

St Bartholomew's, Thurstaston with St Chad's Irby



MISSION AND ACTIVITIES IN 2023



Members of the PCC 2023-2024

Revd J Turner	Rector
Mrs E Whitehead	Warden to April 2023
Mr C Smale	Deanery Synod 2023 – 2026
Mrs E Barton	Elected 2021 – 2024
Mr R Jackson	Elected 2021 – 2024
Mr J Oliver	Elected 2021 – 2024
Mr C Williams	Elected 2021 – 2024
Mrs P Neil	Elected 2022 – 2025
Mrs E Whitehead	Elected 2023 – 2025
Mr G Barley	Elected 2023 – 2026
Mrs J Trigg	Elected 2023 – 2026
Mrs J DeBooder	Elected 2023 – 2026
Ms C Goddard	Co-opted May 2023 – 2024

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The Rector's Report

When I sat down to write this report in the first week of January 2024, I wondered what on earth I was going to say. My memory of the year was one full of challenges and sadnesses. But as always, when I took the time to look back and properly reflect, I was reminded of God's amazing love and graciousness.

As a church community we have done so much and fulfilled many of the goals that we set around Community, School and Prayer.

We took part in the Diocesan Vision Process, with a Vision Café at the end of January and an evening making fish for the art installation at the Cathedral in May.

We have welcomed seven families into church for baptism. We celebrated the joy of marriage with four couples. And we have grieved with eighteen families who were bereaved. We have prayed for countless numbers of people who have been ill (long term and short term).

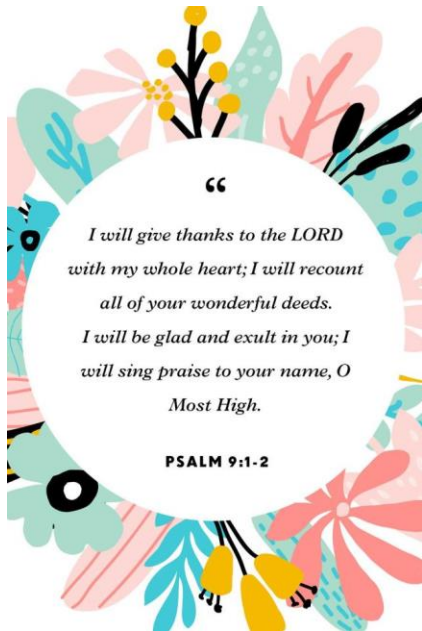


We began the year with a wonderful community event and raising money for Guide Dogs (keep your eyes peeled for another Guide Dog event in 2024!). Later in the year we had a wonderful session learning about the work of Blood Bikes. Of course, the biggest community event in 2023 was celebrating the coronation of King Charles III. And you will read further on in the Annual Report of the Heart Bomb, the scarecrow festival, Christmas Bazaar, Summer Saturdays and monthly socials. It has been a joy and a blessing to be looking outwards from our church doors and doing lots of things which have enabled us to engage with the community which we are here to serve.

The links between church and school have been growing this year. Several members of our congregation were involved with Interfaith week and others have been supporting children with one-to-one reading and DT projects. It was a great delight to me today to meet some Year 6 children as I was coming out of the post office, they thanked me for helping them with their DT project of making Christmas stockings. It was genuine thankfulness initiated by them, several weeks on from the project, and I was really moved by the interaction with these boys. The hope of the "Growing Faith" project is to make connections between church, school and home. We have made a really good start with this, and I hope and pray that we will be able continue growing these relationships.



Another highlight of the Year was our Lent Talks, which were very informative. It was good to think together about “big Issues” and to discuss how our faith impacts the way in which we view these issues. Learning together continued with Christianity Explored and Discipleship Explored Courses.



It was wonderful to welcome Ailsa as associate minister right at the end of the year. We look forward to seeing how this develops, as we find ways to support her in her role as Army chaplain, and as we benefit from what she is able to offer to us as a parish.

