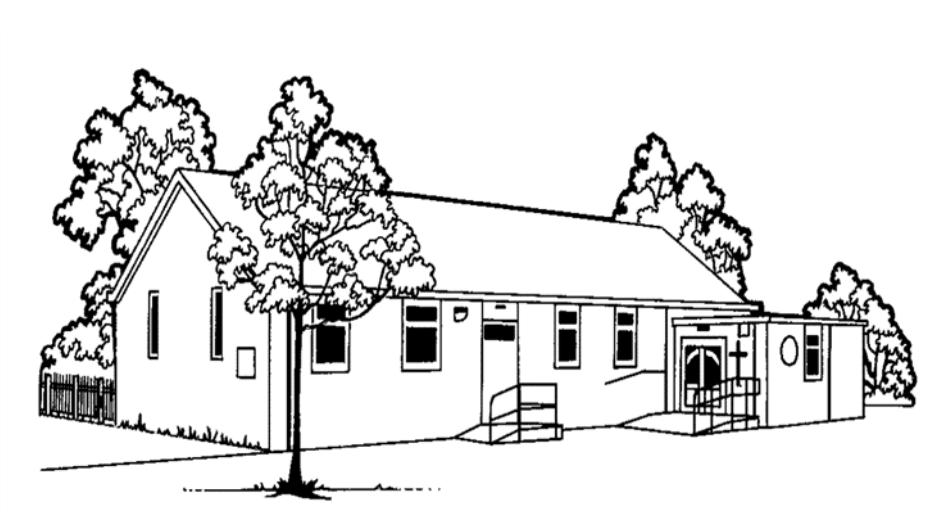


**The Parochial Church Council
of
St Thomas' and St Mary Magdalene's Churches
Stockton Heath**

**Annual and Financial Reports
for the Year Ending
31st December 2023**



Introduction

This information is published as part of the requirements of the Church of England Regulations and Requirements of the Charities Commissioners.

The Parish of St Thomas, Stockton Heath is in the Deanery of Great Budworth and is a part of the Diocese of Chester. The Parochial Church Council (PCC) is a body corporate (PCC Powers Measure 1956, Church Representation Rules 2006) and is a registered Charity (Charity no. 1131459).

St Thomas' PCC has the responsibility of co-operating with the incumbent, the Revd. Michael Ridley, in promoting the mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelical, social and ecumenical. The PCC is also specifically responsible for the maintenance of St Thomas' Church, London Road, Stockton Heath; St Thomas' Church, Ellesmere Road, Stockton Heath; St Mary Magdalene's Church, Dingleway/Bridge Lane, Appleton and 8 St Monica's Close, Appleton.

Correspondence should be addressed to:

The Vicar,
St Thomas' Vicarage
12 Melton Avenue. Walton
Warrington WA5 6PQ
Tel: 01925 261396

Parochial Church Council 2022

Vicar Revd. Michael Ridley

Ex Officio Members

Lay Reader Lee Marsh

Pastoral Workers Claire Hutt
Julie Brown

Deanery Synod Dorothy Carter
Sue Burke
Jenny Corroboy

Church Wardens Sheila Barton
Melanie Wilson

Elected Members

Peter Speed	Peter Banyard
Kirsty Gill	Lynda Heesom
David Whalley	Dorika Roxby
Stuart Marley	James Thornton
Jacqueline Shaw	Sarah Downes
Elaine Smith	

Officers

Secretary Dorothy Carter

Treasurer Sue Burke

Safeguarding Dorothy Carter

Lay Readers Christine Chapman
Lee Marsh

Resigned Jul 2023 : Joanna Woodward

In 2023 the Parochial Church Council met in January, March, April (AGM), May, July, September and November with Standing Committee meetings generally two weeks beforehand. Standing Committees are made up of the Vicar (who also Chairs the PCC), the Church Wardens, Secretary and Treasurer and these willing people prepare for the PCC meeting, and make emergency decisions, which are ratified by the PCC at the next PCC Meeting.

PCC members are also Charity Trustees and are recruited from and voted for by members of the congregation who are on the electoral roll. PCC members are elected for three-year terms after which they must stand down, but can stand for re-election.

The PCC adheres to its aims and principles concerning outreach and mission, whilst managing the finances and the running of and safety of both Churches. Action groups hold their own meetings but refer to the PCC for approval of their spending and actions. Issues addressed include worship, mission, safeguarding, ecumenical matters, social activities and all the possible ways of enhancing outreach and mission.

The PCC works extremely hard on the many aspects of running a successful Church and thanks go to all who attend regularly with a cheerful willingness and enthusiasm. Dorothy Carter stepped down as PCC Secretary in September 2023, after 18 years of exceptional contribution. Kirsty Gill and Kris Bradshaw have taken on the role as a 'job share'.

New faces and talents are always welcome and anyone who feels that they can contribute should speak to the Secretary or a Church Warden. ***Kirsty Gill & Kris Bradshaw - PCC Secretaries***

A Word from Your Vicar



Dear Friends

*'Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?'
Then I said, 'Here I am! Send me!'
Isaiah 6:8*

This year I will celebrate the fortieth year since I was ordained priest in Chester Cathedral on 1st July 1984. Before that, on 15th June, Ruth our curate will be ordained priest at the same cathedral and on Sunday 16th she will preside at Holy Communion for the first time. Both these occasions will be days of joy and thanksgiving for God's calling to ministry for both of us and will celebrate the calling of all disciples to follow Jesus.

