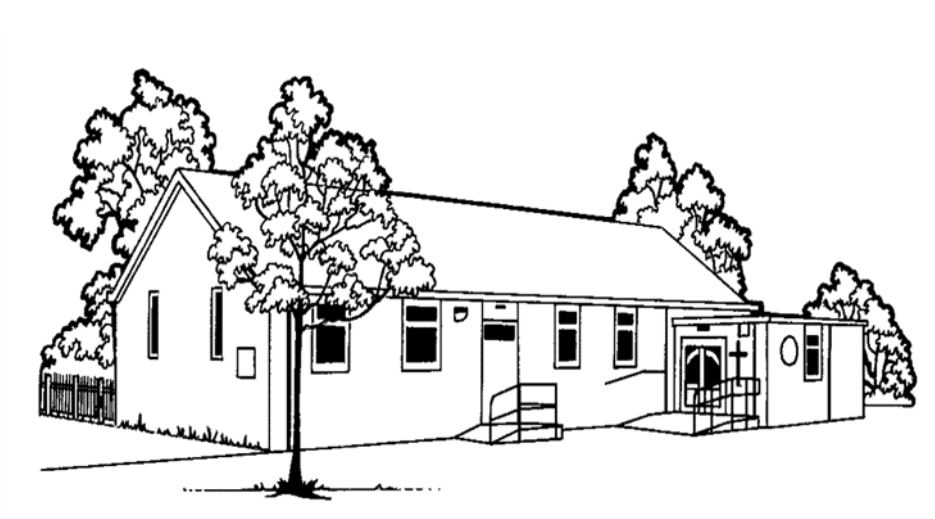


**The Parochial Church Council
of
St Thomas' and St Mary Magdalene's Churches
Stockton Heath**

**Annual and Financial Reports
for the Year Ending
31st December 2024**



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 cooperating 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 Hall, Ellesmere Road, Stockton Heath; St Mary Magdalene's Church, Dingleway/Bridge Lane, Appleton and 8 St Moncia'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 2023

Vicar
Curate

Revd. Michael Ridley
Revd Ruth Gray

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	Irene Fitzgerald
Kirsty Gill	Lynda Heesom	
David Whalley	Dorika Roxby	
Stuart Marley	James Thornton	
Jacqueline Shaw	Sarah Downes	
Elaine Smith	Joe Roxby	

Officers

<i>Secretaries</i>	Kirsty Gill, Kris Bradshaw
<i>Treasurer</i>	Sue Burke
<i>Safeguarding</i>	Dorothy Carter

Lay Readers

Christine Chapman
Lee Marsh

In 2024 the Parochial Church Council met in January, March, April (AGM and an Extraordinary Meeting), May, July, September and November with Standing Committee meetings generally two weeks beforehand. Standing Committees are comprised of the Vicar (who also Chairs the PCC), the Church Wardens, Secretary and Treasurer and these people prepare for the PCC meeting, and make emergency decisions, which are ratified by the PCC at the following 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.

New faces and talents are always welcome and anyone who feels that they can contribute should speak to the Secretaries or a Church Warden.

Kirsty Gill & Kris Bradshaw - PCC Secretaries

A Word from Your Vicar

Dear Friends,

St. Paul begins his letter to the Philippians with these words: "I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the Gospel from the first day until now". These words are the backdrop to what I want to say about our Church fellowship in the last year, and also a motivation to how we should be in the next year.



First I want to say that I am so thankful for St. Thomas' and St. Mary Magdalene's and all that we do together. I am fortunate indeed to minister in such a loving parish where the Gospel message is lived and proclaimed. While I pray for you every day, I am strengthened in the knowledge that you pray for me too, and it is only through our mutual love for Jesus that we continue to flourish and to grow. Paul also talks about the joy he has in the partnership in the Gospel: I too know that the Good News which Jesus brings is only effective if it is proclaimed in the power of the Holy Spirit. Not surprising then, that one of the fruits of the Spirit, namely joy, wells up in our hearts and in our church fellowship as we work together.