As I reflected on 2023, I was drawn to Psalm 9:1-2 "I will give thanks to the LORD with my whole heart; I will recount all of your wonderful deeds. I will be glad and exult in you; I will sing praise to your name, O Most High."

May each of us be inspired this coming year to take time to reflect on where God is at work and to be thankful for all that God gives us. Once a week or once a month, can you build in some time to reflect? I was amazed by how much I had forgotten, and

delighted by taking the time to reflect and discover that God was walking alongside me in the challenges, and that there were so many more wonderful things to be thankful for!

Revd Jane Turner

Electoral Roll Report

At the APCM in 2023, the roll contained 151 members from 101 households. During the past year, 1 addition was made (agreed by PCC in May 2023) and 7 members have been deleted from the roll.

During recent revisions I added 3 new members who applied to join. The Electoral Roll now has 148 members from 100 households.

Helen Williams

Report on the Business of the PCC in 2023

The PCC met 7 times in 2023 and dealt with one matter via email, the acceptance of Ms Goddard on to the electoral roll following her attendance at church during the previous six months, and her co-option on to the PCC.

Church Services

At the All Age services at St Chad's café-style worship was trialled in between February and July. The congregation was asked to comment on these services. Replies were varied including some negative responses. The preference was for a service with small tables at the end of some rows holding activities for the children to do, which related to the content of the service. It was suggested that musical instruments be available for the children with the possibility of including a song with actions that the children could join in.

Christmas 2022 attendance figures were reviewed to inform the pattern for services at Christmas 2023, while endeavouring to provide services which met the needs of regular worshippers and those who attended at this festive time. Fewer services were offered in 2023 due to low attendance at some services in 2022, and because Christmas Day fell on a Monday.

Ministry Support

Revd Jane submitted a request to the Diocese for a curate, not expecting a favourable response because of the parish not being in a position to pay full parish share and the potential cost of supporting a curate. The Diocese offered a Self-Supporting Curate and the PCC discussed the financial implication of such an appointment. As the cost of ministry would not need to be met by the parish as the person would be self-supporting and only expenses would need to be paid, the PCC agreed to this appointment. The curate will be with the parish for three years from June 2024.

The PCC had also received a request to receive a Self-Supporting Minister to be licensed to the parish, to which the PCC unanimously agreed. The Revd Ailsa Whorton, a padre with 1st The Queen's Dragoon's Guards wanted to be rooted in a parish in the Diocese to retain her personal balance. Ailsa will be at home for one weekend each term and could therefore lead one service a term, and she will also be available in the summer for a couple of weeks unless she is recalled by the Army. Ailsa was licensed to the parish on 18 December by Bishop Julie Conalty in the church of St Bartholomew.

Vacancies in the Church Council

Following the APCM, vacancies for Churchwardens, a Treasurer, three Deanery Synod members and seven members of the PCC remained unfilled. Ms Goddard joined the PCC as a co-opted member in May 2023 when she became eligible to go on the Electoral Roll.

The vacancy of Treasurer has remained unfilled all year, with the responsibility for finance being covered by Mrs Butler taking on payroll officer as well as her other financial responsibilities with the support of the Finance Sub-Committee.

The responsibilities of Churchwardens were discussed and individual members of the PCC agreed to take on specific areas of the role. Four members of the PCC agreed to be trained in leading a Lay Service of the Word – Mr C Smale, Mr R Jackson, Mrs J DeBoorder, Ms C Goddard – in the event that the Rector should be taken unwell at short notice it would be possible to offer a service of the word at short notice.

PCC "Reset"

The three areas of Community, School and Prayer have been progressed building on the work undertaken in 2022.

1) Community

Community Outreach

Following the winding up of EMU, the Community Outreach group has worked hard to run a monthly event open to members of the parish and community with all events being advertised more widely in the community. The focus of events have been varied to be attractive to all.

