

**Annual Report of the Parochial Church Council of
Holy Ascension, Upton by Chester**

For the year ended 31st December 2021



Registered Charity Number: 1131069

Revd Paul Newman

As I write this as we are getting back to a bit of normality, looking back, what a strange year it's been. Through the year we continued to run our services on Zoom at 10.00am on a Sunday and 8.00pm on a Wednesday Evening. It was great to see that the numbers continued to be over 50 people on our Sunday morning service and around 15-20 on our Wednesday compline. We also added a Zoom quiz night on a Friday evening for over 20 weeks and it was great to see so many families joining us. This along with the many phone calls, cake baking, gifts of flowers and chocolates all helped to keep us encouraged and our spirits up.

Despite the difficult situation of COVID and with all the pressures that people and families were facing we still managed to keep up with our financial obligations. This has left us as a church community in a good position. As we head into a new year, coming out of the restrictions, we look to reach out into our community with the message of love and hope which Jesus Christ offers.

A big thankyou goes out to **EVERYBODY** who has enabled us to keep being the body of Christ, his Church, around Upton and the wider area, there are too many people to mention but thank you.

God bless

Revd Paul Newman

Our stated purpose

To be the people of God in this place, committed to Christ, to one another and to service in the community: Together we worship God with Joy and Love, with an openness to the renewal by the Holy Spirit.

Administrative Information

Holy Ascension is in Church Lane, Upton, Chester CH2 1DJ and is part of the diocese of Chester within the Church of England.

Correspondence address is: The Parish Office, Holy Ascension Community Hall, Demage Lane, Chester, CH2 1EL

Incumbent: Revd Paul Newman

Curate: Revd Dave O'Brien

Reader Emeritus: Mrs Barbara Capstick

Parish Safeguarding Co-ordinator: Angela Blundell, email safeguarding@holyascension.org.uk

Bank: Unity Trust Bank, Four Brindleyplace, Birmingham B1 2JB.

Independent examiner: John McLintock FCA FCCA

The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Holy Ascension is a charity registered with the Charity Commission for England and Wales, charity registration number: 1131069.

When planning our activities for the year, the PCC gave consideration to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit and, in particular, the specific guidance to charities concerned with the advancement of religion.

The PCC is a body corporate and operates under the Parochial Church Councils Powers Measure 1956 and the Church Representation Rules 2020. The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. All church members are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and stand for election to the PCC.

The PCC currently has 16 members and normally meets on the second Monday of each alternate month.

Members of the PCC:

Elected: Colin Attwood, Graham Barley, Michael Curtis (Churchwarden), Rob Evans, Colin Foden (Churchwarden), Sharon Forsdyke (Resigned 10th February 2022), Vera Gerrard, Jean Machan, Sally Powell (Resigned 15th November 2021), Glenys Sherwin, Liz Squire, Sheila Taylor, Margaret Whaley.

Co-opted: Colin Bain.

Ex officio: Sue Burgess, Barbara Capstick, Paul Newman, Dave O'Brien.

A.C.F. The Fellowship Group

Like all organisations The Fellowship Group has had another challenging year. Our first meeting was an Easter Praise Service held in Church. We were delighted to welcome Dennis Jones as our organist and although we could not sing the sound of the organ lifted our spirits.

We restarted our monthly meetings in September. We now meet in Church on a Monday afternoon.

Frank Mawdsley spoke in September about "Some Crucial occasions in a Christian Journey". Our speaker in October was Tom Livingston the stonemason at Chester Cathedral who gave a fascinating talk about the role of a medieval stonemason and how a modern day equivalent differs.

Helen Rutter, an assistant chaplain with the Cheshire Agricultural Chaplaincy, talked about her role and that of the chaplaincy in our November meeting.

The group organised and led a service of Nine Lessons and Carols in December.

Dennis Jones was our organist. We were able to sing again which was so uplifting and brought the Christmas spirit into our lives.

It is hoped that 2022 will enable us to continue with our monthly meetings.

Margaret Brizell

Bible Study Group

There are 17 members of this group, 15 from Holy Ascension and 2 from other churches.

During the COVID pandemic, when we were not able to meet from April 2nd 2020 to June 24th 2021, we kept in touch by a weekly Prayer letter, phone calls and door- step visits.

When restrictions eased, we met in my garden for a time of tea and chat in order to catch-up with one another and to share in prayers.

