 0                | 0               | 1,361            | 2,250          |
| <b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>                   |      | <b>136,835</b>     | <b>9,727</b>     | <b>1,222</b>     | <b>0</b>        | <b>147,784</b>   | <b>149,775</b> |
| <b>NET INCOME/(-EXPENDITURE)</b>           |      | <b>-8,570</b>      | <b>10,674</b>    | <b>-622</b>      | <b>0</b>        | <b>1,482</b>     | <b>-6,083</b>  |
| <b>Gross Transfers between funds - In</b>  |      | <b>1,421</b>       |                  | <b>221</b>       |                 | <b>1,642</b>     | <b>200</b>     |
| <b>Gross Transfers between funds - Out</b> |      | <b>-1,042</b>      |                  | <b>-600</b>      |                 | <b>-1,642</b>    | <b>-200</b>    |
| <b>Gains on Investment Assets</b>          |      |                    |                  |                  | <b>6,952</b>    | <b>6,952</b>     |                |
| <b>Other Recognised Losses</b>             |      |                    |                  |                  |                 | <b>0</b>         | <b>-18,369</b> |
| <b>NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS</b>               |      | <b>-8,191</b>      | <b>10,674</b>    | <b>-1,001</b>    | <b>6,952</b>    | <b>8,434</b>     | <b>-24,452</b> |
| Balances b/fwd 1st January                 |      | 45,843             | 198,783          | 5,705            | 259,622         | 509,953          | 534,405        |
| <b>Balances c/fwd 31st December</b>        |      | <b>37,652</b>      | <b>209,457</b>   | <b>4,704</b>     | <b>266,574</b>  | <b>518,387</b>   | <b>509,953</b> |

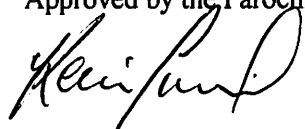
The Notes on Pages 3 to 6 form part of these accounts.

# NESTON PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

## BALANCE SHEET at 31st DECEMBER 2023

|                                                         | Note | 2023<br>£       | 2022<br>£       |
|---------------------------------------------------------|------|-----------------|-----------------|
| <b>FIXED ASSETS</b>                                     |      |                 |                 |
| Tangible Fixed Assets                                   |      | 25,001          | 25,001          |
| Investment Assets                                       | 9    | 296,976         | 290,024         |
|                                                         |      | <u>321,977</u>  | <u>315,025</u>  |
| <b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>                                   |      |                 |                 |
| Stock on Hand                                           |      | 330             | 310             |
| Debtors                                                 | 6    | 6,482           | 5,746           |
| Short Term Deposits                                     |      | 202,578         | 202,442         |
| Development Fund                                        |      |                 |                 |
| Cash                                                    |      | 32              | 15              |
|                                                         |      | <u>209,422</u>  | <u>208,513</u>  |
| <b>LIABILITIES: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR</b> |      |                 |                 |
|                                                         | 7    | 13,012          | 13,585          |
| <b>NET CURRENT ASSETS</b>                               |      |                 |                 |
|                                                         |      | <u>196,410</u>  | <u>194,928</u>  |
| <b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>                                     |      |                 |                 |
|                                                         |      | <u>£518,387</u> | <u>£509,953</u> |
| <b>FUNDS</b>                                            |      |                 |                 |
|                                                         | 5    |                 |                 |
| Endowment                                               |      | 266,574         | 259,622         |
| Unrestricted - Designated                               |      | 4,704           | 5,705           |
| Restricted                                              |      | 209,457         | 198,783         |
| Unrestricted                                            |      | 37,652          | 45,843          |
|                                                         |      | <u>£518,387</u> | <u>£509,953</u> |

Approved by the Parochial Church Council on 16 April 2024 and signed on its behalf by



**Chairman**  
**Fr. Kevin Crinks**



**Hon. Treasurer**  
**Lucy Brooks**  
Member of the Association of  
Chartered Certified Accountants

**The Notes on Pages 3 to 6 form part of these accounts.**

# NESTON PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

## Notes to the Accounts for the Year Ended 31st December 2023

### 1 ACCOUNTING POLICIES

The PCC is a public benefit entity within the meaning of Financial Reporting Standard 102.

The financial statements have been prepared under the Charities Act 2011 and in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations 2006 governing the individual accounts of PCC's and with the Regulations' "true and fair view" provision.

They have been prepared under FRS102 (2016) as the applicable accounting standards and the 2019

version of the Statement of Recommended Practice, Accounting and Reporting by Charities (SORP 2nd Edition(FRS102))

#### **Fixed Assets**

*Consecrated Land and Buildings and Movable Church Furnishings.*

Consecrated and beneficed property is excluded from the accounts by s.10(2)(a) and (c) of the Charities Act 2011. Such Assets are not capitalised in the financial statements

No value is placed on movable church furnishings held by the churchwardens on special trust for the PCC and which require a faculty for disposal since the PCC considers this to be inalienable property. All expenditure incurred during the year on consecrated or benefice buildings and movable church furnishings whether maintenance or improvement, is written off as expenditure in the SOFA and separately disclosed.

*Other Fixtures and Office Equipment*

Equipment used within the church premises is depreciated on a straight line basis appropriate to the life of the equipment concerned.

#### **Funds**

##### **Unrestricted Funds**

These represent the remaining income funds of the PCC that are available for spending on the general purposes of the PCC including amounts designated by the PCC for fixed assets for its own use or for spending on a future project and are therefore not included in its 'free reserves' as disclosed in the trustees' report.

They do not include the accounts of church groups that owe their main affiliation to another body nor those that are informal gatherings of Church members.

##### **Restricted Funds**

These are income funds that must be spent on restricted purposes and details of the funds held and restrictions provided are shown in the notes to the accounts.

##### **Endowment Funds**

Endowment funds have been introduced this year. There were none last year. These are restricted and separately invested.

