

**THE PARISH OF TARPORLEY:
ST HELEN, ST JOHN AND THE HOLY CROSS, ST THOMAS**



**Annual Report of the Tarporley Parochial Church Council
and Accounts for the Year Ended 31st December 2021.**

What follows is a brief report of our Parish life in 2021.

In some ways 2021 seemed little different from 2022, as Covid-19 continued to disturb and disrupt normal life in 2021, as lockdowns and rules changed at a bewildering rate, amid vaccination programmes and new variants. However, 2021 was also a significant year in the parish as we moved from a period of vacancy and welcomed a new Rector to the parish. As this report shows, while Covid-19 continued to ensure that there were plenty of frustrations and setbacks, there was also new life and new starts.

My thanks go to our Curate Revd Julian Osborne, Church Wardens and officers and members of our PCC for their unstinting hard work and complete support.

I hope that you will take encouragement from this report as evidence of God's love and blessing unfolding in our Parish despite the challenging year we have shared.

I pray that 2022 will be a year when we reflect on who we are as church, and how we can continue to share God's love in Tarporley, Eaton, Cotebrook, Rushton and Utkinton.

With every blessing

Jim

Revd. Jim Bridgman
Rector of Tarporley

**The Parochial Church Council
of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Tarporley
A Registered Charity: Number 1130496**

Aim and Purposes

St Helen's Tarporley Parochial Church Council (PCC) has the responsibility of cooperating with the incumbent, in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish, the whole mission of the church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. The PCC is also responsible for the maintenance of the Parish's three churches: St Helen's Tarporley, St John and the Holy Cross Cotebrook and St Thomas, Eaton their attendant churchyards and The Done Room. In pursuing these aims and purposes the PCC has due regard to the Charity Commission's concern for public benefit.

Objectives and Activities

The PCC is committed to enabling as many people as possible to worship at our churches. Our services are open to all, and we are committed to making and keeping our churches, both during and outside of worship, welcoming sacred spaces where people can encounter the presence of God, sanctuary from an often-stressful world and, if they wish it, a place in a welcoming and caring community. When planning our activities for the year, both our regular worship and our extra activities, we have considered the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit. We are open to all and actively encourage participation in our services and activities from all sections of the community believing as we do that every person is made in the image of God. We try to help each other grow in knowledge and love of God and his son, our Lord Jesus Christ, through our worship and prayer and discipleship activities believing that the good news of the gospel enriches and gives purpose and direction to life. And we try to follow this teaching and communicate God's love for all people through our pastoral and outreach work.

Achievements and Performance

1. Worship and Prayer

Following Georgina's retirement at Christmas the parish entered a period of interregnum. We were very blessed to have our Curate Julian Osborne taking the majority of services supported by Trevor Davies, Richard Tuckwell and others. Our thank go to Julian for all his work and support throughout the year.

Unfortunately, there was another lockdown due to Covid and all services were suspended in our three churches from 19th January until 28th March (Palm Sunday). During that time Julian organised and sent out a service each week for parishioners to follow at home and he also arranged and led a Lent Book Club with discussions each week on a book by Dr Hannah Steele called "Living his story". As restrictions lifted, Julian was able to lead a Good Friday vigil in St Helens with music and images based upon the stations of the cross. Easter Sunday was also celebrated in church, albeit without singing, but with the inaugural use of the screen and projector to help us celebrate the timeless truth that "He is Risen!" Weekly worship continued, and it was not long before all three churches were re-opened in line with careful risk assessments and Church of England guidance.

On September 1st, we welcomed Revd Jim Bridgman and his family to the parish, as Jim was Instituted as Rector of Tarporley. We were honoured to have not one, but two bishops in attendance for the service, as Bishop Mark of Chester was joined by Bishop Sam, the newly consecrated Bishop of Stockport (who was also completing his first day at work that day!).

For the first time in a while, St Helen's was full without a masked congregation and the service was further enhanced by the ability to sing, which the congregation took great delight in! The service was followed by wine and biscuits in the Done Room.

During the autumn we were able to hold some of the 'normal' features of the liturgical year – in October we held Harvest services at all three churches, and were able to collect donations to the Mid-Cheshire Foodbank; Messy Church made a welcome return in October as a special 'Muddy Church', outside St Helen's in the wooded area, where the theme was Creation, and youngsters and families were encouraged to use natural materials found in the woods and graveyard to help recap the Genesis creation story; at the end of October, we held an All Souls' service at St Helen's, where the theme was 'The Sea', encouraging bereaved families to gather and draw comfort and hope from Jesus' ability to calm the storm (both on lake Galilee, and the storms of our lives) in what was an especially difficult year to lose a loved one; despite a number of changes and restrictions, we were still able to gather for the annual Remembrance parade and service, with a shortened parade down to the War Memorial with a time of Remembrance and silence outside, before moving into church. The Rector also helped to mark a short time of prayer and silence around the war memorial in Eaton, accompanied by the reading of the names of the fallen and The Last Post by younger members of church and local community.