Finally, as Paul talks about partnership, this is something which I know exists in our Churches but we must increase our partnership too. Life is very busy and young families especially are feeling the strain of child-rearing in a hostile world where Gospel truths are ignored. Older families are also overstretched, looking after elderly parents and grandchildren. Within this context we need committed folk to take leadership roles in partnering in the Gospel: let's not be afraid to be members of the PCC, volunteer to be sidespeople, Ventry helpers, bell ringers, Sunday School teachers, choir members, Bible Study leaders, worship leaders, flower arrangers, cleaners, pray-ers and preachers and so many other jobs. There's a story about the president of the USA visiting the space centre at Houston in the 60s during the race to the moon. Meeting scientists and managers he also shook the hand of a janitor who was sweeping the floor. The president asked him what his job was and he replied, "I'm here to send men to the moon." Despite his lowly occupation he was fully committed to the idea that he was part of something

bigger. Each of us, great or small, are part of the salvation history which is brought about through our partnership in the Gospel of Jesus. We can only make Christ known if we work together. Let us all pray about where we fit into our churches and how we can do the Lord's work together.

Yours as always, Michael.

Some words from Revd. Ruth Gray, Assistant Curate

Around ten years ago I found myself praying a simple prayer at a time when I had come to a spiritual crossroads in my life. That prayer was simply 'Use me Lord'. Little did I know that ten years down the line it would lead to me being a priest in the Church of England, and a Curate here in the Benefice of St Thomas'. It just goes to show the power of prayer, and that God has a plan for each one of us which is far beyond our own imaginations!



I am forever thankful that God has equipped me for the many changes that have happened over the past ten years and in particular that he called me here. There is a saying that 'it takes a village to raise a child', well I think there could be a case in point to say 'it takes a church community to *raise* a priest'.

From childhood I have always felt cared for, encouraged, supported and surrounded by prayer by my church community in Crewe, and over the almost two years of my curacy here I have felt that same care, encouragement, support and prayer; so a heartfelt thank you from me to you all.

It is hard to believe that I am almost two years into my curacy, and that it has been nearly a year since my ordination as a priest in Chester Cathedral. That day was one filled with a range of emotions, from a sense of disbelief that God had really called me to be a priest, which then led to elation during and after the ordination itself.

As I have grown in confidence into my priestly ministry I would like to share how good and beautiful it is to serve as a priest. However, I am a passionate believer that ministry belongs to everyone, that through baptism we all have a share in the ministry of Jesus. Therefore as his disciples we have a responsibility to live our lives for him and to play our part in

following his great commission to 'Go therefore and make disciples of all nations...' Matthew 28.19. This means sharing our love for Jesus through our words and actions within our daily lives and within our roles at church. There are many ways you can do this, from actively praying from home, volunteering within church on the Open church team, the cleaning team, at the Vantry, at the Hangout Hub, through Praise and Play or Little Sunbeams, or being on the welcome team on a Sunday morning, the list goes on and on.

Or you may wish to take it a step further. In this Diocese there is a vision to build up more leaders within our churches through a range of opportunities such as Children's and Family ministry or through the OWLs (Occasional Worship Leaders) a four-session course on how to lead parts of a service and worship. There is also the opportunity to learn more about the vocations of becoming a Reader, Pastoral Worker or training for ordained ministry. The two-part Foundations for Ministry course helps with this discernment.

Several years ago my old Sunday school teacher shared his wise words on leadership through his knowledge of geese, explaining that as they fly in the 'V' formation the lead bird only does so for a while. As it tires there is always another bird within that 'V' that can step in and lead, this continues with each bird playing their part in leading within that group.

Sometime next year I will be flying to pastures new and my time as being part of that 'V' will come to an end, but it would be wonderful to leave knowing that there are some of you who feel ready to take flight and help lead worship and services at both churches.

Perhaps my main message is to encourage you to pray earnestly about how you can live your life as a disciple of Jesus as you are sent out to make more disciples, and perhaps the simplest prayer to pray is 'Use me Lord' then wait to see where it leads.

Yours in Christ, Ruth.

Financial Review of the Year 2024

Dear Friends,

The 2024 Accounts have been prepared on an Accruals basis so that income or expenses are recorded when the transaction occurs rather than when payment is made or received. As our total income is less than £250,000, we are not required legally to produce Accruals Accounts but have done so as it allows for more accurate comparisons month on month with the previous year. There are some categories where having prepared Accrual Accounts for the first year in 2023 there remains a distortion, for example in 2023 Hall Hire at both sites contained 13 months of receipts, in 2024 there are 12 months receipts and consequently it appears reduced in 2024. There have been no major works in the Parish in 2024 in contrast to the major St Mary Magdalene car park refurbishment in 2023, but we continue to be impacted by rising running costs largely related to energy costs.