# NESTON PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

## Notes to the Accounts for the Year Ended 31st December 2023 (Continued)

| 2    | INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS                            | Unrestricted<br>Funds<br>£ | Restricted<br>Funds<br>£ | Designated<br>Funds<br>£ | TOTAL<br>2023<br>£ | TOTAL<br>2022<br>£ |
|------|--------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| 2(a) | <i>Incoming Resources From Donors</i>            |                            |                          |                          |                    |                    |
|      | Planned Giving                                   | 57,614                     |                          |                          | 57,614             | 56,829             |
|      | Collections in Church and Boxes                  | 5,286                      |                          |                          | 5,286              | 4,198              |
|      | Gift-Aided Gifts                                 |                            |                          |                          | 0                  | 0                  |
|      | Regular Gift Days                                |                            |                          |                          | 0                  | 0                  |
|      | Donations and Appeals                            | 2,953                      |                          |                          | 2,953              | 3,648              |
|      | Planned Giving Tax Refunds                       | 12,704                     |                          |                          | 12,704             | 13,060             |
|      | Legacies                                         |                            | 5,000                    |                          | 5,000              | 2,000              |
|      | Chester Diocesan Board Grant                     |                            |                          |                          | 0                  | 0                  |
|      | Vision Income                                    |                            |                          |                          | 0                  | 5,400              |
|      | Gas and PRounding                                | 1                          |                          |                          | 1                  | 316                |
|      |                                                  | <u>78,558</u>              | <u>5,000</u>             | <u>0</u>                 | <u>83,558</u>      | <u>85,451</u>      |
| 2(b) | <i>Incoming Resources From Church Activities</i> |                            |                          |                          |                    |                    |
|      | Wedding and Funeral fees PCC                     | 13,971                     |                          |                          | 13,971             | 13,562             |
|      | Stay & Play                                      |                            |                          | 600                      | 600                | 650                |
|      | Grants and VAT Refunds                           | 338                        | 426                      |                          | 764                | 973                |
|      | Assistant Staff Costs refunded by Diocese        | 3,916                      |                          |                          | 3,916              | 5,242              |
|      |                                                  | <u>18,225</u>              | <u>426</u>               | <u>600</u>               | <u>19,251</u>      | <u>20,427</u>      |
| 2(c) | <i>Activities For Generating Funds</i>           |                            |                          |                          |                    |                    |
|      | Wedding and Funeral fees Diocese                 | 6,802                      |                          |                          | 6,802              | 5,195              |
|      | Parish Fellowship                                | 374                        |                          |                          | 374                | 320                |
|      | Rent - Neston Centre                             | 3,550                      |                          |                          | 3,550              | 9,597              |
|      | Rent - 99 The Ringway                            | 1,876                      | 5,058                    |                          | 6,934              | 5,760              |
|      | Comrade's Field                                  | 720                        |                          |                          | 720                | 720                |
|      | Room Hire                                        | 9,685                      |                          |                          | 9,685              | 4,552              |
|      | Wall Safe                                        | 227                        |                          |                          | 227                | 84                 |
|      | Shop Income                                      | 1,195                      |                          |                          | 1,195              | 950                |
|      | Village Fair                                     | 2,580                      |                          |                          | 2,580              | 2,811              |
|      | Christmas Fairs                                  | 1,825                      |                          |                          | 1,825              | 1,147              |
|      | Events                                           | 2,648                      |                          |                          | 2,648              | 1,579              |
|      | Insurance Claims                                 | 0                          | 0                        |                          | 0                  | 590                |
| 2(d) |                                                  | <u>31,482</u>              | <u>5,058</u>             | <u>0</u>                 | <u>36,540</u>      | <u>33,305</u>      |
|      | <i>Investments</i>                               |                            |                          |                          |                    |                    |
|      | Income from Investments                          |                            | 9,917                    |                          | 9,917              | 4,500              |
|      | Bank interest etc                                |                            |                          |                          | 0                  | 9                  |
|      |                                                  | <u>0</u>                   | <u>9,917</u>             | <u>0</u>                 | <u>9,917</u>       | <u>4,509</u>       |

# NESTON PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

## Notes to the Accounts for the Year Ended 31st December 2023 (Continued)

| 3           | EXPENDITURE                                                 | Unrestricted   | Restricted   | Endowment    | TOTAL          | TOTAL          |
|-------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|--------------|--------------|----------------|----------------|
|             |                                                             | Funds          | Funds        | Funds        | 2023           | 2022           |
|             |                                                             | £              | £            | £            | £              | £              |
| <b>3(a)</b> | <i>Fundraising Trading: Costs of Sale &amp; Other Costs</i> |                |              |              |                |                |
|             | Costs of Stewardship Campaign                               | 485            |              |              | 485            | 96             |
|             | Shop Expenses                                               | 116            |              |              | 116            |                |
|             | Investment Management Costs                                 |                |              |              | 0              | 4,000          |
|             |                                                             | <u>601</u>     | <u>0</u>     | <u>0</u>     | <u>601</u>     | <u>4,096</u>   |
| <b>3(b)</b> | <i>Church Activities</i>                                    |                |              | Designated   |                |                |
|             | Outward Giving                                              |                |              |              | 0              | 0              |
|             | Secular Charities                                           |                |              |              | 0              | 100            |
|             | Weddings & Funeral Fees Diocese                             | 6802           |              |              | 6,802          | 5,167          |
|             | Parish Share                                                | 71757          |              |              | 71,757         | 69,667         |
|             | Assistant staff costs                                       | 6187           |              |              | 6,187          | 9,150          |
|             | Vicar's Working Expenses                                    | 304            |              |              | 304            | 0              |
|             | Curate's Working Expenses                                   |                |              |              | 0              | 0              |
|             | Vicarage Expenses                                           | 2537           |              | 556          | 3,093          | 2,028          |
|             | Education                                                   |                |              |              | 0              | 111            |
|             | Insurance                                                   | 7315           |              |              | 7,315          | 6,802          |
|             | Organ, piano tuning                                         | 936            |              |              | 936            | 1,084          |
|             | Repairs & Maintenance Churches                              | 4045           | 505          |              | 4,550          | 7,006          |
|             | Cleaning                                                    | 3122           |              |              | 3,122          | 2,524          |
|             | Altar requisites                                            | 567            |              |              | 567            | 359            |
|             | Service books                                               | 171            | 93           |              | 264            | 18             |
|             | Robes & chalices                                            | 76             |              |              | 76             | 0              |
|             | Music licences                                              | 756            |              |              | 756            | 703            |
|             | Organist's fees                                             | 6565           |              |              | 6,565          | 5,818          |
|             | Choir fees                                                  | 360            |              |              | 360            | 360            |
|             | Bell fees                                                   | 200            |              |              | 200            | 600            |
|             | Upkeep of churchyard                                        | 384            |              |              | 384            | 1,446          |
|             | Equipment hire                                              |                |              | 45           | 45             | 0              |
|             | Equipment servicing/ usage charges                          | 518            |              |              | 518            | 690            |
|             | Heating, Lighting & W Rates                                 | 9152           | 6,055        |              | 15,207         | 11,453         |
|             | Repairs & Maintenance Neston Centre                         | 10248          | 2,400        |              | 12,648         | 14,351         |
|             | 100 Club Prizes                                             | 0              |              |              | 0              | 0              |
|             | Vision Expenditure                                          | 0              | 674.00       |              | 674            | 1,594          |
|             | Youth Matters General Expenditure                           | 0              |              |              | 0              | 0              |
|             | Miscellaneous Expenditure                                   | 2374           |              | 621          | 2,995          | 1,897          |
|             | Bank charges                                                | 497            |              |              | 497            | 501            |
|             |                                                             | <u>134,873</u> | <u>9,727</u> | <u>1,222</u> | <u>145,822</u> | <u>143,429</u> |
| <b>3(c)</b> | <i>Other Expenditure</i>                                    |                |              |              |                |                |
|             | Other Ordinary PCC Expenditure                              |                |              |              | 0              | 864            |
|             | Parish Office & Administration                              | 815            |              |              | 815            | 904            |
|             | Parish office equipment                                     |                |              |              | 0              | 0              |
|             | Software subscriptions                                      | 546            |              |              | 546            | 482            |
|             |                                                             | <u>1,361</u>   | <u>0</u>     | <u>0</u>     | <u>1,361</u>   | <u>2,250</u>   |