During Advent, a small group met in person and online to read a new Advent book: *An Advent book of days* by Gregory Cameron, and those who came and read it enjoyed engaging more deeply with the characters and events of the Christmas story.

As Christmas approached, we held a very successful Christingle service at St Helen's at the start of December and were able to also offer usual Christmas services such as Lessons and Carols, crib services and Christmas Day services. The rise of the Omicron variant meant that plans were adapted and changed, and many people used their common sense and judgement in deciding when and if to congregate, especially as we inched closer to Christmas day. Sadly, the usual carol service at St Thomas' was cancelled, and a plan for an outdoor carol service at The Drays was eagerly anticipated until Storm Arwen intervened and blew away the marquee! Hopefully 2022 may allow the plan to come to fruition!

We are grateful to the many who worked hard to make it possible for us to return to worship safely and to all who returned or took an active part in our services, whilst being fully understanding and supportive of those who were unable so to do.

Due to the continued disruption of the pandemic, the usual attendance figures submitted to the Church of England remain anomalous, so are not included here for a second year. Congregation members are returning to church, but with so much uncertainty and sustained infection, many people are understandably still cautious.

What this year's enforced closure of our Churches has shown is how important the buildings are to our whole community not just as places of worship, but also as places of stillness, sanctity and prayer. The PCC is grateful to all who help to fund, maintain, clean, decorate and keep our churches open, inviting and safe spaces for all to spend time. Being a listed Church, medieval in origin and situated in the heart of the Village of Tarporley, St Helen is the most accessible of our churches and it receives many visitors. People come for many reasons, but most to spend time in quiet and prayer.

2. Pastoral Services and Activity

The PCC recognizes that our ministry and churches offer a very important and unique resource at particular moments in people's lives. It is a joy to be asked to baptise and marry people and share this celebration with family and friends and a privilege to be able to offer help and support to others through our funeral ministry. Rather than dictating the content of these services we work hard with all concerned to make sure that, within a Christian setting, they have a service that holds meaning for them. Such pastoral services mark important rites in everyone's life and the Church extends the welcome and compassion of God to all people, regardless of their beliefs or background.

In addition to organizing and delivering the service itself the churches are involved in baptism and marriage preparation, helping families prepare for and organize funerals and following up with bereavement visits. Whilst the Clergy undertake most of this work they are supported and enormously helped by the Parish Pastoral Team formed of representatives from all our churches. The PCC also acknowledges the foundational importance of the informal visiting and pastoral care that takes place every day as members of our churches look out for and take care of each other and their neighbours and members of the wider community.

This year, our usual level of activity has been severely disrupted and curtailed by Covid and so again annual figures cannot be compared. Despite changing restrictions, some baptisms and weddings were able to proceed this year, and it was a joy to be once again involved in the happier times of the lives of those in our community. However, 2022 looks like it will be the year when many of the postponed weddings of the past few years will finally take place, so the summer looks to be a busy time!

3. Community Connections

Despite a year when so much outreach and activity has had to cease strong links have been maintained with all five of our local schools and pre-schools, two of which are Church of England schools.

Both Revd Julian and Revd Jim have been busy in supporting our church schools, both on the governing bodies, via regular Collective Worship in school, and through lesson visits for staff and pupils, as well as organising tours and lessons at St Helen's. It was a real privilege to welcome both Tarporley CE Primary and Utkinton St Paul's into church for a joint Harvest service, and separate carol services and nativity plays. We also welcomed the Done Room Preschool into church for a wonderful Christmas show; these are always fantastic ways to extend God's welcome to the children and their families. Revd Jim has also been invited to Eaton primary on a number of occasions since the autumn, talking to classes about church buildings, the incarnation and the story of Christmas.

The PCC also agreed to buy a Fairtrade chocolate Christingle for every pupil in our two church schools, delivered by the clergy during an explanatory Collective worship and an invitation to the Christingle service at St Helen's, which many children came along to.

Relationships with our local councils, organisations and businesses continue to be built upon.

The Link continues to keep the community updated with church life, and since the autumn the parish now has a social media presence via its new Facebook page, as well as (from Advent Sunday) a weekly email sent to nearly 400 contacts, sharing weekly readings and prayers and upcoming services and events from the three churches.