Our total receipts are £230,909 and total expenses are £227,003 with an overall surplus of £3,905 compared to a deficit of £10,373 in 2023, resulting from the Car Park refurbishment at St Mary Magdalene which continues to be an asset for our Parish and the local community.

Parish Finances are a team effort. Linda Latham continues as Bookkeeper maintaining all the computerised Finance Coordinator records and provides a 'second authority' for all our financial transactions. Joanne Ridley, Reg Pritchard, Jackie Cole and Christine Bradshaw assist with the money counting every week, Simon Hutt takes the weekly banking to the Post Office and the Parish Office team provide invaluable admin support. Joanne Ridley is our Gift Aid Secretary and together we ensure we claim every penny of eligible tax recovery on donations. I am grateful for the dedicated work of the team and personally appreciate their support.

Geoff Bruce BSc. FCA has now completed 5 years as our Independent Examiner providing this service free of charge and we remain most grateful to Geoff for his time, guidance, and expertise. I am particularly pleased that he has agreed to 'one more year.' In addition, Geoff provides oversight of our financial processes. He 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 produce and present a formal 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 detailing the responsibilities of Trustees, 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.

The format of the accounts presented is unchanged from 2023. 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 the statement of Financial Activities, 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 continues to operate a small deficit. 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 3 of the accounts. We have also agreed to manage the finances of the Little Sunbeams toddler group within the accounts as a restricted fund going forward to 2025. Agency funds, also detailed on page 3, 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 organist from weddings and funerals and charity donations such as the Children's Society Christingle candles, proceeds from 'noisy collections,' Macmillan Coffee morning and Present Aid.

Our total receipts for 2024 are £230,909 compared to £288,139 in 2023 a reduction of £57,230. However, in 2023 we received grants to the Car Park Fund of £66,800 and specific donations for this project of £9,485, when these are taken into consideration our general receipts have actually increased. Following the annual Thanksgiving Sunday Appeal 2023, we received pledged increases to Planned Giving from both congregations totalling £6,805. In effect Planned Giving has increased by £4,343 and although less than the amount pledged, each year we sadly lose generous donors from our congregations.

In 2024, without any specific major works, donations are increased by £5,251. We have received two large donations: £5,000 towards the repair of the clock at St Thomas' Church, Warrington Borough Council contributing a further £5000 making the project cost neutral to the Parish and £5000 towards the cost of a new piano in St Thomas' Church, we received a further £1500 towards the piano again making the purchase cost neutral. We have also benefitted from an increase in use of the Card Reader being available for donations accounting for £3030 in 2024 compared to £1862 in 2023 which may also explain cash Plate Collections being reduced by £1,470.

There has been a corresponding increase in Recovered Tax receipts. We make considerable effort within the Parish to ensure that all giving is tax efficient wherever possible. If you are a UK taxpayer giving to the Parish and have not completed a Gift Aid declaration, please contact me. In 2023 our total Gift Aid claimed was £30,904 which, due to the introduction of the Accruals Accounting system was for 5 quarters. It is noteworthy that in 2024 with only 4 quarters of Gift Aid our total receipts are £33,757. A successful Listed Places of Worship VAT repayment claim for eligible works to the clock and in the Tower of £2834 contributes to this.

Investment income is increased by £2136 entirely due to favourable Bank Interest rates and we continue to benefit from a previous decision to move funds into CCLA (CBF) Deposit Account where we receive a higher interest rate. Total interest on this account alone in 2024 is £4611.

Although Hall hire at both St Thomas' Church Hall and St Mary Magdalene are reduced by £1805 and £1185 respectively as I have alluded to above, this is due to a distortion of 2023 Hall Hire income where, because of the introduction of Accrual Accounting system, we received 13 months of Hall Hire income and in 2024 we received 12 months. The PCC reviews hall hire rates annually

introducing small rental rate increases and both venues are very busy with bookings. Thanks are due to Peter Speed, St Thomas Church Hall Booking Secretary and Julie Bennion, Booking Secretary for St Mary Magdalene who work hard to ensure our halls are busy, safe and welcoming.