# NESTON PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

## Notes to the Accounts for the Year Ended 31st December 2023 (Continued)

|                                                                          | 2023           | 2022           |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| <b>4 FIXED ASSETS</b>                                                    |                | <b>£</b>       |
| <b>Freehold Land and Buildings</b>                                       | 25,000         | 25,000         |
| <b>Equipment Written down</b>                                            | 1              | 1              |
| <b>Investment in Ringway property : The Hillcrest Curacy Trust Fund.</b> | 112,393        | 112,393        |
| <b>Invested Legacy re Betty Smith Endowment</b>                          | 184,583        | 177,631        |
|                                                                          | <u>321,977</u> | <u>315,025</u> |

The freehold land & buildings comprise the Neston Centre and Comrade's Field at Neston.

The gross values of these and the equipment have been estimated at 1st January 1997.

## 5 ANALYSIS OF FUNDS

|                                                      | At 1st Jan<br>2023<br>£ | Gains &<br>Losses<br>£ | Movement<br>in Year<br>£ | At 31st Dec<br>2023<br>£ |
|------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Endowment Funds</b>                               |                         |                        |                          |                          |
| Betty Smith Endowment                                | 177,631                 | 6,952                  |                          | 184,583                  |
| Hillcrest (including Robert Hamilton) Fund Endowment | 81,991                  |                        |                          | 81,991                   |
|                                                      | <u>259,622</u>          | <u>6,952</u>           | <u>0</u>                 | <u>266,574</u>           |
| <b>Designated Funds</b>                              |                         |                        |                          |                          |
| 3 Churches Repairs from £10,000 designated           | 2,104                   |                        |                          | 2,104                    |
| Chester Diocesan Board                               | 1,001                   |                        | -1,001                   | 0                        |
| Crump Legacy                                         | 2,000                   |                        |                          | 2,000                    |
| Stay and Play                                        | 600                     |                        |                          | 600                      |
|                                                      | <u>5,705</u>            |                        | <u>-1,001</u>            | <u>4,704</u>             |
| <b>Restricted Funds</b>                              |                         |                        |                          |                          |
| Garden Fund Bishops Trust                            | 596                     |                        |                          | 596                      |
| Lighting Fund                                        | 1,441                   |                        |                          | 1,441                    |
| Neston Centre And Comrade's Field Fund               | 25,000                  |                        |                          | 25,000                   |
| St Thomas's Donations                                | 1,000                   |                        |                          | 1,000                    |
| Vision Fund                                          | 91,241                  |                        | -3,167                   | 88,074                   |
| Miss Morris Legacy for Parish Church                 | 60,210                  |                        | -79                      | 60,131                   |
| Hillcrest (including Robert Hamilton) Fund           | 19,262                  |                        | 5,058                    | 24,320                   |
| Beazley Legacy for St Mary & St Helen's Church       |                         |                        | 4,000                    | 4,000                    |
| Dr Evans' Legacy for St Mary & St Helen's Churchyard |                         |                        | 1,000                    | 1,000                    |
| Betty Smith Investment income for Parish Church      | 32                      |                        | 3,863                    | 3,895                    |
|                                                      | <u>198,782</u>          |                        | <u>10,675</u>            | <u>209,457</u>           |
| <b>Unrestricted Funds</b>                            |                         |                        |                          |                          |
| General Fund                                         | <u>45,843</u>           |                        | <u>-8,191</u>            | <u>37,652</u>            |

## 6 DEBTORS

|                         | 2023<br>£    | 2022<br>£    |
|-------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Prepayments             | 2,621        | 1,348        |
| Other Debtors           | 60           | 744          |
| Tax and VAT refunds due | 3,801        | 3,654        |
|                         | <u>6,482</u> | <u>5,746</u> |

## 7 LIABILITIES: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

|                        |               |               |
|------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| Accrued Expenses       | 8,357         | 9,244         |
| Neston Centre Deposits | 275           | 275           |
| Agency Collections     |               | 194           |
| Parish Church Bells    | 4,302         | 3,872         |
| cash reimburse         | 78            |               |
|                        | <u>13,012</u> | <u>13,585</u> |

## 8 Staff Costs

No PCC Members were paid any wages in the year.

Several members of the PCC were reimbursed for minor expenses incurred on behalf of the PCC.

## 9 Connected Charities

The Hillcrest Curacy Trust Fund

The Robert Hamilton Fund

On 13th July 2021 the PCC became the sole trustee of the Hillcrest Curacy Trust fund and the Robert Hamilton Fund was merged into it at the same time to be administered as a restricted fund in the PCC accounts.

These Trusts have been invested in the Curates house at 99 Ringway along with £30,402 of PCC Funds

Land Registry records show the registered owner of the property is Chester Diocesan Board of Finance and as such the house does not form part of the assets of the PCC. The PCC's investment of £30,402 in the property is recorded in the Balance Sheet.

## 10 Neston Village Fair

An autonomous committee runs this annual event and maintains an account to fund the next event. The ultimate benefactor of these funds held in additional accounts would be the PCC and the surplus carried forward at the year end was £8629

## **Report of The Independent Examiner to the Trustees of Neston Parochial Church Council**

I report on the accounts for the year ended 31st December 2023, which are set out on pages 1 to 6

### ***Respective responsibilities of the Trustees and Examiner***

As trustees of the charity, the members of the PCC are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. They consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act;
- follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners (under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act); and
- state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

### ***Basis of Independent Examiner's Report***

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission

An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters.

The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in a full 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***

Since the gross income for the year exceeds the amount provided in section 145(3) of the Act, I confirm that I am qualified to act as Independent Examiner under the provisions of that section of the Act and that my qualification is as shown below.