So why mention these forthcoming events in the annual report? Mainly because I want to emphasise the need for all of us to respond to Jesus' call, "Come follow Me." This is shown in the wonderful hymn 'I, the Lord of sea and sky': we are asked by God, "Who will bear My light to them, whom shall I send?" The answer comes in the chorus, "Here I am Lord, is it I Lord?... I will go Lord, if You lead me." What you may not have noticed is that the final chorus doesn't ask a question but rather declares, "Here I am Lord, it is I Lord." As in the quotation from Isaiah above, we, like the prophet, eventually respond with the words, "Here I am, send me."

Now I want to ask you a personal question: "To what do you think God is calling you?" I believe God has got a job for every one of us, and if we can each work out our task then we can ask the bigger question of what God is calling St. Thomas' & St. Mary Magdalene's to do and to be in 2024. In April we will go through a period of discernment to find out God's will for our parish: a course called, 'Growing Good' will begin on Tuesday April 16th at 12pm and Wednesday 17th at 7.30pm and together we are going to see where God is leading us. To say that there will be a three-line whip for participation is too strong, but I hope that you will respond to the invitation which will go out after Easter. At a time when the Church of England is declining, I pray that our discussions and prayers in this course will lead us into growth.

Yours as always, Michael

Report from Revd. Ruth Gray, Assistant Curate



Firstly, I would like to take this opportunity to

say thank you for the warm welcome that I received when I arrived to begin my Curacy here last July, including the preparation and decoration of the Curacy house before I moved in. That alone demonstrated to me the loving service that I see in abundance, on a daily basis from both church communities at St Thomas' and St Mary Magdalene's. Now nine months on I think it is fair to say that I feel fully integrated into the life of both church families and this community, and I am hugely grateful for all the prayers, support and encouragement that I receive as I continue to learn and develop in my ministry.

The past nine months have taught me a great deal about myself, my journey with God, and his calling of me to ordained ministry. As a deacon I come to serve the community in which I am placed, and what a wonderfully loving, giving, friendly and faithful community this is. I feel blessed to have been placed here and seek to serve to the best of my gifts and abilities. It has been a joy to be an active member of the ministry team as we work together to lead worship, preach and teach as well as develop mission and outreach to the schools and care homes within the parish. However, the ministry team are but a small part of this church community and it would be remiss of me to not give thanks and praise for all within our churches, who through their own loving service and gifts spread the love and compassion of Jesus and prayerfully work together to grow God's kingdom. So, thank you.

In my recent end of year review for my curacy training I was asked to answer two questions – What has gone well this year? And what has been difficult?

Well with regards to what has gone well, I am not a person who likes to blow my own trumpet, it does not come naturally to me but I would hope that the compassionate, nurturing and creative side of me has shone through into my ministry. Being able to sit alongside someone who is feeling lost, lonely, sad or ill, and to pray with them is a beautiful and often heart-wrenching privilege. And equally to nurture the faith of all ages through a range of

encounters and worship styles brings me great joy. From baptism prep, to 'Sing a new song', to confirmation classes, to the Experience Christmas, to the 'Come to the table' all-age service and the Holy week services I hope that I have played my part in shining the light of Christ into the lives of those I have encountered and built relationships with.

With regards to difficulties, I think the greatest one for me was adjusting to a new rhythm of life. Having been a teacher for 24 years prior to ordained ministry, as well as juggling my three years of theology studies and church placement I had become very much a 'Martha' like character; always 'doing' to the detriment of 'being', therefore not taking the right amount of time to be still in the presence of Jesus. It took me a couple of months to unknit all of that when I first arrived, as well as come to terms with the emotional changes that ending one chapter and beginning another brings. However, throughout that and my occasional wobbles of confidence I have been hugely thankful for the nurturing and supportive guidance of Michael. He has been generous with his time, knowledge and patience as I have learnt about parish life and leading parts of ministry that I have not led before, such as funerals.

I am thankful that I still have over two years left in this parish to learn and grow in my ministry and eagerly await the many encounters yet to come. I know that where I am today is not by my doing and I look forward to seeing where God continues to guide and use me as I minister in this community over the coming weeks, months and years.

Financial Review of the Year 2023

Dear Friends,

For the first time in a few years, I hardly feel the need to mention Covid from a financial perspective and 2023 saw very much financial 'business as usual' in



our Parish although we continue to be sensitive to people's health concerns, especially during Holy Communion. Inevitably new challenges have arisen, our churches are not immune to rising prices and most particularly rising energy costs with both St Thomas' and St Mary Magdalene churches having to negotiate new

and much higher prices for gas than we had been accustomed to, the previous 3-year fixed rate contracts expiring. Your PCC stepped out in faith in January 2023 voting to proceed with St Mary Magdalene's car park renewal and committing £35,000 of general church funds to this project complementing the £66,800 in grants successfully secured by Julie Bennion who Project Managed this work expertly and the £9485 in donations which attracted a further £1,695 in recovered tax through Gift Aid. Our total income is £288,139.99 and total expenses are £298,513.02 giving an overall deficit this year of income over expenditure, the first during my six years as Treasurer, of £10,373.03. With the car park renewal this was expected and does not cause me concern, it is a 'one-off' expenditure and if I remove all income and expenditure relating to the car park, we would have had a healthy surplus despite cost of living and energy challenges.

Geoff Bruce BSc. FCA has continued as our Independent Examiner for a fourth year in 2023 again providing this service free of charge and we remain most grateful to Geoff for his time, guidance, and expertise. In addition, Geoff is keen to ensure that our PCC members are fully aware of their responsibilities as Charity Trustees and informed about all the financial matters relating to the Parish. I report to every PCC meeting updating the financial position, and these full reports are incorporated into the PCC minutes as Appendices. There is an induction process for all new PCC members, we adhere to our Standing Financial Instructions which are reviewed annually, and I undertake the Charity Commission Internal Financial Controls Self-Assessment Checklist presenting the findings to the PCC annually to ensure we have robust processes in place.