The PCC offers its thanks to all who work to share the life of the Church and the love of God: all who tell and invite others to services and events, those who contribute articles, edit and put together the information we can share and ensure its successful distribution, and those who work to keep our website up to date. In Covid times all of this has proved even more important.

Before Christmas, there were a number of opportunities for community engagement through carol singing: from a (very wet!) community carol singing on the High Street on the weekend of the Tarporley Christmas Event, carol singing on a Friday night outside at the Alvanley Arms with members of St John and the Holy Cross, community led carols in Eaton in place of the carol service, and the usual Christmas Eve carols before the crib service.

Sadly, once again many of our concerts, social and fundraising activities also had to be cancelled this year. It has been very hard not to be able to gather together, share meals, coffee, prayer, worship, music, stories, hugs and laughter, but our priority throughout the year continued to be keeping people as safe as possible so that when restrictions are finally lifted everyone will be there to gather together and give thanks to God.

So, 2021 has been a year of endings, and new beginnings, plenty of uncertainty and challenges, but we can see the presence of God with us throughout, with hope and faith that God will continue to lead and guide us throughout 2022, whatever that may bring.

4. Financial Review and Independent Examiner's Report

Our thanks go to all involved in ensuring the smooth running of our Parish finances. First and foremost, we recognise the hard work and commitment of our Treasurer, but we also recognise the contribution of the many who help with: collecting and counting monies, banking the same, overview of our stewardship, and administration of our giving and gift aid. As with all our volunteers this important work is undertaken with cheerfulness and reliability. We are indeed blessed to have the help of so many and we thank you all. We also express our thanks to our Examiner for her expertise and support. The full accounts can be found in Appendix A beginning on page 8.

COVID continued in impact on our finances throughout 2021 with fewer people attending services, reduced fund-raising events and reductions in giving. Over the past two years since the start of COVID, we have seen our income reduce by £52,200 which is directly attributed to COVID (churches being closed, lack of fundraising and weddings etc).

The careful stewardship by the Treasurer and Wardens, expenditure reduced by £39,235 over the same period, reducing the negative financial impact of Covid upon Parish finances. Our thanks to all those who continued to give by monthly standing order throughout the vacancy and church closures. The figures quoted above exclude income from the sale of assets and quinquennial work on the fabric of St Helen's.

We also express our thanks to our new examiner Rob Hall of Mitchell Charlesworth in Chester for his expertise and support.

5. Reports from Our Three Churches regarding Fabric

The PCC thanks all who have worked, often unseen, throughout the year to maintain our buildings and keep our communities so vibrant.

St Helen's church carried out the remaining work which was highlighted in the last quinquennial report – namely work on some stained glass and the boiler house roof.

There weren't any fabric repairs undertaken at St John's and the Holy Cross and St Thomas' churches.

6. Structure Governance and Management

The PCC is a corporate body established by the Church of England. The PCC operates under the Parochial Church Powers Measure. The PCC is a Registered Charity. As trustees of the charity the PCC members are responsible for making decisions on all matters of general concern and importance to the parish including deciding on how the funds of the PCC are to be spent. There is a Standing Committee comprised of the Incumbent, 2 Church Wardens, Treasurer and Secretary of the PCC and one representative from St Thomas and one from St John's. This Committee will consult only in extremis when a decision must be made between PCC meetings. The full PCC met six times during the year both in person and on Zoom.

Given its wide responsibilities the PCC has a number of committees, each dealing with a particular aspect of Parish Life, but all these committees report back to the PCC for decision making.

Safeguarding

The PCC considers that it has, to the best of its knowledge, taken all reasonable steps to comply with the duty under section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2017. St Helens Parish Church takes its duty and obligation to protect all extremely seriously. We have adopted the national Church of England's robust procedures and guidelines. You can find out more about the national policies and procedures at www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding.

If you have any safeguarding concerns or issues of a safeguarding matter then you can find useful contact information below and at www.chester.anglican.org/socialresponsibility/safeguarding

In line with the diocesan regulations on safeguarding the PCC has adopted a Policy Statement on the Safeguarding of Children and Adults in the Church. There are notices in the Church providing contact details for Childline and Family Lives and also contact details for the Rector and the Parish Safeguarding Officer should anyone wish to speak privately and in confidence on safeguarding issues.

Following ThirtyeightOne guidelines there are currently 6 volunteer leaders and assistants with clear and current DBS certificates and who have completed the Basic Awareness and Foundation courses in Safeguarding; these people coach bellringers.