In connection with my examination, no matters have come to my attention:

- (1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements
- to keep accounting records in accordance with s.130 of the 2011 Act; or
  - to prepare accounts which accord with these accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act have not been met;

or

- (2) to which in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

*B. H. Morris FCA*

Highfield, Bull Hill  
Lt Neston

CH64 4DN

April 2024

# **Neston Parochial Church Council Trustees' Report for 2023**

## **Parish of Neston**

### **2023 Report and Accounts**

#### **Parochial Church Council of the Parish of Neston, Cheshire.**

## **Aim and purposes**

Neston Parochial Church Council (PCC) has the aim of every Church of England church:

To promote the whole mission of the Church - pastoral, evangelistic, social, and ecumenical.

The PCC has the responsibility of cooperating with the incumbent in promoting this aim throughout the ecclesiastical parish of Neston. The PCC is specifically responsible for maintaining:

- St Mary & St Helen's Church: Parish Church, High Street, Neston, CH64 9TZ;
- St Michael and All Angels' Church: Marshlands Road, Little Neston, CH64 4AD;
- St Thomas's Church: School Lane, Parkgate, CH64 6SR; and
- Neston Centre: High Street, Neston, CH64 9TZ.

## **Objectives and activities**

The PCC is committed to enabling as many people as possible to worship at our churches and to become part of our parish community. We aim to enable people to live out their faith as part of our parish through:

- Services, worship, and prayer;
- Social outreach and pastoral work; and
- Missionary outreach, especially to children and young people.

During the first part of 2023, Neston PCC and the Ministry Team worked with officers in the Diocese of Chester to select the next Vicar of

Neston. Members of our congregations made invaluable input to this work.

In September 2023, the new Vicar of Neston, Revd Kevin David Crinks, was inducted as the Incumbent of the Parish of Neston.

Some of the work we had hoped to do in previous times that had been delayed, has started again following the arrival of Revd Crinks.

It is also important that we maintain the fabric of our three church buildings and the Neston Centre to enable us to carry out our objectives and activities.

## **Achievements and performance**

During 2023, we were able to conduct worship in all three churches with the invaluable assistance of Revd Judith Calvert (our Assistant Curate) and of local, retired priests, especially Revd Canon Ian Davenport, Revd Maureen Hobbs, Revd Alan Leach, Revd Frances Skinner, Revd Richard Skinner, Fr Mark Turner and Revd Ian Urquhart.

Revd Crinks was appointed following interviews chaired by the Archdeacon of Chester, the Ven Michael Gilbertson in May 2023.

Revd Judith Calvert retired as Assistant Curate in July 2023.

Work with elderly people continues with CAFÉ (Community and Friendship for Everyone), meeting monthly in the Neston Centre. Work with the recently bereaved continues through OASIS in the Blue Bicycle coffee shop.

## Neston Parochial Church Council Trustees' Report for 2023

Our pre-school gatherings continued during 2023: Stay & Play met in term-time on Friday mornings at the Parish Church, offering Christian teaching in a creative and well-received way. It is over-subscribed.

Children from the High School and primary schools were able to resume their visits and worship in our churches in 2023. Experience Christmas and Experience Easter workshops resumed, as did carol services and crib services – all with high attendances.

The Knit & Natter Group held a well-attended exhibition of their work in St Thomas's Church in August 2023 – depicting biblical, church and local events.

Most of our activities in all three churches benefit from the work and commitment of many volunteers, without whom much of our work could not happen and the PCC would not meet its objectives. The PCC want to thank those many people who are contributing their time and talents to our work.

The PCC is reasonably placed to address its financial position and manage budgets to prevent unplanned over-spending and enable growth – but spending levels are getting close to agreed working funding levels. We acknowledge particularly the skill and commitment of the Treasurer, Lucy Brooks, who became a Trustee at the APCM in May 2023.

Quality management information enables the PCC to understand its financial position. A planned-giving campaign was deferred until Revd Kevin Crinks was in post.

New contracts were negotiated for gas supply to all our churches and buildings.

### Churchwardens' reports

This was Linda Haigh's first year as church warden, and it was quite challenging.

She made a point of visiting each of the churches when possible and getting to know the congregations

She spent most of her time sorting new energy contracts and smart meters for our 4 buildings. Our energy provider is now EDF, and 5 accounts now have smart meters

The Neston Centre and Parish Church gas meters are too big to change to smart meters and there is a problem with the Parish church electric with the cut-out switch and a company called Quartz Elec in Liverpool is coming to access the cable under the pathway in order to fix it

The Heritage Open Days in September were successful.

We have an ongoing problem with the public parking in the Neston Centre. The parking bays have been repainted and new signs put up, and it is much better

Marion Forshaw helped lead a number of Civic outreach services:

- **Civic Service.** After a few years' absence, due to covid, we were able to once again hold this annual event which was led by Rev Maureen Hobbs. The Service was well attended by Deputy Lieutenant Mark Mitchell, our Member of Parliament, the Lord Mayor of Chester, Mayors of a number of adjoining areas and Civic leaders from Neston Town council and representatives from Cheshire West and Chester Council. We were pleased to accept for laying up the standard of 2<sup>nd</sup> Neston Guides as this unit has long ceased to exist.
- **King's Coronation.** A United Service of celebration was held on 6<sup>th</sup> May led by Rev Canon Ian Davenport, King's Chaplain.
- **Neston Female Society.** The Society held their Annual Walk through the town on 1<sup>st</sup> June 2023. This was attended by over 100 children and the adult members of the Society. Their Ecumenical Service was held at the Parish Church and outside at Neston Cross led by Bishop Julie assisted by Rev Richard Skinner, Rev Francis Skinner and Fr

## Neston Parochial Church Council Trustees' Report for 2023

Francis from St Winifred's (Roman Catholic Church).

- **Installation of our new Incumbent.** We were delighted to welcome Bishop Mark on 7<sup>th</sup> September 2023 to lead us in the Induction and Installation of our new Incumbent Revd Kevin Crinks. The service was attended by clergy and lay readers from the Deanery, Revd Crinks's previous Parish and members of the Anglican Grey Friars; civic dignitaries; representatives of local clubs and societies; representatives from other local places of worship; local school heads; many members of both the Parish of Leigh and Parish of Neston. In all almost 300 packed the church for this occasion. It was followed by refreshments at Neston Town Hall, and we are indebted to the civic team there who helped set that up and Neston Flower Society who decorated the venue.
- **Armistice Day.** The outside service and wreath laying at the war memorial on 11<sup>th</sup> November was well supported and led by Revd Kevin Crinks.
- **Remembrance Sunday.** The parade and the Service was well attended by the British Legion, Members and Veterans of the armed forces, Civic Leaders and local Cadet and Youth Groups. The Service was led by Revd Kevin Crinks.
- **Christmas outreach events**
  - We were pleased to host Christmas concerts for Neston Primary School, Parkgate Primary School and Neston High School.
  - Outdoor carol singing was held in Mostyn Square, Parkgate and in the Blue Bicycle courtyard in Neston. Both events being well attended and enjoyed by local residents.