Linda Latham is an invaluable support as bookkeeper, she maintains all the Finance Coordinator records and is a 'double check' for all our financial activity. The finance team also comprises Joanne Ridley, Gift Aid Secretary and Joanne with Reg Pritchard and Jackie Cole assist with the money counting every week with Peter Speed as back up when required, Simon Hutt takes the weekly banking to the Post Office and Carol Bridger provides admin support and banking back up. I am most grateful to all the Finance Team for their invaluable service.

As our gross income is in excess of £250,000, we must prepare our accounts on an Accruals basis to satisfy Charity Commission legal requirements, another first for me. Previously, I have prepared the accounts using the receipts and payments basis except for the following:

-any invoice raised and not settled before 31/12 is included as a debtor
-any cheque issued but not cashed or services received but not paid for before 31/12 are included as creditors, both only if they materially affect the accounts.

However, in preparing the accounts on an Accruals basis income or expenses are recorded when the transaction occurs rather than when payment is made or received. You will note as an example an apparent large increase in Gift Aid – this is mainly due to claiming 5 quarters instead of the usual 4 with an estimated amount for Quarter 4 2023 included in these accounts for Accruals purposes as it is the Gift Aid due on donations received in October, November and December 2023.

The format of the accounts presented is unchanged from 2022. We continue to use the Finance Coordinator computerised accounts system and operate 'fund accounting'. You will note headings of general fund, designated funds and restricted funds on page one of the accounts and on the Balance Sheet these funds and their values are detailed. We have three Designated Funds set aside for a particular purpose: Visranthi Trust, a charity in India which supports victims of domestic abuse to which a group of regular donors contribute; Mission Project fund for our outreach work like the Christmas and Easter bags for vulnerable families and the holiday fun lunches and St Mary Magdalene Car Park fund which has kept monies received for this work separate. There are five active restricted funds, donations into these funds must be used for the sole purpose of that fund: Parish Family fund for youth and family work, Grants fund holding money given annually by the War Graves Commission for us to use to maintain the graves of the fallen in the churchyard, Bells fund to manage and maintain the bell tower and ringing band, the Parish Charities fund is used for our annual charitable outward giving, and St Mary Magdalene Flower Fund is self-explanatory. The movement in these funds can be seen in detail on page 4 of the accounts. Agency funds, also detailed on page 4, relate to money we receive on behalf of a third party: it is not our money and is managed separately within the accounts but forms part of our creditors figure. Examples include fees we receive and pay to the Diocese, vergers or organists from weddings and funerals and charity donations such as the Children's Society Christingle candles, Macmillan Coffee morning and Present Aid.

Our total income is £288,139.99 an increase of £87,213.87 compared to 2022 largely due to the £66,800 in grants secured for and £9,485 donations towards, the renewal of St Mary Magdalene's car park. Hall hire has been robust at both sites due to the efforts of both Julie Bennion (St Mary Magdalene) and Peter Speed (St Thomas Church Hall) our Hall Booking Secretaries with a significant increase at St Thomas' however, some of this increase again relates to the switch to Accruals Accounting and there being 13 months of hall hire recorded in these accounts. It is noteworthy that the income from St Thomas' Church Hall hire more than covers the hall running costs and we have the advantage of the building for our personal use and for the benefit of the community. It is pertinent to note that our Planned Giving and Plate Collections increased by £6,797.52 with associated additional Gift Aid payments. This increase is, in the main, the response to our Annual Thanksgiving Sunday 2022 appeal from which we received pledged increases of £6,268. Rental income from St Mary's house is reduced by £5,080 reflecting the fact that the house was only let for 4 months in 2023 being vacated for the arrival of our new Curate, Ruth in May. Investment income has increased this year from £707 in 2022 to £2,584.67 in 2023 relating to bank interest rates and our decision to move funds into CCLA (CBF) Deposit Account where we receive a more favourable interest rate.

Fund raising receipts, after costs, are £10,873.06 compared to £5,877.54 in 2022, a significant increase and thanks go to the entire Fundraising, Social and Mission Project team. Fundraising and social highlights in 2023 included a Pancake Party, a very challenging quiz set by Adam Bennion, a Car Treasure Hunt, 'Pick a Prize Raffle' and 'Music for a Summer's Evening' concert during Stockton Heath Festival, the Parable of the Talents Summer Challenge in which many members of our congregations participated, including Michael's abseil, Harvest Supper and Ceilidh, Macmillan Coffee Morning, The Abbarettes Concert, Christmas Fair with our Church School and finally the Golborne Brass Christmas concert. We are also very grateful to Ann and Mick Jackson, Julie Bennion and all supporters of the Parish 100 club for donations of £2,000 in 2023.