We raised £8247, after costs, through various fundraising Fund-raising events. Highlights in 2024 were an Evening with the Violin featuring Simon Coombs with Cheese and Wine in February; a catered fun quiz in April set by Julie Bennion; Pick a Prize raffle on the Festival field; Music for a Summer's evening concert with Melody Makers and young people from Sixpence Voice Studio; Afternoon Tea in July, Harvest Supper with Ceilidh in October; a very successful Christmas Fair collaborating and sharing profits with our Church School; A Musical Soiree featuring the Warrington String Quartet and members of our church in November and Golborne brass concert welcoming Christmas. Fund raising proceeds were reduced after costs, in 2024 by £2626, there have not been any 'Parish wide' fundraising events in 2024 like the Parable of the Talents event in 2023 or Vicar Michael's sponsored abseil. In addition to Fundraising, the FRASM team also work hard providing refreshments (cake in particular!) for celebrations like Ruth's first Holy Communion Service and Michael's 40th Anniversary Celebration. FRASM team members also hosted a free Pancake Party for children and families and the Macmillan Coffee morning raising £1143 in 2023. We are also grateful to Ann and Mick Jackson, Julie Bennion and all supporters of the Parish 100 club for donations of £1,500 in 2024.

Grants are reduced by £64,454 entirely due to the large car park grants received in 2023.

We did receive a grant from 'Brakes' via Transforming Lives Together of £2496 for the Mission projects we undertake: fun lunches, Christmas and Easter bags. Our collaboration with local schools is now well established and we provided 149 Easter gift bags and 137 Christmas bags of food with 2 full days of food providing 2620 meals plus fruit, fresh vegetables and treats. A total of 8 free fun lunches in school holidays took place providing over 289 hot meals all freely produced by members of the FRASM team. These are lunch events with Christian themed activities, Bible stories, videos, songs and crafts, we are grateful to Ruth for her help. With the Pastoral Care Team 60 Easter and 60 Christmas Cheer bags were distributed to older vulnerable or isolated people within our congregation and community. In addition to the grant of £2496 from Brakes we received donations from our congregations of £1254 attracting £331 in Gift Aid Tax recovery to support the Mission Project work. The church 'Kindness Group' is also part of the mission work of the church and in 2024 we took 18 floral gifts /plants, 18 cakes and 2 meals to members of our congregations and community – showing and sharing God's love.

In 2023 our total expenditure was £298,513, however £118,395 related to St Mary Magdalene Car park costs leaving £180,118 as general Parish expenditure. In 2024 our total expenditure is £227,003 without any major works. In effect therefore our general Parish expenditure has increased. Before we consider any other costs, we are obliged to pay £75,344 Diocesan Parish Share to Chester Diocese. This is our contribution for the cost of our Vicar-including his stipend and pension contributions, and training for future clergy. This increased by £3588 from £71,756 in 2023 to £75,344. We also paid £30 to Bridgewater Churches Together, no Deanery Contribution was required in 2024.

Running costs have increased across both churches by £8562 the major contribution to this is from increased gas costs following the end of 3-year fixed rate gas contracts in both churches during 2023. In 2023 the cost of gas, electricity and water across both churches was £16,626 in 2024 it is £25,027. Gas costs alone have increased by £8,740. St Thomas Church Hall has continued to benefit from a 4-year fixed rate gas contract which ends in 2025, and gas costs have been stable £2876 in 2023 and £2957 in 2024 contributing to comparatively stable running costs in the Church Hall.

General 'cost of living' and inflationary increases account for the increases in Support costs and some of the increase in Church Maintenance and Repairs costs. In addition, the PCC elected to contribute £5000 from General Fund towards the restricted Bells Fund to facilitate the installation of heating in the ringing chamber and an upgrade to the Tower Electrics, the Bells Fund meeting the remaining costs to a total of £5,904. Similarly Worship costs are affected by inflationary pressures although we have also seen increased music costs to support the development of the Choir and music within St Thomas' Church from £998 in 2023 to £1,725 in 2024. The increase in Church equipment costs relates to the purchase of the new piano for St Thomas' church costing £7,699 which was supported by the donations mentioned previously. Vicarage costs are increased by £1,648 these are due to general inflationary pressures, rise in council tax and water rates and a PCC decision to support some kitchen refurbishment to the value of £1000. St Mary's house expenditure is reduced as there has not been any significant work undertaken following the complete redecoration in 2023

The PCC again fulfilled the obligation to Christian outreach in our 'Outward Giving' Parish Policy which is to give away 10% of our disposable income. We allocated £11,936 based on our disposable income into General fund in 2024. This was distributed between Overseas Mission, Home Mission, and Secular Charities.