It was agreed that from September we would meet fortnightly in an afternoon on a Thursday in the Kempe Room.

We begin with coffee/tea and cake and a time of fellowship. One of the members leads us in prayer prior to the chosen session for discussion and the meeting closes with a prayer and the grace.

Our new study has been Paul's letter to the Philippians where we have followed Paul's travels into Philippi and his imprisonment, during which time he continued his work of evangelism. A letter which encourages us to rejoice and be joyful.

These afternoons give us an opportunity to share our thoughts and understanding and to learn from our studies and each other. Hopefully they encourage us to continue learning at home.

It has been good to share with one another after the many weeks of being 'house-bound' by COVID and we are grateful for the support and prayers for one another and the work of our Church.

We are always pleased to welcome new members to join us.

Barbara Capstick

Choir

After an absence due to the pandemic, the choir has now begun to lead the singing at the 9.00am service again.

Revd Paul Newman

Christian Aid

Last year's street collection took place by volunteers putting envelopes through doors in Upton and then people were encouraged to return them to designated houses in their road. This was successful and £1,425 including gift aid was raised. Trevor Dennis held three reading and music evenings in St Mary's Handbridge over the last year and raised £10,892 for Christian Aid. Thank you to those who supported him either in person or on Zoom.

Margaret Bain

Churches Together in Upton

Another unusual year, nevertheless Churches together in Upton were able to be as active as the situation allowed.

A couple of meetings were held at the URC where a variety of topics were discussed.

We had two "5th Sunday" services with hymns in August (Holy Ascension) and October (St. Columba's). Both were well attended and appreciated. There was a Quiz in October which was an enjoyable social occasion and raised money for CAFOD and Christian Aid. We had our usual advert in "Inside Upton", drawing attention to the Christmas Services at our three churches. A significant number of gifts for the homeless were distributed via CATH.

A highlight of the year was the restarting of the Churches Together Coffee Mornings. It was felt that the Pavilion was too cramped (and expensive) at present; therefore members of the committee decided to experiment with using the URC hall on a Thursday, every two weeks (instead of Monday every week).

This was very successful and the number of attendees soon built up to pre-pandemic levels.

John Butler

Connect Group

The 'Connect' group is aimed at the younger ladies who come to Holy Ascension, to offer them a chance to take time out from their work / family commitments and get together, get to know each other and support each other in the journey of life. Although we could not meet in person due to the COVID restrictions, we have had monthly evening Zoom meetings for a 'Catch Up & Prayer' session lasting for around an hour; with a theme, a song and prayer time, although only 4-6 ladies joined many more sent in their requests by WhatsApp and text. It was a great way to centre yourself and refocus on Christ in all the chaos!

Our WhatsApp group has been a vital way of communicating between us all: for general communication about services and meetings, prayer requests, updates on situations, words to support each other and sending pieces of scripture to encourage us all. Through the different forms of technology, we have been able to keep 'Connected' and I praise the Lord for that!

We have started to have a couple of 'in person' meetings and it's been great to catch up as we all find the courage to enter back into the real world!

A branch of the 'Connect' group is a bible study group that had been meeting before COVID and has continued to meet over the past year, restrictions allowing. We have used the study guides on 'Hope' and 'Woman of God' to encourage and guide us to follow Jesus knowing he is there with us all the way.

Tara Newman

Electoral Roll Report

In line with Church Representation Rules, a new Electoral Roll was prepared in 2019.

In March 2021 there were 122 names on the roll.

Jane Curtis

Fabric Report

As a church we continue to be blessed with our buildings which is to say they are overall in good condition.

We noticed that we had some water coming into a few areas of the church and we employed a roofing firm which has sorted out the situation.

Revd Paul Newman

Finance

The Receipts and Payments accounts for the year ended 31st December 2021 are set out at the end of the Annual Report.

Unrestricted Fund

Thank you to everyone who has donated to the church over the last couple of years allowing us to meet our financial obligations and achieve a surplus of receipts over payments of £7,050 for the year ended 31st December 2021.

During 2021 planned giving fell from £57,014 to £56,429 due to a significant decrease in envelope giving mainly whilst the church was closed. Several regular givers switched to donating by standing order which helped our cash flow and the PCC would like to encourage more people to donate by standing order in future. Collections at services were up on the 2020 total but remain significantly below what we would expect to receive in a 'normal' year. Consequently, the amount of Gift Aid we could claim on planned giving and under the Gift Aid Small Donations Scheme was down.