Our total expenditure is £298,513.02, an increase of £139,444.64 compared to 2022. £118,395.41 is accounted for by St Mary Magdalene car park costs, £118,060.30 major works and £335.11 car park fundraising costs. The second major contributing factors are energy costs, these are ongoing liabilities and of more concern. During 2023 St Mary Magdalene's three-year fixed rate contract for Gas came to an end in October and St Thomas' three-year fixed rate contract for gas ended in June. In addition, Electricity for St Thomas' Church and Church hall is via the Parish Buying Energy basket and is reviewed annually with consequent rises in electricity for both sites, although the

electricity provided is 100% green energy generated by Hornsey 1 wind farm. In 2022 utilities – gas, electricity and water across all three sites cost £12,857.39 in 2023 the same utilities cost £22,503.06 an increase of £9645.67 and whilst some of this increase relates to the switch in accounting practice a comparable figure for the energy cost increase is still over £7,000. Additionally, these gas price rises were not for the entire year as will be the case in 2024. Parish Share increased by £2,090. Parish share is the money we pay to the Diocese for Clergy stipend, pensions and training, in the accounts it forms the major part of the 'Diocesan Parish Contribution and Deanery' category. The total Parish Share paid in 2023 is £71,756.64 and we have paid our full Parish Share throughout the year, many Parishes are in arrears.

St Mary's house expenditure increased by £3,593.51 as the house needed considerable refurbishment, decorating, replacement of flooring and installation of a Burglar Alarm the costs of which were significantly mitigated by the hard work of members of the congregation who undertook cleaning, decorating and gardening tasks on a voluntary basis. We are also now responsible for Council Tax and water payments. Church maintenance costs have increased by £3,817.28, whilst these do vary year on year this large increase relates to the necessary removal of a disused oil tank in St Thomas' Church Cellar identified at the Quinquennial Inspection costing £3,732 and a significant repair to St Thomas' Church boiler costing £1,762.52. Most other costs have increased in line with inflation.

Although we have our own financial challenges your PCC fulfilled the obligation to Christian outreach in our 'Outward Giving' Parish Policy which is to give away 10% of our disposable income. We allocated £10,969 based on our disposable income 2022, which was distributed between Overseas Mission, Home Mission, and Secular charities. £10,200 in donations were as follows: £2000 to the Church Missionary Society, £2000 to USPG, £500 to Visranthi Trust, £500 to St David's Nigeria, £500 to Christchurch Latchford, £500 to Ascension Trust for Street Pastors, £400 to the Prison Fellowship, £800 to Broomfield's Youth Project, £500 to St Joseph's Family Centre, £500 to St Rocco's and £1000 to St Thomas' School - £500 towards distinctiveness and £500 towards a Language and Phonics course, £800 to Warrington Youth for Christ, and £200 to support the Creamfields Church tent. A further £500 was given to the church Mission Project and as in previous years a small sum of £269 has been retained for 'in year' emergency appeals. Listed in the Memorandum Analysis - Charity Agency Summary are all the other collections or donations received and paid out to charities throughout 2023.

Community outreach via the Mission Project work progressed in 2023 collaborating with local schools to provide 150 Easter gift bags, 153 Christmas bags of food with 2 full days of food for 206 adults and 236 children. A total of 8 free fun lunches in school holidays took place providing over 270 hot meals all freely produced by members of the FRASM team. These are Christian lunch events with themed activities -all the summer lunches were themed on 'Creation', videos, stories and crafts. We have been treated to Ruth's guitar playing, some popular new songs and imaginative crafts and are grateful to Ruth for her support and input. With the Pastoral Care Team 50 Easter and 50 Christmas Cheer bags were distributed to older vulnerable or isolated people within our congregation and community. We have worked with Transforming Lives Together for the last three years and in 2023 were fortunate to receive a donation from their funders of £1,646 and donations from our congregations of £1045.10 to support the Mission Project work.

Despite our year end deficit of income over expenditure we continue to maintain a healthy Cash at Bank and in hand figure of £132,141.42 unrestricted funds, £11390.13 restricted funds, and £1283.20 designated funds. The response to the Thanksgiving Sunday Appeal in November 2023, for 2024 giving, yielded pledges of £6320 increase in Planned Giving with an estimated increase of £1500 additional Gift Aid. These figures will help us withstand the economic buffeting, particularly energy costs through 2024. We have another major challenge ahead in 2024/25. St Thomas' Church a Grade II listed building remains on the Heritage England 'Churches at Risk' register with two outstanding phases of renovation identified in previous Quinquennial Inspections still to be completed. This work will only be able to be undertaken with successful Grant Applications and funding, but it is likely that we will need to contribute approximately £60,000 towards the works.

It is a privilege to serve God and our churches as your treasurer. In my role I am humbled by God's loving faithfulness and the generosity I encounter within our congregations. A sincere thank you to everyone who contributes to the life of the church both financially and through giving of their time or talents. The financial health and stability of the Parish underpins all we do and all we aspire to do to show and share God's amazing love in our churches and the community.

Sue Burke

Parish Treasurer

Church Wardens' Report

St Thomas and St Mary Magdalene

Dear Friends,

Reflecting on 2023 it seemed like a full and busy year (again!) across our churches of St Thomas' and St Mary Magdalene's. We've faced challenges and opportunities to extend our support to the community especially in the face of the continuing rise in the cost of living. Consequently, St Thomas joined the Warm Welcome Spaces initiative, opening its doors from 10-1 during the colder months. This involved joining with volunteers from Bridgewater Churches Together and despite the logistical nightmares of allocating people to time slots it helped forge valuable and lasting friendships. And our ongoing support to the foodbank seemed more important than ever.

This year brought the Quinquennial inspections for both churches. As St Thomas' is a listed building, we are only too aware of our responsibility to maintain such a beautiful building but the task is onerous. We anticipate further initiatives to widen our community links and encourage more of the village into our buildings. At St Mary Magdalene's the task is not quite as daunting but our focus is to maintain the warm and welcoming space that is so well used by the local community to a high standard into the future.