£10,875 in donations are 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, £1000 to Broomfield's Youth Project, £500 to St Joseph's Family Centre, £750 to St Rocco's and £700 to St Thomas' School of which £500 was towards distinctiveness, £800 to Warrington Youth for Christ, and £200 to support the Creamfields Church tent, £270 to the Christian Aid Gaza appeal and £250 to Warrington Foodbank and a small amount of bank charges. A further £500 was given to the church Mission Project. Listed in the Memorandum Analysis - Charity Agency Summary are all the other collections or donations received and paid out to charities throughout 2023.

We have maintained a healthy cash at bank and in hand figure of £133,800 unrestricted funds, £3413 designated funds and £11,506 restricted funds. Following our annual Thanksgiving Sunday appeal we have received increased regular planned giving pledges of £5000 and £2,400 in new pledges. This increased income will help sustain us through the price increases in 2025, particularly the energy costs. Last year I mentioned that St Thomas' Church being 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. Some progress has been made during 2024 with digital surveys, heating appraisals, Architect and Quantity Surveyor input. Having had an initial unsuccessful 'Expression of Interest' to National Heritage Lottery Fund we have since had encouraging conversations with them and hope to resubmit in June 2025. This work will only be able to be undertaken with successful Grant Applications and funding as it is likely to cost £1,600,000 and we will be required to find 10% of these costs. Consequently, your PCC has already allocated £80,000 of unrestricted funds for this work. Other grant applications and major fundraising will also be required.

It is a privilege to serve as your Treasurer and be part of the leadership team of the church both in Standing Committee and PCC. I have worked very closely with both our Church Wardens, and it feels pertinent to acknowledge here the tremendous contribution they have made over the last six years to the life of our Parish and thank them personally for their support to me in my role, I am sure we all wish them well for the future. Finally, without financial stability we would not be able to do most of the things mentioned in this review to further the Kingdom in Stockton Heath and Appleton. Thank you to everyone who gives sacrificially to the work of our Parish, financially and through giving of their time and talents.

Sue Burke
Parish Treasurer

Church Wardens' Report

St Thomas and St Mary Magdalene

Dear Friends,

Reflecting on 2024, it seems to have been a busy year again for both of our churches of St Thomas' and St Mary Magdalene's. Spring cleaning started early at St Thomas with a tidy up of the choir vestry; choir robes were donated to a church on the Wirral and the



cupboard space was rationalised using donated cupboards from the food bank. We also welcomed a team of volunteers from Capula in March who spent a day, tidying the graveyard and cleaning all the high awkward places including the clock housing in the tower. At St Mary's we've had several Saturday morning clean ups to mend chairs, scrub skirting boards (and share cakes!)

Music has played a large part in 2024, in February we welcomed Simon Coombs from Capula, who gave us all a wonderful insight into the history and versatility of the violin. The choir led by Keiko and assisted by Ian has meant an added dimension to the worship and special occasions like the Carol Service. We have also been fortunate in acquiring through a donation a new piano.

Mission always remains central to our church fellowship and many attended 'Growing Good' in the spring led by the Rev Ruth. The course encouraged us to evaluate what we do and could be doing and its action plan formed the basis of new initiatives especially our mission with children and young people.

They bring their differing perspectives to our deepening knowledge of God and how He is working in our day to day lives. At St Thomas's the family-focused 'Come to the Table' services have provided a brilliant avenue for some of our wonderful young people to take responsibility for leading and teaching our grown ups – learning together has been a real privilege in our church family. And as ever, the tech is both a blessing and a curse at both churches as we continue to try and make our worship and services as accessible as we can. We are really grateful to everyone who helps in preparing power point slide decks, streaming, 'clicking' and keeping us sane as we deal with the quirks and foibles of our systems.

Maintaining the fabric of St Thomas is an ongoing process. Unfortunately, in April we had a break-in, the alarm saved us but we did need a new window which thanks to some skilled workmanship matches the current glass. New electrics were installed in the Tower so our bell ringers are secure and warm and in October the clock was finally returned after an extensive repair- how good it was to hear its chime.

Whilst not as 'challenging' as St Thomas's, at St Mary Magdalene's we've had a few plumbing related challenges this year, from frozen pipes and occasionally reluctant heating to a significantly blocked drain due tree roots. The SMAG team have been amazing in stepping in and getting things done when Mel has been unable to due to work commitments. What a team.