Due to the pandemic, organised activities in church for children were put on hold and the majority of adult volunteers who held clear and current DBS certificates will now need to re-apply as certificates are no longer valid. However, until a new programme of children's activities requiring adult supervision or teaching is scheduled fresh applications will not be made.

The PCC thanks all the volunteers for their time and commitment given in running these activities and for their understanding in having background checks completed. We take the safeguarding of our children and vulnerable adults in church extremely seriously and DBS checks and procedures ensure all who are vulnerable as well as those who volunteer are protected. All non-church activities being run on a regular basis in the Done Room have also been checked as per diocesan guidelines to ensure that safeguarding policies are in place and that they too are covered by all necessary certificates, procedures and insurance. No safeguarding issues have arisen in the past year.

Electoral Roll

The Electoral Roll of the church is a list of people who consider themselves to be members of one of our three churches including those who are housebound or unable to attend regularly. Everyone is welcome and forms, available in our churches or from the Electoral Roll Officer, are completed by each individual (over 16 and baptised). We are grateful to our Electoral Roll officer who oversees this work. After the annual revision in 2021 the Electoral roll stood at 190 (2020: 199 2019: 191 2018: 202 2017: 198 2016: 205, 2015: 185)

Malpas Deanery Synod Report

There were two meetings of Deanery Synod. The first meeting in April welcomed our new Rural Dean - The Revd Tim Hayward and paid tribute to the Revd Canon Ian Davenport who has retired after 10 years as Rural Dean.

At the second meeting in September Phillip Posnett was elected as Lay Chairman following the retirement of Marion Randles after 8 years. There will be an episcopal visit from Monday 27th June until Wednesday 29th June in 2022 when the Bishop will visit churches, schools, homes in the Deanery as well as undertaking a Prayer walk.

Administrative Information

At the APCM on Sunday 23rd May 2021, the following were elected unopposed:

For a period of three years:

Marjorie Rathbone, Michael Scott, William Spiegelberg

No election was necessary for the remaining members of the PCC:

For a period of one year: (now for re-election in 2022)

Paul Bullen, Alastair Findlay

For a period of two years: (now for re-election in 2023)

Simon Corradine, Mike Kiddle, Anita Langford, John Meredith and Rosemary Lilley

APPENDIX A

THE ANNUAL ACCOUNTS AND INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT

**The Parochial Church Council
St Helen's Church, Tarporley**

**End of Year Financial Statements
Year ending 2021**

Statement of Financial Activities

	Unrestricted funds	Designated funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds	Total funds	Prior year total
Receipts						
Planned giving	38,293	—	—	—	38,293	45,331
Collections and other giving	19,563	7	366	—	19,937	22,563
Other voluntary receipts	—	12,000	—	—	12,000	120
Gift Aid recovered	12,515	—	—	—	12,515	17,507
Other receipts	11,601	94,695	1,000	—	107,296	11,067
Activities for generating funds	3,857	9,769	—	—	13,627	8,115
Investment Income	68	24,506	4,671	—	29,246	5,015
Receipts from church activities	10,992	—	—	—	10,992	5,661
Total income	96,891	140,977	6,037	—	243,907	115,380
Payments						
Cost of generating funds	462	—	—	—	462	1,580
Missionary and Charitable Giving	—	—	300	—	300	300
Parish Share	68,131	—	—	—	68,131	67,624
Clergy and Staffing costs	7,554	936	—	—	8,490	3,697
Church Running Expenses	18,158	—	663	—	18,821	25,068
Hall Running Costs	33	7,611	—	—	7,644	10,054
Church Repairs & Maintenance	—	22,809	—	—	22,809	10,264
Hall Repairs & Maintenance	—	—	—	—	—	—
New Building work	—	—	—	—	—	—
Governance Costs	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total expenditure	94,340	31,356	963	—	126,660	118,588
Net income / (expenditure) resources before transfer	2,551	109,620	5,074	—	117,246	(3,208)
Transfers						
Gross transfers between funds - in	—	150,000	12,352	—	162,352	—
Gross transfers between funds - out	—	(162,352)	—	—	(162,352)	—
Other recognised gains / losses						
Gains / losses on investment assets	—	—	—	—	—	—
Gains on revaluation, fixed assets, charity's own use	—	—	—	—	—	—
Net movement in funds	2,551	97,268	17,426	—	117,246	(3,208)
Total funds brought forward	54,308	45,336	28,078	—	127,723	130,932
Total funds carried forward	56,859	142,605	45,505	—	244,970	127,723