There have been a number of little tweaks which help keep us in touch, we have refurbished the notice boards in the porch of St Thomas and now have photo record of 'who's who' on display so newcomers can identify church leaders. This was one of the outcomes from our Vision Day, which helped us to focus on what we do well and where we can accentuate this, as well as where we need to develop further to bring God's Kingdom to this place.

The Easter Experience in 2023 showcased the artistic and creative talents of our members, tableaux of the Passion Story were spread throughout the church, while hundreds of school children were guided through the Easter Story. It was a huge success and all the effort was well rewarded by the children's natural interest and candid questions: 'Did Jesus have a surname?' And so, all the energy was summoned again to recreate the Christmas Story in December.

Your Churchwardens Mel and Sheila waited in some trepidation for the Archdeacon's Visitation in May - this is basically a triennial inspection to check all records and procedures are being adhered to. We are pleased to report that we 'passed' with flying colours and it was noted how well organised the parish office is. Huge thanks go to all our volunteers that help to make that so, but most especially to Carol for all she does so efficiently behind the scenes.

Having achieved the Silver Eco award at the end of 2022, we have made modest progress in consolidating our eco initiatives to strive to gain the Gold. We welcomed Year 1 from St Thomas school in May to make bird feeders and survey our flora in the churchyard. In June we entered our churchyard in 'Caring for God's Acre' - counting flora digitally which all fed into a national data base.

After an amazing effort of cleaning, painting, and generally refurbishing, in June we were delighted to welcome Ruth Gray our new curate as she moved to Appleton and took up residence in St Mary's House. She has blended in so easily and we are hugely blessed by her cheerfulness, tuneful voice, honesty and special skills with children and little ones.

It was a huge honour for us all when St Thomas' 'stood in' for Chester Cathedral which was unavailable to host the ordination of Ruth and three other deacons on July 1st. Awash with Bishops, visiting clergy and technical support, the service was packed, magnificent and showed off our beautiful church at its best. The wonderful voices of Melody Makers, our baking, hospitality and our well-oiled organisation all contributed to make this a wonderful celebration - we even had the added benefit of the Stockton Heath Art festival adorning our walls.

In July we finally 'took delivery' of a new car park at St Mary Magdalene's. Whilst she's too modest to say so, this would not have been possible without the energy and tenacity of Julie Bennion who corralled grant applications, plans and surveys with such expertise. We are so grateful to everyone who played a part in the fundraising, and for the patience of everyone who has ruined a pair of heels on the previous surface! The Bishop again joined us to bless the endeavour and really brought home to us all what a tremendous community asset we have in our custodianship.

Also in July, we formally said thank you to two faithful servants, firstly Joanna Woodward, who has given devoted years of service to our church community as a reader; we are delighted that she still offers to contribute to our services especially at the Thursday morning communion service. Secondly,

at the PCC meeting in July we formally said thank you to Dorothy Carter who had given many, many years of trusty service as our PCC secretary – she was escorted home with a trolley full of plants for her garden. We are fortunate that Dorothy has agreed to stay on as our Parish Safeguarding Officer.

During the summer Keiko Tanaka introduced herself and we quickly embraced her enthusiasm and musical talent to take a lead role in leading St Thomas Choir. With Ian as organist and Keiko, the singing has really enhanced our services, culminating in a wonderful Carol Service in December. Thank you Keiko and Ian.

Our Parish supplied a number of volunteers and lots and lots of Jammy Dodgers to the church tent at Creamfields in Daresbury over the August Bank Holiday weekend. This outreach to the sometimes tired and emotional party goers is a brilliant example of our mission to the extended community.

The Summer brought the Talents Challenge and the congregation rose admirably to the challenge of increasing their £10 stake. There were raffles, quizzes, bakes, afternoon teas and all manner of sponsored activities including the Vicar's momentous abseil down the tower at Weaverham. Thank you to all who took part and gave so freely.

We look ahead to 2024 when we hope the Church clock will finally be chiming (though muted during the night hours) and the War graves in the churchyard more formally recognised.

Finally we cannot conclude our report without saying thank you to all those who freely help with keeping our churches clean and welcoming. We look forward to serving with you all for another year.

With thanks

Melanie and Sheila

Church Wardens



Action Groups

Action groups hold their own meetings but refer back to the PCC for approval of their spending and actions. Issues addressed include worship, mission, safeguarding, ecumenical matters, social activities and all the possible ways of enhancing outreach and mission.

The groups who meet regularly are:

ST Thomas Action Group (STAG)
St Mary's Action Group (SMAG)
Church Hall Action Group (CHAG)
Fundraising, Social and Mission Group (FRASM)
Tech Team
Pastoral Group
Deanery
Synod
Bridgewater Churches Together

Outreach

A word of thanks go to all to who work so hard to organise or help with the groups that our Church community provides.

It was stated a while ago in Parliament that "Without volunteers this country would grind to a halt" and our wonderful group of volunteers certainly lays testimony to that statement.

A heartfelt thanks goes to all who work so hard to make our Church the warm, welcoming and safe haven that it is.

Apart from the support listed in other parts of the report, volunteers are responsible for the success of the following really well loved and important parts of our Churches:

Sunday School
Bellringing
Eco Church
Church Duties
Home Visits

The Choir
Open Church
Cleaning
Office work
Praise and Play

Annual Report of the Safeguarding Officer 2023

The PCC of St Thomas and St Mary Magdalene adheres to the Church of England principles and has adopted their Policy – “Promoting a Safer Church”, which promotes safety for children, young people, vulnerable adults and adults.



Advice leaflets are available for all volunteers and where appropriate volunteers receive basic awareness training.