The biggest event of the year was the party to celebrate the coronation of King Charles III in May. Details of the range of events can be found in the report on page 12.

Warm Hub

As spring arrived, regular guests at Warm Hub showed an interest in it being continued beyond the winter months. It is a space where individuals enjoy company and a chat over a drink and biscuit. It was agreed that it would continue as a weekly community event throughout the year. A grant of £1000 was received against running costs in 2023. See page 10

2) School – Growing Faith

Dawpool School

The school recognised that there was a resource in terms of support to hear children read and help with craft work within the congregation. A detailed report on activities can be found in the report on page 18.

3) Prayer

The prayer room continues to be used regularly for Morning Prayer. Prayer requests left on the Prayer Tree periodically are included in Morning Prayer.

Finance

Banking – The PCC has accounts with CAF (Charities Aid Foundation) Bank, and Mrs Butler had been able to deposit income with HSBC. Due to the closure of the nearest branch in Bromborough in July 2023, depositing monies has been very difficult. CAF has been trying to establish a relationship with the Post Office so that banking can be done there, but despite numerous telephone calls this possibility has not yet been confirmed. In the interim of this happening members of the Finance Committee have taken it in turns to go to Chester to make deposits at HSBC in Chester as any local branches of HSBC on the Wirral no longer have a till service.

The PCC agreed to increase the payment of Parish Share to 48%.

Receipt of a donation from a parishioner was spent on two sets of prayer cards – one set in each church, and two packs of books of 'Daily Prayers for the Coronation of King Charles III'.

The parish was notified of the resignation of the Payroll Officer, and Mrs Butler offered to step into this role when no other alternative had been found.

The Diocese offered free devices so that members of congregations could make immediate transfers to church accounts using credit and debit cards. There was already such a device at St Chad's having been donated by a member of the congregation.

At the November PCC meeting the Finance Committee was asked to review Mrs Butler's salary and the hourly rate for the cleaners. The outcome of this discussion falls outside the date of this Annual Report.

Energy Grant

Chester Diocese had been allocated a large payment by the Church Commissioners and the parish received £983.77 towards energy costs.

Safeguarding

This item has been on every PCC Agenda.

During the year there was a warning from the Diocese regarding someone who had been visiting Wirral churches to beg for money and who had stolen when visiting the venues. Thankfully this person did not visit our parish.

Fabric, Goods and Ornaments of the Churches

Churchwarden's Report

Matters discussed included the damage and repair to the churchyard wall at St Bartholomew's damaged in December 2022, the disposal of the Christmas Trees to St John's Hospice for a donation, and the eyebolts inspection at St Bartholomew's. See the Churchwarden's report on page 22.

Buildings and Churchyard Matters

The height of the yew trees at St Bartholomew's have been trimmed to allow light into the centre of the trees to promote internal regrowth to allow for the possibility for further retrenchment work in the future. The DAC also gave permission for the holly tree by the front porch at St Bartholomew's to be completely removed and the other holly tree at the front to be crowned.

The provision of a toilet facility at St Bartholomew's has been discussed throughout the year and the project is ongoing.

It was noted that the setting of the paving slabs at St Chad's by the main entrance made it possible for weeds to grow in between, and the paving slabs leading to the public pavement were uneven. Options are being explored on whether to lift and re-lay the slabs or whether to opt for another surface finish such as tarmac. This discussion is ongoing.

St Chad's was inspected for the use of Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) and the PCC was informed there is no evidence of it in the building.