Fee income increased during the year due to a number of postponed weddings taking place and the community hall opened as soon as it could to regular users and more recently for one- off bookings so income was up on 2020 at £11,878. In 2021 we again paid our parish share of £68,132 in full. The majority of other expenditure was down in line with the reduction in church activities during the year.

The PCC has committed to donating 3% of the previous year's voluntary income to charity, however, during 2021, due to the timing of PCC meetings, donations totalling £2,550 were not paid until 2022 hence the fall in mission giving.

Unrestricted Designated Funds

The Musical Tots designated fund was set up to ensure that the fees from the weekly sessions will cover any future costs associated with running the group, however, it has not run since March 2020.

The Hall fund represents money allocated by the PCC to pay for future improvement works on the community hall such as a new boiler and kitchen.

Restricted Funds

The movements on restricted funds are set out in note 2 to the accounts.

Reserves policy

It is the PCC policy to maintain a balance on unrestricted funds which equates to a level it considers necessary to meet forthcoming needs.

Sue Burgess

Flower Arranging Team

Since the last report in 2019 our plans for arranging flowers were disrupted by the closure of the Church as a result of COVID.

Whenever we could we put flowers in the Church and were delighted to be able to get back to our usual routine during 2021.

Our team of 14 ladies and 2 gentlemen continue to work with enthusiasm and expertise to make beautiful flower arrangements to celebrate the festivals of Easter, Ascension, Harvest, Christmas and Weddings.

The rota for flowers to be placed in the Sanctuary and on the War Memorial each week (except during Lent) is solely supported by generous donations from the congregation for which we are very grateful. Further donations for flowers are given at Christmas and Easter and throughout the year in memory of family and friends.

Sadly the Flower Festival planned for this July has been cancelled.

However, members of the Flower Club are joining with us to decorate the Church to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee from Thursday June 2nd - Sunday June 5th. We would be very pleased to welcome anyone who wishes to help. Further details to come.

Our church is very fortunate to have so many folk who give a great deal of their time to arrange flowers throughout the year for which we are very grateful.

Barbara Capstick

Foodbank

As a church, we support the foodbank by bringing essential food to our church and then Colin and Margaret Bain take it once a month to the local foodbank. During COVID this did not happen but parishioners were encouraged to donate items at local supermarkets. We are now up and running again so please bring your donations to church as in the next few months, these donations will be needed even more as people struggle to feed their families.

Margaret Bain

Heartbeat

The magazine continues to be available as an online PDF only until such time as the PCC feel it is safe to resume the printed format.

Recent issues have condensed to 24 pages to reflect the temporary suspension of church and community activities. It is anticipated that this will increase in the future.

The Editor wishes to thank the Editorial Team for their sterling work in keeping the magazine going during some very challenging times.

Sharon Forsdyke

Health and Safety

With the urgent need to combat the COVID pandemic and its variants, it has been necessary to introduce new Health and Safety rules during the last 20 months. These have included the insistence and monitoring of hand sanitising mask wearing, social distancing within the pews, and the insurance of a free flow of fresh air. In addition, an alternative method of distributing the bread and wine at Holy Communion services was also adopted. It was also necessary to guide members of the congregation to a specified exit via the South Transept at the conclusion of services.

Regrettably during this period several of the routine church activities have had to be put on hold. It is evident, however, that thanks to the preventative procedures outlined above together with the national vaccination roll out attendances at church are improving and it can be seen that seasonal activities are being resumed.

In spite of several storms during the past months we have been fortunate to escape serious damage to the church and its environs. Annual safety inspection dates for the various church and church hall equipment have either been met or are being sought.

Colin Foden

Music Group

The music group continues to lead our worship at our Sunday 10.45am service. It is great to have such a committed and able group.

Revd Paul Newman

Safeguarding

Holy Ascension 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 at www.chester.anglican.org/social-responsibility/safeguarding or you can contact our parish safeguarding co-ordinator at safeguarding@holyascension.org.uk

Sewing Group

Sewing group began meeting again in September 2021 and continues to meet every Thursday morning in the Kempe Room between 10.00am and 12noon. Our main project during the period was to make about two hundred lanterns which were distributed before Christmas to members of the parish.

Everyone is welcome to come along for coffee/tea, biscuits, chat and company irrespective of sewing or knitting ability.