### Worship and prayer

The Principal Sunday Service is streamed live from the Parish Church each week.

Services are held every Sunday in all three churches. Holy Communion is celebrated every week in the Parish Church, and twice a month in St Michael's and St Thomas's churches.

The midweek service continues in the Parish Church on Wednesday afternoons. Prayers for healing are included once a month, and the Mothers Union hold their monthly meeting in conjunction with one of these services.

A united service across all our churches is held on the fifth Sunday of the month, taking place in each of our churches in turn.

In 2023, our annual return to Statistics for Mission indicated:

- Approx. 110 people (including children) attended our three churches in person on those Sundays in October 2023 when we held services there;
- Approx. 145 people attended our three churches on Easter Day;
- Advent and Christmas services were held in all three churches:
  - 1150 people attended a range of services including carol services, crib services, Blue Christmas services and Christingle;
  - Approx. 185 attended services on Christmas Day in person.
- The number of views of streamed services on YouTube fluctuated through the year. On average, approx. 70 views were made of each of the live services streamed in October 2023;
- A prayer group has continued to meet, focussing on praying for the world, the parish, for growth and for achieving our mission. The group has established itself on Zoom, as a weekly prayer group, with about 8 people attending each week;
- There were 16 baptism services in our churches and 18 people were baptised. Baptism services are usually celebrated separately after our main Sunday services;

## Neston Parochial Church Council Trustees' Report for 2023

- There were 2 weddings in our churches;
- There were 55 funerals held during the year, either in our churches or at crematoria / cemeteries;

### At **St Michael's Church** in 2023,

- We now have two Eucharist services a month and two Sunday Praise services, and this has been much appreciated by the congregation, which remains mostly the same.
- We have a number of children who attend with their parents on a regular basis.
- We have sadly lost Len Smith, a member of our congregation who was a regular communicant and who did a lot of work for the parish over the years. Len's family are donating a bench in his memory, which will be situated outside St Michael's, and we thank his family for this kind offer.
- During the year, Jim Wilcock's health prevented him from doing many of the things he enjoyed and valued doing, including being the organist. Sadly, Jim died in early 2024. We thank Daniel Wakefield, the parish church organist for stepping in to play when Jim was ill, and who is now playing at St Michael's on a regular basis. Both Len and Jim will be sorely missed.

### At **St Thomas's Church** in 2023,

- Although a couple of members of our congregation have died or moved from the area, our regular congregation numbers have increased over the year.
- There have been several All-Age Café style services throughout the year, which included breakfast.
- There was an All-Age Commemorative Service on Sunday, 7th May. In the afternoon there was a successful Bring and Share Coronation Lunch, with a good number of competitors in the Best Crown Competition.
- The Annual Parish Harvest Supper received positive feedback. This has been an Outreach Event since St

Thomas' reopened in 2010. Revd Kevin Crinks and his Franciscan colleagues provided an Amazing Entertainment.

- The Knit and Natter Bible Stories Exhibition was a great success in August.
- The garden in front of the church was overflowing at our Annual Open Air Carols event – lots of families with children together with a Brownie Pack, followed by refreshments inside the church afterwards.
- Music plays an important role within acts of worship across the parish.
- Daniel Wakefield is our Organist and Choirmaster in the parish church with Christine Schofield supporting in an administrative role.
- Currently there are about 16 regular members of the choir. The choir leads singing at our principal Sunday Service and other services.
- 2023 was a busy year for bell ringers across the country. Following the large amount of half-muffled memorial ringing following the death of Queen Elizabeth II, the ringing around the coronation of King Charles III was more joyous. The ringing took place at Neston in the form of a quarter peal (45 minutes continuous ringing) on the eve of the coronation and ringing on the day of the coronation by the local band, including our "Ring for the King" recruit, John King. Showing the strong bell ringing community spirit, members of the Neston band helped at many other local towers to help ring for this important national occasion.
- Our ringers have continued to ring prior to every 10.45am service and the joint services held at the parish church as well as the additional Sunday afternoon and evening services. Quarter peals were rung before the Neston Music Festival Choral Evensong, for the induction of the new vicar and before the Blue Christmas and Christingle services. Quarter peals were also rung for the Armistice weekend and to open the Village Fair. Part of this last

## **Neston Parochial Church Council Trustees' Report for 2023**

quarter peal was played on the "Breakfast Bells" feature on Radio 3.

- There are currently twelve members in the band, including our two newest recruits who started to ring for services during the year. Our Friday practices have also begun to attract a couple of regular visitors who have seen Neston as a place to improve their ringing skills. New recruits are always welcome and will be needed to ensure ringing can continue to take place at Neston.
- No progress has been made on the overhaul of the bell frame and fittings.
- Our three churches are decorated with flowers, especially at festivals.
- In the Parish Church, there are 6 people on the Porch rota and 4 people on the Dais rota. Two people work fortnightly to provide arrangements for these. There are similar arrangements in St Michael's and St Thomas's churches.
- For the Festivals of Easter, Harvest, Christmas and also Remembrance and Heritage Open Days all rota ladies, plus helpers, come together to produce larger and extra arrangements to decorate the church. The combined cost of flowers and foliage for these occasions is approximately £500.
- The PCC acknowledges this offering to our worship.

### **Deanery Synod**

Neston is part of the Wirral South Deanery in the Diocese of Chester.

- All our clergy are members of the Deanery Synod: Revd Judith Calvert, followed by Revd Kevin Crinks.
- Two lay representatives were elected in 2023 to the Deanery Synod for 3 years: Robin Hughes and Richard Lewis. There are two vacancies.
- Lesley Irvin is an ex officio member as a licensed pastoral worker.
- Richard Lewis is the Lay Chair of the Deanery Synod.

- Deanery Synod met three times in 2023 and reviewed environmental issues (Faith4Change) and Casting the Net Wide (the Chester Diocese Strategy).

### **Buildings and services**

Our churches have been used by the wider community for civic and other purposes which help us to meet our objectives;

- The Neston Female Society held their Annual Walk on 1<sup>st</sup> June. This was attended by over 100 children and the members of the Society. Their Ecumenical Service was held at the Parish Church and on the Cross led by Julie, Bishop of Birkenhead;
- The parade for Remembrance Sunday and the Service was well attended by the Royal British Legion, Members and Veterans of the armed forces, Civic Leaders and local Cadet and Youth Groups. The Service was led by Revd Kevin Crinks;
- We have continued to maintain our buildings and grounds.