Cheryl Goddard (Interim PCC Secretary)

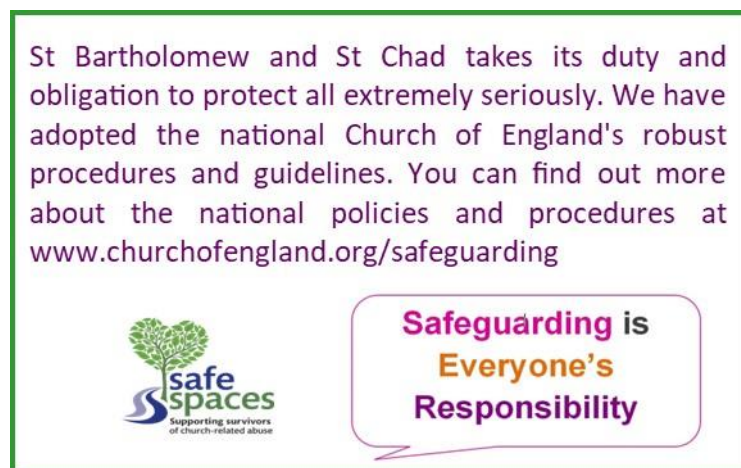
Activities of the Parish Generally

Safeguarding

We continue to promote safeguarding within the parish, ensuring that DBS checks and appropriate safeguarding training is undertaken and kept up to date for all in positions of responsibility (Churchwardens, PCC members, employees of the PCC, Bell Ringers, Junior Church Leaders and helpers, Tots and Tinies Leaders and helpers, Sidespeople, Sacristans, Servers, Refreshment Servers, Flower arrangers and Warm Hub Helpers.)

We have a dedicated email address safeguarding@thurstaston.org.uk and safeguarding information is displayed on the front page of our parish website.

The following image is printed on our weekly notice sheet, in the parish magazine, and on service sheets for one-off services.



During the year, the Rector made one safeguarding referral to social services regarding a vulnerable adult.

Revd Jane Turner
(on behalf of Mr Chris Williams – Parish Safeguarding Officer)

Junior Church

Junior Church has continued on a monthly basis throughout 2023 led by Dawn Rudd and Sally Partington. Attendance picked up in the second half of 2023, with a number of new young faces and parents in attendance. The age of children is generally in the pre-school bracket so we have organised activities suitable for this age group. Some themes explored this past year have included Jesus and the Children, The Lost Sheep, St George and the Dragon and Jesus turns water into wine. Sessions usually start with a simple Bible story and discussion with the

children and are followed by one or two crafts relating to this and sometimes even a song or two!

Sally Partington and Dawn Rudd

St Bartholomew Church Bell Ringers

We continue to ring the Church bells at Thurstaston for Sunday service and special occasions. We are an enthusiastic group who are willing to learn and are steadily improving our ringing. We now only ring on alternate weeks on a Sunday morning (due to the change in service patterns). We continue to meet on the other Sundays for coffee, chat and hand bell practice.

This year's ringing included a significant amount of ringing for the Coronation of HM King Charles III. Prior to the Coronation we rang the bells in celebration and were joined by the Mayor of Wirral, Cllr Jeff Green who rang for the first time. On this occasion we rang Rounds, Kings (when the bells ring in the order 5,3,1,2,4,6), Plain Bob and Grandsire Doubles. It was also noted that Richard Turner had first visited the bell tower with his father during the ringing for the Coronation of HM Queen Elizabeth II.



The band with Mayor and Lady Mayoress (Peter Robson taking the photograph)

We have started to use our bells for monthly Wirral Branch quarter peal attempts. This allows us an opportunity to learn more complex methods and this is reflected in this year's ringing;

Wednesday 1st March **$\frac{1}{4}$ Peal 1320 Kent Treble Bob Minor**

First quarter of Kent by Alice Pettit

Wednesday 5th April **$\frac{1}{4}$ Peal 1260 Doubles** (240 each of grandsire, Reverse Canterbury, St Martin's, St Simon's and 300 Plain bob doubles)

Rung after meeting short for minor

Thursday 27th April **Peal 5040 Surprise Minor** (Extents of London, Wells, York, Durham, Cambridge, Bourne and Norwich Surprise Minor)