Balance sheet

	Total funds	Prior year funds
Current assets		
Investments	134,645	50,744
Cash at bank and in hand	110,324	76,978
	244,970	127,723
Net current assets less current liabilities	244,970	127,723
Total assets less current liabilities	244,970	127,723
Total net assets less liabilities	244,970	127,723
Represented by		
Unrestricted		
General fund	56,859	54,308
Designated		
ALTAR FRONTAL FUND	416	416
Rectors Leaving Fund	—	—
UNRESTRICTED ST HELENS	85,482	3,041
UNRESTRICTED ST JOHN	1,770	1,549
UNRESTRICTED ST THOMAS	16,306	16,198
CHOIR FUND	1,955	1,955
CHILDRENS SOCIETY & OTHERS	—	—
DONE ROOM	14,372	4,003
St Helen's Fixed Projector & Screen	—	—
St Helens Fabric	4,288	—
Churchyard Footpath St H	15,350	15,350
General Mission Fund	1,064	2,000
HEARSE HOUSE	1,598	821
Restricted		
DIVIDENDS REST ST THOMAS	6,415	5,745
PARISH CHURCHYARDS <i>Note 1</i>	17,578	2,567
RESTRICTED RELIGIOUS EDUCATION	1,816	964
RESTRICTED ST HELENS (FORMER CONS CHARITY)	1,625	1,925
RESTRICTED ST JOHN	14,829	13,095
St John's Churchyard	3,193	3,734
UNRESTRICTED ST THOMAS	46	46
Agency collection	—	—
Funds of the church	244,970	127,723

Statement of assets and liabilities

	General	Designated	Restricted	Endowment	This year	Last year
Current assets - Cash at bank and in hand						
Bank Current Account -	28,593	48,796	31,629	—	109,019	75,940
CCLA (CBF) deposit account -	1,223	—	—	—	1,223	980
Petty Cash -	81	—	—	—	81	57
Totals	29,898	48,796	31,629	—	110,324	76,978
Current assets - Investments						
CBF C of E Investment Fund -	26,980	18,789	13,875	—	59,645	50,744
CBF CoE Investments - Income Shares -	—	75,000	—	—	75,000	—
Totals	26,980	93,789	13,875	—	134,645	50,744
Grand total	56,879	142,585	45,505	—	244,970	127,723

Notes:

Note 1 – Parish Churchyard Restricted Fund. A decision was made to charge grass cutting to general funds rather than Parish Churchyard. This means that all grass cutting for 2019-2020 was reallocated in 2020. This is why this fund has increased by £15,000.

Financial Report for the year Ending 31st December 2021

Our total receipts for 2021 were £243,907 but this included one-off receipts of £136,005.

These one-off receipts included the realising of assets (sale of Hearse House and cashing in of a legacy), donation towards redecoration of The Rectory, a COVID restart grant for the Done Room, VAT reclaim for St Helen's quinquennial and an insurance claim for stolen microphones and hearing loop.

Excluding these entries, our underlying income was £107,902. Our income for 2020 was £115,300, so it is £7,398 less.

Part of this decrease was due to the ongoing effect on COVID which meant that congregations were still less than pre-pandemic and greatly reduced fund-raising activities.

As well as this, we have seen a decrease of £7,038 in standing order receipts which also impacts on the gift aid we can claim, reducing this by £5,000.

On the positive side, our fees for weddings and funerals increased by also 50% to £10,992. We also received more for letting out the Done Room.

Our expenditure for 2021 was £126,660 which also contained the following one-off costs – St Helen's quinquennial, Rectory redecoration, replacing stolen microphones and hearing loop and the fees relating to the sale of Hearse House. These total £30,690, making our underlying expenditure £95,959.

This is £22,619 less than 2020. Part of this is due to not having a Rector until September, 50% reduction in the insurance premium for St Helen's and less being spent on Done Room repairs. Whilst we incurred some St Helen's quinquennial costs in 2020 these were £12k less than in 2022.

Despite our reduced income, we managed to pay 100% of our Parish Share which totalled £68,131 We also paid our fees for weddings & funerals to the Diocese in full.

We placed some of our staff on furlough in 2021 and claimed some of their salaries from HMRC's Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

We have reviewed our Reserves policy and have decided that we can reduce the period we need to reserve for from six to three months. This is due to the fact that our Standing Orders give regular income and we have decided to invest more of our income which will result in receiving more dividends. Items we reserve for are: Utilities, Parish Share, Rector & Staffing costs, Insurance, Organ and Bell Maintenance, Grass Cutting & Done Room Costs.

In addition to the figures presented, the PCC has a stewardship responsibility for other capital assets.

Anita Langford

Treasurer

8th February 2022