### **Parish Church of St Mary & St Helen**

- In March 2023, the card reader was installed at the West End Shop for contactless payments.
- The east wall of the graveyard required repair following damage by vehicle impact accident. [Faculty & insurance claim were required]
- The church roof was cleared of vegetation and the gables repointed, rain water outlets were improved and the loose merlon on the church tower was repaired.
- Plans were agreed in principle for a new disabled ramp. Investigation into automatic operated doors was requested. [Faculty & planning permission required]
- A new loop system amplifier was purchased.

## **Neston Parochial Church Council**

### **Trustees' Report for 2023**

- New LED lights and socket were required in the bell room due to weather corrosion.

#### **St Michael's Church**

- A new replacement oak cross was purchased and fitted into a new brick build base outside the church.

#### **St Thomas's Church**

- New fence posts replaced rotten ones and the fence made secure.
- The entrance was re-decorated by a local painter.
- Easing of the entrance doors was required and the adjacent wall was repainted.
- New radiator valves were required for four radiators and a service was included.
- The boiler's outside vent pipe was replaced.

#### **The Neston Centre and Comrades' Field**

- The absorption of soil moisture by tree roots caused subsidence and cracking to the north side wall. The drains were cleared, a new lintel fitted, and the wall re-plastered, the repainting was done 'in house.' No insurance claim due to natural causes.

#### **The Vicarage**

- It fell to PCC to make good the inner decoration prior to the new Vicar's arrival. This was done 'in house.'
- Small routine maintenance and electrical work was carried out in all above buildings i.e. broken furniture and replacement light bulbs etc.

#### **Work pending**

- Pruning of two copper beech trees south of The Neston Centre.
- External re-decorating of St Michael's.

#### **Village Fair**

- The 2023 Village Fair was held on the first Saturday in July.

- The event was well attended by the people of Neston, who were able to enjoy a good family afternoon out for the whole family. There were a number of new attractions this year.
- Entertainment was provided throughout the afternoon with the usual mix of local acts.
- The Parish made a total of £2,600, which included income from the Grand Raffle, the gate money, craft and toy stalls, burgers and from the teas and cakes in the church.

#### **Winter Fair**

A Winter Fair was held in November 2023 to avoid the clash of Christmas events. It was held in the Parish Church and was well attended by the wider parish and local school choirs. Approx £1800 was raised for church funds.

#### **Pastoral Care**

- Conversations, telephone calls, input to Prayer and Action along with the Guild of St Luke and St Raphael prayer chain keep the Ministry Team and Church aware of health and isolation issues within the community.
- Where appropriate and permitted, Home Communion is offered and taken out from the Church.
- Revd Kevin Crinks coordinates funerals with local Readers. Funeral ministry extends to many years after initial contact and the immediate impact of bereavement. This includes follow up information, OASIS support group, making connections and visiting with particular attention to isolation. There is an annual Memorial Service on the Sunday closest to All Souls' Day.
- The **Guild of St Luke and St Raphael** continued its key ministry of offering regular prayers for healing, daily for many in the local communities and further afield.

## **Neston Parochial Church Council**

### **Trustees' Report for 2023**

Again, the Guild's wider prayers for healing ministry has been a monthly focus within Mid-Week Communions.

- Healing Eucharists have continued and are now part of a monthly principal Sunday service.

#### **CAFÉ group**

- "Community and Friendship for Everyone" met in the Neston Centre on the first Tuesday of the month throughout the year from 2 – 4pm.
- It is a place for people to come and chat, play games such as Scrabble, Rummikub, dominoes, or try their hand at painting.
- We provide tea, coffee and cake.
- This group is open to anyone, not just church members and we regularly have 15+ people attend each month.

#### **OASIS group**

- OASIS is a bereavement group which meets on the second Tuesday of the month at the Blue Bicycle cafe from 3 – 5pm.
- This is a social group, not a counselling group. After each funeral, the parish sends out a letter to the next of kin which informs them of the group, and we also have referrals from the local surgeries and the wellbeing co-ordinator. Those interested in referring people to OASIS are encouraged to bring them along.

- There were 201 people on the Electoral Roll for the parish. Jim Wilcock continued as Electoral Roll Officer until he resigned in late 2023 due to ill health.
- Our two GIFT (Growing in Faith Together) groups explored topics in informal ways to grow, strengthen and support the faith of those attending. The three-fold ingredients are prayer, Bible study and fellowship.

#### **Knit And Natter**

- Knit and Natter had another successful year knitting for various charities and the Church.

- They were able to deliver twice to our charities in June 2023 and January 2024:
  - The Seaman's Mission. (Hats, scarves and gloves.)
  - The Salvation Army. (Hats, scarves, gloves, cardigans and jumpers.)
  - Arrow Park Hospital. (Baby hats and blankets.)
  - Claire House. (Baby doll outfits.)
- They also made donations to:
  - The Hedgehog Rescue Centre. (Pompom hedgehogs.)
  - Local Care Homes. (Twiddle muffs.)
- They had four events for the Church:
  - The Summer Fair
  - A Knitted Bible Story Exhibition at St Thomas,' Parkgate.
  - Winter Fair
  - Spring Coffee Morning
- An Afternoon Tea was held at St Michael's, Little Neston in June as a "Thank You" to all the members of the group.

### **Mission and evangelism**

- Monthly All Age worship was introduced at St Michael's Church from September 2022. Six children from four families attend the services in St Michael's Church.
- Revd Crinks has made contact with Neston schools and visits them.
- Children from Parkgate, Woodfall and Burton Road Schools attended Experience Easter and Experience Christmas events at St Michael's and St Thomas's churches.
- We are praying that more leaders will be found to help with this vital work with children.

#### **Mothers' Union**

- MU has met every month in 2023, except August and December, after the 1.30 Communion Service in the Parish Church. They enjoyed many excellent speakers, hosted a Deanery afternoon tea for the Coronation and attended an Advent service at Willaston. Prayer is at the heart

## Neston Parochial Church Council Trustees' Report for 2023

of all we do. Members participated in the MU worldwide wave of prayer in May.