Rung in celebration of the forthcoming Coronation of HM King Charles III

Rung by members of the Ancient Society of College Youths. 100th peal and 1st as Conductor with the Society for Peter Robson

Wednesday 3rd May **$\frac{1}{4}$ Peal 1320 Cambridge Surprise Minor**

Rung to celebrate the upcoming Coronation of HM King Charles III

Saturday May 6th **General ringing as noted above**

Rung by 12 members of our band and the Mayor prior to the Coronation of HM King Charles III

Wednesday 2nd August **$\frac{1}{4}$ Peal 1260 Plain Bob minor**

Rung as congratulations on the wedding of Sarah Robson and Joshua Hall on 27/7/23

Saturday 5th August **$\frac{1}{4}$ Peal 1296 Surfleet Surprise Minor**

Wednesday 16th August **$\frac{1}{4}$ Peal 1320 Thurstaston Doubles**

Rung in memory of Tony Fletcher whose funeral was today

400th quarter and 100th as Conductor – Peter Robson

Wednesday 6th September **$\frac{1}{4}$ Peal 1320 Surfleet Surprise Minor**

We enjoyed our Christmas meal in the New Year as usual. We met in February and had a wonderful evening with good food at The Mont Blanc in Irby.

We currently have 16 ringers but will always welcome more. You are welcome to come and see what we do and to join us (please ring first to confirm that we will be there).

Peter Robson

Warm Hub

When we opened Warm Hub on the first Tuesday in December 2022 it was our intention to only run it through the cold months. At our early sessions we had people who appeared once and didn't come a second time, but by February we had a steady attendance of people from within the church and community. While the objective of Warm Hub initially was to offer a warm place to save individuals having their heating on, the people attending came for companionship and conversation. While the initial months of Warm Hub were covered by three volunteers it was clear that to close Warm Hub would leave a gap in the social lives of those who were regulars, so a recruitment programme was carried out. We now have a volunteer team of a dozen or so individuals who cover the sessions on a rota basis.

With the local library closed we have a small library of books at the Hub which can be borrowed. We don't sign out or sign in returned books – everyone is welcome to borrow a book or even keep it. When additional books are added to our library, then we recycle some of the older books. Our 'library' has been very popular. There is a jigsaw board at the Hub with a jigsaw on the go at most sessions. We don't tend to bring it out if it is a session when we have a speaker booked. As our collection of jigsaws has grown we have also offered a jigsaw library service through the winter months.

During the summer it was decided that it would be interesting to invite speakers once a month, on the fourth Tuesday, and this does attract guests who may only come on one occasion or come because of the subject of the talk. Mr Alan Jones was our first speaker in September, and he entertained us with wonderful stories from his time as a teacher. Our speaker in October was Robert Kavanagh, the son of one of our regular attendees. His first career was as an actor and he shared with us the highs of some of the wonderful opportunities he had such as performing with the Royal Shakespeare Company to the lows of periods of having to earn an alternative income between roles. He eventually decided to go into teaching in order that he had a regular income. Our last speaker of the year was Helen Parkinson from Sunlight Bees and she talked to us about bee keeping, queen bees and making honey. We had samples of honey to taste, and she brought jars of honey to purchase. In December, our last session for the year was the third Tuesday of the month where we sang carols and volunteers provided a light lunch for everyone.

Warm Hub has opened on every Tuesday throughout the year with the exception of the Tuesday between Christmas and New Year. Our opening time was originally 9.00am to 12.30pm as it was thought that it might attract young Mums with toddlers after they had dropped off older children at school, but at no point did we have anyone from that age group attending, and so the opening time has been amended to between 9.30am and 12.30pm. We are registered with a couple of national organisations – Places of Welcome which operates under the Church Urban Fund and Warm Spaces which operates under Warm Welcome. Connect Us visited us during one of our sessions and on another occasion used our church as a base for a village door knocking exercise seeing if people within the village were in need of help while also promoting our Warm Hub. [Taken from their website: *'Connect Us' has been launched by Public Health with an underpinning objective of positive wellbeing interventions. Working with your local Community Connector can serve as that missing link for you to access the things you need in order for you to move forward and look to achieve your aspirations.*]

Susan Smale and Cheryl Goddard

TOTS & TINIES

By the end of 2023, we had 78 adults and 108 children registered for Tots and Tinies. Some of them come regularly, others pop in and out more haphazardly. On average we have between 30-40 children every week.