Every year brings some cause to celebrate and this year was no exception, in June a number went to support the Rev Ruth when she was priested at the Cathedral and a few weeks later we celebrated with some of his former parishioners, the Rev Michael's 40th anniversary as a priest – a lot of cake was consumed during those weeks!

Thanks to a kind offer from Capula, we edited and upgraded the booklet showing the war graves in the churchyard and the local Brownies used these to place wooden crosses on these graves for Remembrance Sunday. The Eco team has continued to work with WASH, (Wild about Stockton Heath) and is accruing evidence to apply for the Rocha Gold Award.

Finally we cannot finish without saying what a huge privilege it has been to serve you all for the last 6 years as churchwardens. Change can be unsettling but we are confident that you will continue to support with your prayers and time the incoming people who will take over the roles.

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	The Choir
Bellringing	Open Church
Eco Church	Cleaning
Church Duties	Office work
Home Visits	Praise and Play

Annual Report of the Safeguarding Officer 2024

The safeguarding policy for the Parish of St Thomas and St Mary Magdalene Churches is the Church of England 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 continue 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 Diocesan requirement that safeguarding training should also be undertaken by PCC Members, Sunday School Teachers and Group Leaders continues. PCC members must also undertake Safer Recruiting and Domestic Abuse Training. This too is mandatory, and the training will take place after the APCM to allow for any changes on the PCC. This is also an ongoing process and is monitored regularly. This will apply to anyone taking on one of these or other appropriate roles in the future.

No issues were reported during 2024 but advice and support has been readily available whenever required.

Thanks go to everyone who has willingly complied to the regulations and guidelines, thus helping to keep our Congregations, volunteers and friends safe.

The Safeguarding Officers are:

St Thomas': Dorothy Carter



St Mary's: Julie Bennion



Both have up-to-date DBS clearance and training.

Anyone having any concerns about people of any age within our Churches should contact their Safeguarding 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.

Dorothy Carter.
Julie Bennion.

Lead Recruiter/Safeguarding Officer—St. Thomas'
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 2024 meetings were held at Christ Church Latchford, Lymm St Mary's, St Thomas's Stockton Heath and St Matthew's Stretton. At each meeting the treasurer gave a brief finance report.

Meetings outlined updates on 'The vision and strategy for the Diocese of Chester.' Funding for 2025 is being looked into. Initially trials in 4 areas are being led by Mike Gilbertson for which funding became available.

Meetings are an opportunity for Parish sharing e.g mental health training provision. The deanery successfully take a collaborative approach.

Synod allows us to hear how other churches are reacting to these challenges and to share ideas.

The Revd Bev Jameson of St Mary's Lymm is the rural dean.

St Thomas' and St Mary's representatives for 2024 were Dorothy Carter, Jenny Corroboy and Sue Burke. Deanery Synod representatives attend meetings on behalf of the Parish and report back to PCC. The Parish is represented by Julie Brown, pastoral worker. 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 ***Deanery Synod Representatives***

Electoral Roll

A completely new Electoral Roll has been generated in 2025.

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 £22,000 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 2024 to 31 December 2024