Our Churches endeavour, at all times, to comply with the Diocesan guidelines on Disclosure and Barring Service checks. DBS clearance is required every three years and on election to the PCC or when taking on any of the roles listed below.

In line with the more stringent policy adopted, it is now mandatory that all PCC members have the appropriate Church of England DBS clearance, regardless of any other checks they may have undertaken. Sunday School Teachers and Group Leaders, who work regularly on a one-to-one basis with children, young people and vulnerable people must also have this DBS clearance. This is an ongoing process and is monitored regularly.

The Diocese has ruled that safeguarding training should also be undertaken by PCC Members, Sunday School Teachers and Group Leaders. This is also an ongoing process and is monitored regularly. This will also apply to anyone taking on one of these roles in the future

The Safeguarding Officers are:

St Thomas - Dorothy Carter
St Mary's - Julie Bennion

Both are up-to-date with DBS clearance and training.

Anyone having any concerns about people of any age within our Churches should contact their Safety Officer. There are posters in both Churches with the contact information displayed.

Safeguarding is a regular item on all PCC agendas.

Church employees who work regularly with children or vulnerable adults currently have valid and satisfactory DBS disclosures

This also applies to Lay Readers and Pastoral workers.

The aims of these measures are:

- To ensure a safe environment for all who attend our Churches to worship, work, volunteer or visit.
- to promote safe practice by raising awareness of safeguarding issues by offering training to church volunteers.
- to ensure all church activities and church groups have a recent risk assessments which are reviewed annually, and risk assessments for all church trips and events are completed.

There were no issues or causes for concern reported in 2023.

Dorothy Carter - Lead Recruiter / Safeguarding Officer - St. Thomas'
Julie Bennion - Safeguarding Officer - St Mary Magdalene's

Great Budworth Deanery Synod

The aims of the Deanery Synod are:

- To consider matters concerning the Church of England
- To bring together the views of the parishes of the Deanery
- To act as the channel of communication between the parishes of the Deanery and the Diocesan Synod
- To effect decisions made by the Diocesan Synod
- To raise matters with the Diocesan Synod
- To elect representatives to the Diocesan and General Synods

In 2023, two meetings of Deanery Synod were hosted by St Matthew's, Stretton, with one at St Wilfrid's, Grappenhall and one at Christ Church, Latchford. At each meeting the treasurer gives his finance report. Guest speakers have been reporting on the drive for green energy, stressing the deadlines for churches to make this happen. Focus by speakers has concentrated on "The Vision and Strategy for the Diocese of Chester". John Pocock came from Chester, raising lots of questions as to how we can reach out to the one and a half million people in Chester Diocese who don't come to church. Synod allows us to hear how other churches are reacting to these challenges and to share ideas.

Following the appointment of Revd Jane Proudfoot to the role of Archdeacon of Macclesfield, Revd Bev Jameson of St Mary's, Lymm is our new rural dean for Great Budworth deanery.

St. Thomas' And St. Mary's representatives for 2023 were Dorothy Carter, Jenny Corroboy and Sue Burke. Deanery Synod representatives attend meetings on behalf of the Parish and report back to the PCC. The Parish is also represented by Pastoral Workers Claire Hutt and Julie Brown. Because of the numbers on our electoral roll, we are eligible to elect four members for the Deanery Synod. It is a three-year election process and there is a place for one more representative. If anyone would like to learn more about this role, please talk to a Church Warden or one of the representatives.

Dorothy Carter & Jenny Corroboy

Electoral Roll

The electoral roll closed on March 31st to allow time for revision and a new version will be instated. The Electoral Roll will be opened on April 21st and the final number of applicants will be announced at the AGM on that day.

Congregation members are encouraged to have their names added to give them voting rights at general meetings.

Should anyone wish to be entered on the electoral roll application forms are available at the Church Office or ask one of the Church Wardens.

Simon Hutt
Electoral Roll Officer

Reserve Policy

It is the aim of the PCC to hold £20,000 in unrestricted reserves to enable cover for three months' running costs in the event of a major problem, and/or to provide additional support for some unforeseen repairs. Having considered outgoings, the PCC deems this to be a reasonable amount to hold in reserve to maintain an adequate cash flow. This policy will be reviewed in twelve months' time by the PCC, who will consider the viability of this amount.

Risk report

The major risks to which the PCC are exposed are reviewed regularly and systems and procedures are in place to ensure that those are in place.

Major risks identified are:

- Adverse publicity
- Demographic change
- Dependency on income
- Disaster issues
- Fund raising
- Governance
- Security
- Volunteering
- Vulnerable people
- Pandemic

Risk assessments are stored at a central point and can be viewed on request.

St Thomas' Church Stockton Heath
Statement of Financial Activities
For the period from 01 January 2023 to 31 December 2023