Sue Burgess

Sunday Club

Due to the COVID pandemic and church being closed Sunday Club could not be held, but we have kept in touch with the families through the All Age Café service that happened in the church hall once a month, and through the delivery of cakes to those who could not make the All Age Services in the church once it had re opened.

Although church re opened in July 2021 it is only recently, February 2022, that we have seen a return to church of some of our families that previously attended and so Sunday Club has begun again.

We had been prepared for the children to return since July, but like everyone and everything it has taken time for normal / usual patterns of living to return.

It has been wonderful to catch up with children, see how much they have grown and talk with them about their experiences.

As before the aim of Sunday Club is to learn about the love God has for each of us in a fun and stimulating way. We always start with action songs, games, read a story / passage from the Bible, perhaps watch a video, a discussion time, prayer and some sort of craft activity.....a lot packed into a short time!

Tara Newman

The Children's Society

The annual box opening was held in September. We raised £1,090-51 and although lower than in previous years was an excellent sum. The Christingle service was held in December in Church when we were able to have our Christingles and lighted candles. We were able to send £182 to The Children's Society.

Margaret Brizell

Upton Heath CE Primary School

The link we have with Upton Heath CE Primary School, which is part of the Samara Trust, continues to be an important part of the work we do as a church. We have two members of the church on the Management Committee and we take an assembly each week in the school. The school also comes into church with the children around major Christian Festivals in the church year. When they do, a year group will lead an assembly for other year groups.

Revd Paul Newman

World Day of Prayer

Our World Day of Prayer service 2021 was eventually held on Friday September 24th at the United Reformed Church in Upton. Sadly, as a result of the COVID pandemic, we had to cancel it on 2 previous dates.

However, the service written by the women of Vanuatu was well attended. The theme was 'Build on a Strong Foundation' and members of all three churches took part – St. Columba's, Holy Ascension and the URC.

As they came in, participants were given small wooden crosses, made in the Holy Land, to be a reminder of our prayers for the world. We enjoyed singing the chosen hymns accompanied by organist Dennis Jones. The collection was sent to the WDP for the work of their charities throughout the world.

Barbara Capstick

Approved by the PCC on 28th March 2022 and signed on their behalf by

Revd Paul Newman (PCC Chair)

The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Holy Ascension, Upton-By-Chester
Receipts and Payments Accounts for the Year Ended 31st December 2021

The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Holy Ascension, Upton-By-Chester

Receipts and Payments Accounts for the Year Ended 31st December 2021

	Note	Unrestricted Fund	Unrestricted Designated Funds	Restricted Funds	Total 2021	Total 2020
<u>Receipts</u>		£	£	£	£	£
Voluntary receipts						
Planned giving		56,429	-	2,340	58,769	57,334
Collections at services		4,743	-	182	4,925	4,159
Donations		1,365	-	-	1,365	8,210
Legacies		-	-	-	-	5,500
Gift Aid recovered		11,622	-	-	11,622	14,294
Grants received		1,838	-	-	1,838	6,864
Upton PCC Charitable Trust		-	-	340	340	-
		75,997	-	2,862	78,859	96,361
Activities for generating funds	3	18	-	-	18	524
Church Activities	4	25,425	-	648	26,073	19,537
Investment Income	5	2,288	-	-	2,288	2,269
Total Receipts		£103,728	£-	£3,510	£107,238	£118,691
<u>Payments</u>						
Church activities						
Parish Share		68,132	-	-	68,132	67,624
Fees remitted		4,936	-	-	4,936	4,199
Clergy and Staffing costs		3,144	-	-	3,144	9,009
Church costs	6	8,457	-	869	9,326	10,682
Vicarage costs		4,512	-	-	4,512	4,001
Hall running costs		6,997	-	-	6,997	9,840
Mission giving and donations		500	-	730	1,230	4,885
		96,678	-	1,599	98,277	110,240
Cost of generating Funds	7	-	-	-	-	250
Total payments		£96,678	£-	£1,599	£98,277	£110,490
Surplus of receipts over payments		7,050	-	1,911	8,961	8,201
Cash at bank and in hand						
1 st January 2021		19,435	10,565	13,334	43,334	35,133
31 st December 2021		£26,485	£10,565	£15,245	£52,295	£43,334

Approved by the PCC on 28th March 2022 and signed on their behalf by:

Rev. Paul Newman *P. Newman*

Mr. Michael Richard Curtis. *M. R. Curtis*

The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Holy Ascension, Upton-By-Chester

Statement of Assets and Liabilities as at 31st December 2021

	Unrestricted Fund	Unrestricted Designated Funds	Restricted Funds	Total 2021	Total 2020
	£	£	£	£	£
Cash at bank and in hand					
Lloyds Current Account	20,335	367	2,508	23,210	16,660
Unity Trust Bank - Current Account	5,374	1,050	2,001	8,425	4,249
Unity Trust Bank - Deposit Account	-	4,130	4,306	8,436	12,435
CCLA – Deposit Account	493	5,000	5,332	10,825	8,537
CCLA – Building in Faith	-	-	17	17	17
Cash in Hand	283	18	29	330	154
Sunshine Tots Account	-	-	1,014	1,014	1,014
Flower Fund	-	-	38	38	268
	£26,485	£10,565	£15,245	£52,295	£43,334
Other Monetary Assets					
Gift Aid Recoverable	£4,811	-	-	£ 4,811	£4,004
Investment Assets					
3,841.83 (3,841.83)					
Shares in The CBF					
Church of England Fund	£89,968	-	-	£89,968	£78,709
Fixed assets retained for church use					
The fixed assets retained for church use are Holy Ascension Community Hall, the Organ (refurbished 2013) and the AV system.					
All assets belong to the unrestricted fund.					
Liabilities	£	£	£	£	£
Fees	£372	-	-	£372	-

The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Holy Ascension, Upton-By-Chester

Notes to the Receipts and Payments Accounts for the Year Ended 31st December 2021

1. The financial statements of the PCC have been prepared in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations 2006 using the Receipts & Payments basis.
2. The movements in designated and restricted funds during the year were:

	Balance b/fwd.	Receipts	Payments	Balance c/fwd.
Restricted	£	£	£	£
Family Workers	650	-	-	650
Flower Fund	268	639	869	38
Sunshine Tots	3,534	9	-	3,543
Other	8,882	2,862	730	11,014
	£13,334	£3,510	£1,599	£15,245

	£	£	£	£
Designated				
Hall	6,515	-	-	6,515
Musical Tots	4,050	-	-	4,050
	£10,565	-	-	£10,565

	Unrestricted Fund	Unrestricted Designated Funds	Restricted Funds	Total 2021	Total 2020
	£	£	£	£	£
3. Activities for generating funds					
Social events	£18	-	-	£18	£524

	£	£	£	£	£
4. Church activities					
Fees for weddings and funerals	13,242	-	-	13,242	8,192
Community Hall hire	11,878	-	-	11,878	9,080
Magazine	305	-	-	305	1,106
Flower fund	-	-	639	639	410
Sunshine Tots	-	-	9	9	342
Musical Tots	-	-	-	-	407
	£ 25,425	-	£648	£26,073	£19,537

	Unrestricted Fund	Unrestricted Designated Funds	Restricted Funds	Total 2021	Total 2020
	£	£	£	£	£
5. Investment income					
Dividends	2,283	-	-	2,283	2,205
Interest	5	-	-	5	64
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	£2,288	-	-	£2,288	£2,269
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	£	£	£	£	£
6. Church activities					
Church running expenses	6,511	-	-	6,511	7,353
Cost of services	802	-	-	802	772
Administration	1,144	-	-	1,144	1,787
Magazine	-	-	-	-	412
Caring & Sharing	-	-	-	-	50
Flower fund	-	-	869	869	206
Sunshine Tots	-	-	-	-	82
Musical Tots	-	-	-	-	20
	<hr/>				
	£8,457	-	£869	£9,326	£10,682
	<hr/>				
7. Cost of generating funds					
Social events	-	-	-	-	£250
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Independent Examiner's Report to the members/trustees of the Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Holy Ascension, Upton by Chester (registered charity number: 1131069).

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity for the year ended 31st December 2021 which are set out on pages 1 to 4.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

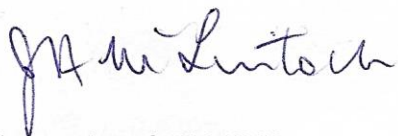
I report in respect of my examination of the charity's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

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

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



John McIntock FCA FCCA
2 Windmill Rise
Upton
Chester

Date 11.4.22