- There were 18 Baptisms in 2023 and MU gave a children's Bible to every candidate. A new venture was to give Bibles to couples getting married in our Parish.
- Proceeds of £125 from the Lent lunches went to the MU Relief fund. MU also supported the MU Summer of Hope Appeal, £200, and the Christmas Appeal. In November, 7 small blankets and 25 baby hats (including 5 special premature baby hats) were delivered to the Maternity Unit and 16 emergency wash bags to A&E at Arrowe Park Hospital. A Neston family (mum and four children) thoroughly enjoyed their 'Away From It All' holiday in August at Presthaven sands in North Wales. They had not had a holiday since 2005 so this was special for them as a family.
- In November MU members participated in the 16 days of activism against gender-based violence and abuse. RISE UP Against Domestic Abuse is Mothers' Union's new campaign to raise awareness about domestic abuse.
- Neston Mothers' Union now has 33 members for 2024 including the Vicar.
- Our Stay & Play team runs this ever-growing group! The group regularly has 25-30 children with their parents and grandparents. It is very popular, and they love the friendly atmosphere. It's a wonderful outreach for the Church and Mothers' Union. Friday morning is their church, with a Bible story, action songs and prayers. They often light a candle for special intentions. At Easter and Christmas, the Group give them children's books about these events. Our aim is to share the love of Jesus with these families in all we do with them.
- Neston PCC was unable to give unrestricted gifted income to local and overseas charities in 2023.
- The Parish Website: we continued to maintain our web presence with information about our services and

activities on

<http://www.nestonparishchurch.org/index.asp>

- Our Prayer & Action pew sheets are a valuable, informative, and important weekly flyer of group activities, and weekly service information keeping everyone updated. Approx. 90% of these are now emailed weekly or posted to members of the congregation and others interested in our work, mainly in the town.
- During the Vacancy, we were assisted by retired priests in holding our services including Revd Maureen Hobbs, Revd Alan Leach, Revd Ian Urquhart, Fr Mark Turner and Revd Ian Davenport. We were also assisted by Revd Frances Skinner and Revd Richard Skinner who were ministering in other parishes as part of their training.
- Lesley Irvin continues her work as Licensed Pastoral Worker.
- Elizabeth Joyce is a Reader Emeritus and leads services in all our churches.
- Tony Cooke is a Reader, working in the parish for about 6 months each year.
- Richard Lewis is a Reader and leads services, in all our churches.
- John Hart completed his training as a Reader and was licensed in Chester Cathedral in October 2023. He is also leading services in all our churches.

### Ecumenical work

#### Neston and District Churches Together (NDCT)

- We have continued in our support of NDCT and have attended their regular meetings and their Service for Christian Unity in January, the Christian Aid Service in May and the Service for One World Week in October. We have also hosted in rotation a number of prayer breakfasts at St Michael's.
- Open the Book taking Bible Stories back into school assemblies is gaining strength and the teams include members of our congregations.
- Christian Aid is promoted and maintaining the Fair-Trade status of Neston is encouraged.

## Neston Parochial Church Council Trustees' Report for 2023

- Member churches operate Warm Hubs on a number of days through out each week.
- NDCT also have a representative on the Neston and Willaston community Partnership Steering Group. This group focuses on mental wellbeing, children and young people and the wellbeing of our older citizens.

### ANNUAL REPORT 2023: FINANCES

The funds available to the parish consist of:

1. Our General Fund where general income and expenditure go in and out. The overall balance of this is our "General Reserve."
2. Other "Restricted" Funds which are reserves which can only be used for particular purposes.

It is the policy of the PCC to hold enough General Reserves to cover three months' running costs.

#### SUMMARY

**Our running costs exceeded our general income by more than £16,500 (2022 £15,000) and in the absence of a one-off hire fee of £4,500, would have been over £21,000.**

Other funds have been used to subsidise the running costs of the parish, as explained later in these notes.

The PCC's largest item of expenditure is Parish Share which is paid to Chester Diocese:

|      |            |
|------|------------|
| 2022 | £69,666.60 |
| 2023 | £71,756.64 |
| 2024 | £75,344.40 |

Electricity, gas & water is the second largest area of expenditure. The cost of these increased by one third during the year.

#### PLANNED GIVING

Following the request from the PCC to electoral roll members, planned giving increased by 25% during 2021.

|      |            |
|------|------------|
| 2019 | £49,389.84 |
| 2020 | £47,215.35 |
| 2021 | £59,001.87 |
| 2022 | £56,829.32 |
| 2023 | £57,613.92 |

There are around 200 people on the electoral roll. Of these, around 100 are involved in planned giving.

The overwhelming majority of planned givers use monthly standing orders. During 2023 a review of all standing orders was undertaken:

| Monthly Amount | No. of Standing Orders | Total Amount  |
|----------------|------------------------|---------------|
| £0 - £22       | 30                     | £5,149        |
| £22 - £43      | 28                     | £10,885       |
| £43 - £65      | 12                     | £7,404        |
| £65 - £87      | 7                      | £6,653        |
| £87 - £130     | 8                      | £9,780        |
| £130 - £260    | 4                      | <u>£9,889</u> |
| Total          | 89                     | £49,760       |

Of the planned giving standing orders:

70 provided £23,438 (47% of the total)  
19 provided £26,322 (53% of the total).

The average standing order was £47 per month.

#### GAS, ELECTRICITY & WATER

|      |               |                   |
|------|---------------|-------------------|
| 2022 | Parish Church | £8,042.43         |
|      | St Michael's  | £2,475.73         |
|      | St Thomas'    | <u>£934.93</u>    |
|      |               | <u>£11,453.09</u> |
| 2023 | Parish Church | £10,337.53        |
|      | St Michael's  | £2,923.22         |
|      | St Thomas'    | <u>£1,945.65</u>  |
|      |               | <u>£15,206.40</u> |

## Neston Parochial Church Council Trustees' Report for 2023

### USE OF OTHER FUNDS TO SUBSIDISE THE GENERAL RUNNING COSTS, AND ONE-OFF INCOME

1. Part of the Parish Church's energy & water costs have been paid using monies totalling **£6,054.64** withdrawn from the Betty Smith legacy investment.

2. The cost of replacing the boiler in The Neston Centre of **£2,400** was paid for by the Vision Fund.

This subsidising of the General Fund from other funds results in a picture as follows:

|                  |                  |
|------------------|------------------|
| Income           | £128,642.51      |
| Expenditure      | £136,835.49*     |
| <b>Overspend</b> | <b>£8,192.98</b> |

\* Expenditure excludes amounts paid from other funds as detailed above.

During 2023 the PCC received **£4,500 for the hire of St Thomas'** for filming.

**The overspend during the year would have exceeded £21,000 if other funds had not been used and the hire fee had not been received.**

The PCC's financial position is not sustainable for the long-term.

It is the policy of the PCC to hold enough General Reserves to cover three months' running costs. Based on expenditure during 2023 this threshold is £34,200.

In the course of 2023 the General Reserve fell from £45,800 to £37,600.

### BETTY SMITH LEGACY INVESTMENT

The value of the investment at the end of December 2023 was £184,584, an increase of almost 4% compared to the December 2022 value of £177,631.