	Unrestricted funds	Designated funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds	Total funds	Prior year total funds
Income and endowments from:						
Donations and legacies						
Planned Giving	82,694.62	420.00	2,224.50		85,339.12	79,772.39
Plate Collections	18,662.94				18,662.94	17,432.15
Recovered tax	27,844.60	2,690.85	368.75		30,904.20	24,629.18
Legacies						2,000.00
Donations	11,499.62	14,466.10	653.50		26,619.22	18,675.51
Income from charitable activities						
Fund Raising	14,132.17	2,475.02			16,607.19	10,766.56
Investments	2,570.26		14.41		2,584.67	707.00
Other income	1,375.65		1,108.00		2,483.65	2,321.06
St Mary's House Rent	2,600.00				2,600.00	7,680.00
St Thomas' Church Hall Hire	16,594.00				16,594.00	12,480.00
St Mary's Hall Hire	12,438.00				12,438.00	11,079.50
PCC Fees	6,140.00				6,140.00	6,480.00
Grants	150.00	66,800.00	217.00		67,167.00	6,902.77
Diocesan fees						
Total income	196,701.86	86,851.97	4,586.16		288,139.99	200,926.12
Expenditure on:						
Raising funds	5,399.02	335.11			5,734.13	4,889.02
Expenditure on charitable activities						
Diocesan Parish Contribution and Deanery	71,786.64				71,786.64	69,746.60
Clergy Costs	2,810.79				2,810.79	2,681.54
Youth Worker Costs			1,934.25		1,934.25	533.60
Church Running costs	33,068.36		908.00		33,976.36	21,111.06
Church Maintenance / Repairs	8,904.73				8,904.73	5,087.45
Church equipment purchase	1,340.82				1,340.82	2,920.69
Church Hall Running Costs	15,123.43				15,123.43	13,839.93
Church Hall Maintenance / repairs	1,496.63				1,496.63	730.00
Mission Giving and donations			10,200.00		10,200.00	10,100.00
Worship Costs	7,229.81		367.20		7,597.01	6,252.32
Churchyard costs	60.00				60.00	239.44
Support Costs	4,810.58	2,085.28			6,895.86	6,520.27
Vicarage costs	3,655.30				3,655.30	4,552.67
Other expenditure	1,476.86	3,044.00	49.50		4,570.36	3,828.89
St Mary's House	4,366.41				4,366.41	772.90
Major works		118,060.30			118,060.30	5,262.00
Total expenditure	161,529.38	123,524.69	13,458.95		298,513.02	159,068.38
Gains / losses on investment assets						
Net income / (expenditure) resources before transfer	35,172.48	(36,672.72)	(8,872.79)		(10,373.03)	41,857.74
Transfers						
Gross transfers between funds - in	4,975.99	40,395.99	11,049.00		56,420.98	10,681.00
Gross transfers between funds - out	(50,944.99)	(4,895.99)	(580.00)		(56,420.98)	(10,681.00)
Other recognised gains / losses						
Gains on revaluation, fixed assets, charity's own use						
Net movement in funds	(10,796.52)	(1,172.72)	1,596.21		(10,373.03)	41,857.74
Reconciliation of funds						
Total funds brought forward	142,937.94	2,455.92	9,793.92		155,187.78	113,330.04

26 March 2024 Page 1

	Unrestricted funds	Designated funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds	Total funds	Prior year total funds
Total funds carried forward	132,141.42	1,283.20	11,390.13		144,814.75	155,187.78

St Thomas' Church Stockton Heath

Balance sheet (Summary) As at: 31 December 2023

	As at 31/12/2023	As at 31/12/2022
Current assets		
Debtors	6,991	1,575
Cash at bank and in hand	145,586	162,758
	<u>152,577</u>	<u>164,333</u>
Liabilities		
Creditors: Amounts falling due in one year	7,762	9,145
Net current assets less current liabilities	<u>144,814</u>	<u>155,187</u>
Total assets less current liabilities	<u>144,814</u>	<u>155,187</u>
Total net assets less liabilities	<u>144,814</u>	<u>155,187</u>
Represented by		
Unrestricted		
Unrestricted - General fund	132,141	142,937
Designated		
Designated - ST MM Car Park	(746)	2,193
Designated - Mission Projects	1,654	262
Designated - Visranthi Trust	376	?
Restricted		
Restricted - Bells fund	2,413	1,963
Restricted - Grants Fund	1,312	1,095
Restricted - St Mary's Flower Fund	323	276
Restricted - Parish Charities fund	270	5
Restricted - Parish Family Fund	7,070	6,452
Restricted - Prom Praise	?	?
Restricted - Agency collection	?	?
Funds of the church	<u>144,814</u>	<u>155,187</u>

Notes to Accompany the Accounts 2023

1. The financial statements of the PCC have been prepared in accordance with the Accounting Regulations 2006 and Section 133 of the Charities Act 2011.

Agency monies held are also shown as a creditor. These are detailed below for information.

2. The PCC holds 199.49 CBF accumulation shares whose market value was £11,912.31 for December 2023 (£11650.52 for December 2022)

3. The PCC decided at a meeting in January 2023 to proceed with the renewal of St Mary Magdalene Church Car Park. The costs were met by grants, donations and use of PCC approved Parish funds and was managed via a designated fund within the accounts.

4. In addition the PCC own the following non sacred buildings: St Mary's house Insurance valuation January 2024 £257,174 & St Thomas Church Hall Insurance valuation January 2024, £1,146,633