	Unrestricted funds	Designated funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds	Total funds	Prior year total funds
Income and endowments from:						
Donations and legacies						
Planned Giving	88,090	475	1,117	0	89,682	85,339
Plate Collections	17,192	0	0	0	17,192	18,662
Recovered tax	32,485	1,068	202	0	33,757	30,904
Legacies	0	0	0	0	0	0
Donations	26,777	4,189	904	0	31,870	26,619
Income from charitable activities						
Fund Raising	14,360	0	0	0	14,360	16,607
Other trading activities	0	0	0	0	0	0
Investments	4,704	0	15	0	4,720	2,584
Other income	2,916	0	0	0	2,916	2,483
St Mary's House Rent	0	0	0	0	0	2,600
St Thomas' Church Hall Hire	14,789	0	0	0	14,789	16,594
St Mary's Hall Hire	11,253	0	0	0	11,253	12,438
PCC Fees	7,655	0	0	0	7,655	6,140
Grants	0	2,496	217	0	2,713	67,167
Diocesan fees	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total income	220,224	8,228	2,456	0	230,909	288,139
Expenditure on:						
Raising funds	5,732	0	381	0	6,113	5,734
Expenditure on charitable activities						
Diocesan Parish Contribution and Deanery	75,374	0	0	0	75,374	71,786
Clergy Costs	2,807	0	0	0	2,807	2,810
Youth Worker Costs	63	0	1,409	0	1,472	1,934
Church Running costs	42,421	0	117	0	42,538	33,976
Church Maintenance / Repairs	11,599	0	6,048	0	17,647	8,904
Church equipment purchase	10,454	0	0	0	10,454	1,340
Church Hall Running Costs	17,235	0	0	0	17,235	15,123
Church Hall Maintenance / repairs	2,025	0	0	0	2,025	1,496
Mission Giving and donations	0	0	10,870	0	10,870	10,200
Worship Costs	10,312	0	385	0	10,698	7,597
Churchyard costs	0	0	0	0	0	60
Support Costs	7,018	2,356	0	0	9,375	6,895
Vicarage costs	5,303	0	0	0	5,303	3,655
Other expenditure	254	4,242	64	0	4,561	4,570
St Mary's House	3,155	0	0	0	3,155	4,366
Major works	7,370	0	0	0	7,370	118,060
Total expenditure	201,129	6,598	19,275	0	227,003	298,513
Gains / losses on investment assets	0	0	0	0	0	0
Net income / (expenditure) resources before transfer	19,094	1,630	(16,819)	0	3,905	(10,373)
Transfers						
Gross transfers between funds - in	638	500	18,074	0	19,213	56,420
Gross transfers between funds - out	(18,074)	0	(1,138)	0	(19,213)	(56,420)
Other recognised gains / losses						
Gains on revaluation, fixed assets, charity's own use	0	0	0	0	0	0
Net movement in funds	1,658	2,130	116	0	3,905	(10,373)
Reconciliation of funds						
Total funds brought forward	132,141	1,283	11,390	0	144,814	155,187

There may be minor discrepancies in the totals if the pence are not being shown

17 March 2025 Page 1

	Unrestricted funds	Designated funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds	Total funds	Prior year total funds
Total funds carried forward	133,800	3,413	11,506	0	148,720	144,814

St Thomas' Church Stockton Heath

Balance sheet (Summary)

As at: 31 December 2024

	As at 31/12/2024	As at 31/12/2023
	£ ½	£ ½
Current assets		
Debtors	11,561	6,991
Cash at bank and in hand	149,176	145,586
	<u>160,737</u>	<u>152,577</u>
Liabilities		
Creditors: Amounts falling due in one year	12,016	7,762
Net current assets less current liabilities	<u>148,720</u>	<u>144,814</u>
Total assets less current liabilities	<u>148,720</u>	<u>144,814</u>
Total net assets less liabilities	<u>148,720</u>	<u>144,814</u>
Represented by		
Unrestricted		
Unrestricted - General fund	133,800	132,141
Designated		
Designated - ST MM Car Park	(465)	(746)
Designated - Mission Projects	3,879	1,654
Designated - Visranthi Trust	0	376
Restricted		
Restricted - Bells fund	1,632	2,413
Restricted - Grants Fund	1,148	1,312
Restricted - Little Sunbeams	0	0
Restricted - St Mary's Flower Fund	307	323
Restricted - Parish Charities fund	1,331	270
Restricted - Parish Family Fund	7,086	7,070
Restricted - Prom Praise	0	0
Restricted - Agency collection	0	0
Funds of the church	<u>148,720</u>	<u>144,814</u>

There may be minor discrepancies in the totals if the pence are not being shown

Notes to Accompany the Accounts 2024

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 £12,520.43 for December 2024 (£11912.31 for December 2023)

3. In addition the PCC own the following non sacred buildings: St Mary's house Insurance valuation January 2025 £263,603 & St Thomas Church Hall Insurance valuation January 2024, £1,176,437