Lump sum withdrawals from this investment are likely in the short term to fund large

projects at the Parish Church, such as repairs to the roof and replacing the external ramp.

### OTHER RESERVES

A summary of the PCC's reserves is included in the notes to the accounts.

The largest restricted reserves of the PCC at the end of 2023 were:

- Vision Fund £88,074
- Morris Legacy for the Parish Church £60,131
- Hillcrest (including Robert Hamilton) Curacy Fund £24,321

The Vision Fund is available for a range of activities:

- Communications
- Youth
- Ministry Team & Leadership
- Worship for all the Family
- Fellowship and Social
- Prayer and Study
- Giving
- Outreach & Pastoral
- Buildings & Resources

## Safeguarding

In line with Diocese of Chester guidelines Neston Parish has a Safeguarding Officer for Neston Parish, Liz Ledsham.

At the beginning of 2023, a Safeguarding audit was carried out involving all three churches. This showed an improvement on the previous audit but highlighted several areas of concern that needed to be addressed. These were:

1. Parish Safeguarding handbooks were not present or accessible in the church buildings and the signed Parish Safeguarding Policy was not displayed.
2. Hire Agreements for use of church premises did not include an agreement for organisations hiring the premises to follow and comply with the Parish Safeguarding Policy.

## **Neston Parochial Church Council Trustees' Report for 2023**

3. The Parish did not have an appointed Lead Recruiter to complete the DBS checks.
4. Most existing DBS checks were about to run out or had run out and needed renewing.
5. There had been a fall-off in the number of people completing the Safeguarding training.
6. No accurate up to date record of volunteers and their roles existed in the Parish.

During 2023 the areas of concern following the audit have formed an action plan identifying issues to priorities in order to address the problems. This will make the church a safer environment and maintain a robust safeguarding culture.

1. Although the Safeguarding Handbooks were out of print and could not be ordered, photocopied versions were supplied, and these are now available in each church. In addition, each church building also has a signed copy of the Parish Safeguarding Policy to display. An A3 and A4 "Promoting a Safer Church" poster which lists local and national contacts, in case of a safeguarding concern or emergency, are up to date and displayed.
2. Room Hire Agreements - All group leaders who hired the church premises were sent letters explaining the need for them to comply with current Parish safeguarding procedures and that they needed to be aware of our Safeguarding policy. Each received a copy of the policy and 2 copies of the agreement to sign to adopt the policy or submit their own policy. All the organisations hiring church premises have complied and signed the documents.
3. A lead recruiter role was advertised in P&A and has been appointed. Amanda Donelan was proposed and accepted by the Diocese to be the Parish's Lead Recruiter to process Volunteer DBS checks.
4. In August 2023 Amanda Donelan and Liz Ledsham set aside 2 days to complete the DBS applications for the Parish. Everyone was informed about what identification documents were required. Most DBS checks were completed in the 2 days and anyone unable to attend was given an individual appointment. This has brought the Volunteer DBS checks up to date.

5. Safeguard Training – Anyone required to do Safeguarding Training has been encouraged to register onto the Church of England Training Portal and to complete the online training. 100% of the PCC members have completed the Basic and Foundation levels of training, other volunteers have also completed the training, two volunteers have completed the Leadership Training and others have completed the Domestic Abuse training. Not everyone is comfortable training online and to increase the number of people receiving the training preparations were made to develop and run face to face basic Safeguarding Training in 2024. This would be open to anyone in the Parish who would like to take part and it will be certificated.

6. To produce better record keeping Liz Ledsham has worked with Robin Hughes to compile details of Parish volunteers and the volunteer roles. This has been invaluable in identifying which roles require DBS checks, which volunteer roles require certain levels of training. This should enable the Parish to produce statistics and information in the future.

During 2023 two concerns regarding Safeguarding were recorded and forwarded to the Diocese Safeguarding Adviser. Both concerns were dealt with and reported within the specified 24 hours. Full reports were submitted to the Diocese and feedback was given to the Parish SGO by the DSA. Neither of the reports required concerns to be escalated or required them to be referred to outside organisations. The Diocese was pleased with our prompt, correct response in handling the concerns and our accurate reporting.

Liz Ledsham

Parish Safeguarding Officer

### **Structure and governance**

The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Neston is a corporate

## **Neston Parochial Church Council Trustees' Report for 2023**

body established by the Church of England, and is a Registered Charity registered with the Charity Commission, with the public benefit being for the advancement of religious education promoting the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to the doctrines of the Church of England.

The governing documents are the Parochial Church Councils (Powers) Measure 1956 as amended and the Church Representation Rules 2020 (as amended in 2022)

The object of the charity is to promote the whole mission of the Church in the Ecclesiastical Parish of Neston.

The trustees of the charity, being the elected, co-opted, or ex-officio members of the PCC, organise a formal election each year in the run-up to the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) to fill vacancies on the PCC. New members elected to the PCC automatically become trustees of the charity.

Elected and co-opted PCC members serve for a period of no more than 3 years after which they may seek re-election. There are no limits to the number of times a person may serve as PCC member. On standing down from the PCC, a member is also removed from the list of trustees of the charity. A full list of the trustees of the charity is available on the Charity Commission website.

At the annual meeting in May 2023, there were 201 people on the Electoral Roll. About 20 members attended the meeting.

The members of the PCC in December 2023 were:

Clergy: Revd Kevin Crinks (Chair)

Churchwardens: Marion Forshaw; Linda Haigh

PCC Secretary: Richard Lewis

PCC Treasurer: Lucy Brooks

Trustees: Terry Abel; Lucy Brooks; Alex Cummins; John Hart; Lesley Irvin (Vice Chair); Val Johnson; Mary Olson; Cara Pickthall; Peter Rossiter; Carol Stott; Sue Thomas.

Deanery Synod – laity: Robin Hughes, Richard Lewis. Lesley Irvin attends as a licensed Pastoral Worker in her own right.

The Parish Safeguarding Officer is Liz Ledsham, who has provided reports to PCC, and attended some meetings.

Some PCC meetings were chaired by the Rural Dean, Revd Beth Glover.

Some PCC meetings have been held jointly with the Ministry Team to address arrangements for filling the vacant post of Vicar of Neston.

### **Administration and contact details**

- St Mary & St Helen's Church: Parish Church, High Street, Neston CH64 9TZ;
- St Michael and All Angels' Church: Marshlands Road, Little Neston CH64 4AD;
- St Thomas the Apostle's Church: School Lane, Parkgate CH64 6SR; and
- Neston Centre: High Street, Neston CH64 9TZ.
- The Parish Office is at the Neston Centre and is staffed on Monday mornings and Wednesday mornings. 07464 258372 [nestonparishoffice@gmail.com](mailto:nestonparishoffice@gmail.com)