5. The PCC has a Reserves Policy and held £20,000 reserves in 2023

5. The movements in designated and restricted funds during the year were:

	Bal b/fwd	Receipts	Payments	Transfers	Bal C/fwd
Designated fund (unrestricted)	£	£	£	£	£
Visranthi Trust	0.00	3,420.00	3,044.00	0.00	376.00
Mission Project fund	262.45	2,976.95	2,085.28	500.00	1,654.12
St Mary Magdalene Car Park fund	2,193.47	80,455.02	118,395.41	35,000.00	-746.92
Total	262.45	86,851.97	123,524.69	35,500.00	907.20
Restricted Funds					
Charities	5.00	0.00	10,203.75	10,469.00	270.25
War graves	1,095.77	217.00	0.00	0.00	1,312.77
Flowers	276.81	413.50	367.20	0.00	323.11
Parish Family fund	6,452.76	2,597.66	1,980.00	0.00	7,070.42
Gain on investment asset					
Bells Fund	1,963.58	1,358.00	908.00	0.00	2,413.58
Total	9,793.92	4,586.16	12,550.95	10,469.00	12,298.13
Memorandum analysis					
Church acting as an agent		Bal b/fwd	Receipts	Payments	Bal C/ fwd
Diocesan fees for weddings and funerals		1,255.68	5,914.00	6,809.68	360.00
Other fees- verger/ organist/choir		540.00	3,935.00	3,950.00	525.00
Retired/visitng clergy fee		0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total		1,795.68	9,849.00	10,759.68	885.00
Charity Agency Summary					
Chester Clergy families		0.00	543.05	543.05	0.00
Children's society		825.76	1,045.97	829.71	1,042.02
foodbank		673.32		673.32	0.00
Present Aid		421.30	324.34	446.00	299.64
Macmillan Cancer Support		0.00	475.34	475.34	0.00
USPG		1.05	550.66	526.33	25.38
DEC Earthquake		0.00	712.05	656.00	56.05
Total		1,921.43	3,651.41	4,149.75	1,423.09
Total Agency fund					2,308.09



CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Independent examiner's report on the accounts

Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/
members of

Charity Name
The Parochial Church Council of St Thomas and St Mary Magdalene
Stockton Heath

On accounts for the year
ended

31st December 2023

Charity no
(if any)

1131459

Set out on pages

1 - 5

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31 December 2023.

Responsibilities and
basis of report

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

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination (other than that disclosed below *) which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- the accounts did not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

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

** Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.*

Signed:

Date:

2/4/2024

Name:

Geoff Bruce

Relevant professional
qualification(s) or body
(if any):

FCA

Address:

31 Bristow Close, Warrington, WA5 8EU

**The Parochial Church Council
of St Thomas' and St Mary Magdalene's Churches**
Charity Number 1131459

**Minutes of the Vestry Meeting
For the year January 1st to December 31st 2022
Held on Sunday 23rd April 2023 at St Thomas' Church
10:45am**

The number present at the meeting was 58

The Minutes of the Vestry Meeting for the year 2022 had been circulated and were accepted

Election of Church Wardens:

Nominated	Proposed	Seconded	Approved
Sheila Barton	Dorothy Carter	Lynda Heesom	Unanimously
Melanie Wilson	Michael Jackson	Linda Lathom	Unanimously

Church Warden Remarks (Sheila Barton and Melanie Wilson)

The Wardens expressed their grateful thanks to everyone who had supported them through the year. Highlighted was the hard work done by all and time and talents given so willingly.

They thanked Michael for all his support, Carol Bridger for all her work in the Church Office, Sue Burke for all her work as Treasurer and Dorothy Carter for all her work as Secretary.

Both said that they were looking forward to the next two years and welcomed all the positive changes that were happening.

Electoral Roll. The previous electoral roll had closed and a revised one created for 2023/2024. At the time of this meeting there were 222 names on the Roll.

The Terriers and Log Books were presented to be signed after the meeting

The Vestry meeting closed at 11:25am

**Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting
For the year January 1st to December 31st 2022
Held on Sunday 23rd April 2023 at St Thomas' Church
at 11:30am**

The number present at the meeting was 58

The Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting for the Year 2022 had been circulated and were accepted.

Chairs Remarks: (Rev. Michael Ridley)

Michael talked about how well the Churches were doing and thanked everyone concerned for all their hard work.

He asked people to read his letter in the annual report. He talked about the changes and difficulties facing the Church of England. He expressed concern about the lack of older children and the importance of all-round succession management.

Election to Deanery Synod

The role and importance of Deanery Synod was explained. Because of the numbers on our Electoral Roll, we are able to appoint four lay members to Deanery Synod, but at present there are only three. Because of three-year rotation all lay members must stand down in 2023. All three members are to stand for re-election. No fourth member came forward.

Nominated		Proposed	Seconded	Approved
Sue Burke	Re-election	Brenda Speed	Dorothy Carter	Unanimously
Dorothy Carter	Re-election	Sue Burke	Sheila Barton	Unanimously
Jenny Corroboy	Re-election	Dorothy Carter	Sheila Barton	Unanimously

Annual Reports

The Annual Reports had been circulated prior to the meeting.

Sue Burke explained the accounts and both reports were formally accepted.

Elections to the Parochial Church Council

Thanks were expressed to all members of the PCC for their loyal input. Elections were as follows.

There were 7 places to be filled (three people were standing for re-election because of three-year rotation rule and four new members).

Nominated		Proposed	Seconded	Approved
David Whalley	Re-election	Dorothy Carter	Lynda Heesom	Unanimously
Dorika Roxby	Re-election	Sheila Barton	Peter Speed	Unanimously
Stuart Marley	Re-election	Carol Bridger	Joanne Ridley	Unanimously
Joe Roxby		Warren Whalley	Sheila Barton	Unanimously
Irene Fitzgerald		Dorothy Carter	Sheila Barton	Unanimously
Janice Rowland		Sue Burke	Reg Pritchard	Unanimously
Kris Bradshaw	Co-opted	Sue Burke	Carol Bridger	Unanimously

Appointment of Independent Examiner

Geoff Bruce was thanked for all his hard work on the accounts and re-appointed for the year 2023

Proposed S Burke **Seconded** J Benson **Voted** Unanimously

The meeting closed at 12:25am

The first PCC Meeting will be at St Thomas' Church, Tuesday 23rd May 2023 at 7.30pm

Dorothy Carter (PCC Secretary)

Signed Rev. M L Ridley.....

Date 8th April 2024

Date 21st April 2024