The sessions begin with free play and craft, followed by snack time and finally a story time and song all together. It is lovely to see the parents, grandparents, carers, and children engaging with each other.



We have enjoyed contributing to church window decorations. We enjoyed helping to plant trees in the garden. We loved exploring the Blood Bike.

Reverend Jane planned the craft activities and Bible stories for the year and comes every week to read at Storytime, this has been of great benefit. In the Spring term our sessions were based on stories Jesus told and enjoyed an Easter Egg hunt to end the term.



In the Summer Term we looked at Old Testament stories and enjoyed a Teddy Bears Picnic at the end of term. In the Autumn term we continued our Old Testament theme, and then spent several weeks learning about the different characters in the nativity story. Father Christmas came to visit us at our final session of the year.



It continues to be a great help having volunteers to provide Tea/Coffee and Juice throughout the session and clear up the Kitchen. This makes a huge difference to the tidying up at the end.

Thank you to everyone who plays a part in making this group so successful and welcoming to all who attend.

Allison Youds

Community Outreach and Social Events

In January a new committee was formed, the Evening Mother's Union (EMU) had its last Christmas meal together and the Community Outreach and Social committee was formed in its place. Together we have arranged a variety of monthly social events, on different days of the week and at weekends to hopefully provide something for all tastes and that appeal to the community too. We advertise events on ITPAS Notice boards and through church communications and Facebook. The committee was formed by the former members of the EMU under the wing of the PCC.

In **February** we had a Heart Bomb in Irby and the WI helped us hang hearts made by the congregation and WI in time for Valentine's Day all around Irby Village and we also hung hearts at St Chad's and St Bartholomew's Churches. Our ladies created some wonderful floral arrangements too. Tots and Tinies, Rainbows, Brownies, Guides and Dawpool School all got involved in making hearts for St Chad's windows. The sight of so many hearts all over the village and at both churches was uplifting, residents and shops joined in putting hearts in their front gardens and windows. It was a lovely event and many people commented how cheerful it made them feel and how the community felt stronger.





In **March** we had an enjoyable Crochet Evening learning a new skill.



In **April** we had the Merseyside and Cheshire Blood Bikes come to talk to us, with their Bikes on show and we raised money for their valuable service.

In **May** we held a Coronation Party Big Lunch for the community, a very popular fabulous event including planting trees, sowing wildflowers, bouncy castle, royal photo set, children's crafts, colouring competition, and a beautiful Coronation Cake.



In **June** we had a day out at Ness Gardens in the glorious sunshine. Everyone enjoyed the beautiful flowers and views and the picnic eaten in the shade.



Also in **June** we participated in the Scarecrow Festival with a variety of bugs and butterflies and intrepid bug catchers around the front garden at St Chad's and a Bee Keeper with run away bees in the back garden!



In **July** there was a trip to see Men In Sheds at Christ Church Higher Bebington. It was fascinating to hear how it all started and how many men it has benefitted. The visit finished with some homemade cake we had taken with us to share with the men.



In **July/August/September** the garden at St Chad's was ready for visitors. Many hands had worked together to re-new the bark chipping paths, re-lay uneven paving, weed, prune and plant. We opened up the gardens on Saturday mornings from the end of July to early September. Children's toys, crafts, drinks and snacks were available inside or outside depending on the weather. All ages mixed together and everyone enjoyed the company and beautiful surroundings.