5. The PCC has a Reserves Policy and held £22,000 reserves in 2024

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	376	3866	4242	0	0
Mission Project fund	1654	4081	2356	500	3879
St Mary Magdalene Car Park fund	-746	281	0	0	-465
Total	2030	8228	6598	500	3414
Restricted Funds					
Charities	270	0	10875	11936	1331
War graves	1312	217	381	0	1148
Flowers	323	370	386	0	307
Parish Family fund	7070	1485	1469	0	7086
Gain on investment asset					
Bells Fund	2413	384	6165	5000	1632
Total	<u>11388</u>	<u>2456</u>	<u>19276</u>	<u>16936</u>	11504
Memorandum analysis					
Church acting as an agent		Bal b/fwd	Receipts	Payments	Bal C/ fwd
Diocesan fees for weddings and funerals		360	7923	7448	835
Other fees- vergers/ organist/choir		525	4060	4370	215
Retired/visitng clergy fee		0	0	0	0
Total		<u>885</u>	<u>11983</u>	<u>11818</u>	1050
Charity Agency Summary					
Christian Aid Gaza		0	625	619	6
Children's society		1042	792	1042	792
foodbank		0	226	3	223
Present Aid		300	580	0	880
Warrington Youth For Christ		0	98	98	0
Macmillan Cancer Support		0	1143	1143	0
USPG		25	555	580	0
DEC Earthquake		56	0	56	0
Total		<u>1423</u>	<u>4019</u>	<u>3541</u>	<u>1901</u>
Total Agency fund					2951



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 2024

Charity no
(if any)

1131459

Set out on pages

1 - 5

Responsibilities and
basis of report

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above
charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31 December 2024

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:

25/3/2025,

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

**DRAFT —Minutes of the Vestry Meeting
For the year January 1st to December 31st 2023
Held on Sunday 21st April 2024 at St Thomas' Church
10:45am**

The number present at the meeting was 73

The Minutes of the Vestry Meeting held in 2023 had been circulated and were accepted

Election of Church Wardens:

Nominated	Proposed	Seconded	Approved
Sheila Barton	Sue Burke	L Heesom	Unanimously
Melanie Wilson	Lee Marsh	Carol Bridger	Unanimously

Church Warden Remarks (Sheila Barton)

Sheila spoke and expressed the Wardens' 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, with thanks to all of those who are on the church rota.

Sheila also thanked Michael for all his support, Carol Bridger and Joanne for all their work in the Church Office, Sue Burke for all her efforts as our hard-working Treasurer. She also thanked Simon Hutt for his work in revising of the Electoral Roll.

Sheila said that both her and Mel are looking forward to the next year in role and that it's a real joy and privilege to serve as Church Warden.

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

The Vestry meeting closed at 11:15am.

DRAFT—Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting
For the year January 1st to December 31st 2023
Held on Sunday 21st April 2024 at St Thomas' Church
at 11:15am

The number present at the meeting was 73

The Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting held in 2023 had been circulated and were accepted.

Chairs Remarks: (Rev. Michael Ridley)

Michael thanked the congregation and noted what a great joy it is to be Vicar here, as he is approaching his 40th year in service, and that he is looking forward to becoming a grandfather. Michael talked about how well the Churches were doing and thanked everyone concerned for all of their hard work.

Michael mentioned the Growing Good course that is starting, as a great opportunity to get involved with the work of the church and to further develop God's presence in the community. He encouraged people to get involved.

He said how fantastic it had been to have Ruth Gray with us and how much we are all looking forward to her Ordination at Chester Cathedral in June. Michael noted the importance of succession planning and is looking to the congregation to become the next Readers and Church Wardens.

Electoral Roll.

The previous electoral roll had closed and a revised one created for 2024/2025. At the time of this meeting there were 217 names on the roll.

Annual Reports.

The Annual Reports had been circulated prior to the meeting.

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

Election to Deanery Synod

On this occasion there were no elections to Deanery Synod. Jenny Corroboy gave a brief update on Deanery Synod meetings attended within the year.

Elections to the Parochial Church Council.

Thanks were expressed to all members of the PCC for their loyal input. Elections were as follows. There was just one place to be filled, as a re-election because of three-year rotation rule.

Nominated		Proposed	Seconded	Approved
James Thornton	Re-election	Kris Bradshaw	Dorothy Carter	Unanimously

Appointment of Independent Examiner

Geoff Bruce was thanked for all his hard work on the accounts and re-appointed for the year 2024

Proposed S Burke. **Seconded** D Carter. **Voted** Unanimously

Safeguarding

Dorothy Carter gave a short update on safeguarding, noting that advice and training on safeguarding is available to all volunteers in the church. Dorothy asked for the congregation to let us know if they feel anyone is at risk of safeguarding issues, but that there had been no areas of concern during 2023.

The meeting closed at 12:00 Noon

**The first PCC Meeting will be at St Thomas' Church, Tuesday 21st May 2024
at 7:30 pm**

Kris Bradshaw (PCC Secretary)

Signed Rev. M L Ridley.....

Date 21st April 2024

Date 21st April 2024