In **August** we also had St *Beartholomew's* Day, in the lovely sunshine. A great event for families and friends to marvel at the parachuting teddies, eat delicious cake with a cuppa and generally have a great fun afternoon, helped along by children's raffle, pic'n'mix and lucky dip.

In **September** we had a compelling talk all about The Leprosy Mission and learnt all about the struggles and the hard work that goes into making things better for those affected by leprosy. We also raised money for this much needed cause with Bring and Buy and personal donations.

In **October** our favourite photographer Roger Ellison gave us another fascinating and enjoyable journey through the year with his amazing collection of images of wildlife and beautiful scenic views, plus we were able to purchase quality prints and cards.



In **November** we had the Christmas Bazaar. There were many local beautifully handcrafted goodies and we were able to support several charities. There were also homemade gorgeous cakes, an amazing raffle, children's crafts and games and Santa's Grotto. A popular event for the community and an enjoyable time had by all.



In **December** we provided children's Christmas Crafts and Games in the Evangelical Church Hall during the Irby Lights Switch On. A popular place for many families, in the warm and plenty to keep the children occupied.



THANK YOU to the many people involved in the success of these events and to everyone who supported them.

Julie DeBoorder



Dawpool Church of England Primary School

Dawpool joined Chester Diocesan Academies Trust (CDAT) on 1st February 2023. Dawpool is proud of its Church of England heritage in the Diocese of Chester since its foundation by Deed of 30th December 1865 - a Church of England history spanning over 150 years.

The PCC has been working with school on The Growing Faith Adventure. The Church of England Growing Faith Adventure provides an opportunity to make all our decisions through the lens of what this means for children, young people and families and to enable flourishing relationships between church, school and home.



The Three Growing Faith Principles are:-

- **Connected Communities** - faith grows in each of the three circles school, home and church. However, when faith grows in the intersections it will be stronger and life long.
- **Spiritual Encounters** - faith is enriched by encounters with God and through the sharing of personal stories.
- **Imaginative Practices** - finding new ways of exploring together to help make faith relevant to everyone.

Children in Year 3 undertook the Archbishop of York's Young Leaders Award which aims to:-



The children raised money for Guide Dogs for the Blind. They also put on a concert at St Chad's for school volunteers and older members of our community, followed by sharing a picnic together and showing some of their work books.

In the Autumn term, Dawpool began to use the "Questful RE" curriculum developed by Blackburn diocese which "promotes the explicit teaching of Christian concepts and God's big salvation story, therefore the content of this syllabus gives pupils a deeper understanding of Christianity. Through an open investigative enquiry approach pupils are given the opportunity to explore major religions and world views. The large number of questions included in each unit is a key feature of the syllabus. As pupils explore these questions they will discover more about themselves, their relationships with others, their relationship with the world around them and their relationship with God".



Throughout 2023, Revd Jane visited school every week, spending an hour over lunch with staff (checking out wellbeing, catching up with news, planning, etc) followed by an hour in a classroom – every year group was visited every term.

We also have a number of volunteers who visit school on a weekly basis listening to children read. Some people have helped out on an occasional basis – with DT projects, assisting with invigilating for SATS. And as a Church school we have volunteers who serve as Foundation Governors.

One of the highlights of 2023 was a number of church members and friends supporting Interfaith week in November. This really did make all of the connections across all of the intersections between church, school and home.

School received this lovely feedback from a parent:-

"Lovely initiative being drawn on the school windows looking into the playground today. I recognised the lady drawing it out from when *child* helped plant a tree at church for the Queens canopy. *Child* pointed out and said to her friend excited on way out of school 'look they're drawing our values!' She was pointing at Sikhism. When we lived in Leeds an MP Jo Cox was killed and she was quoted 'we have more in common than that which divides us' I think this was captured beautifully in today's drawings and it made me feel happy and hopeful, especially close to Remembrance Sunday. Thank you".

And a Thank you message from the school's RE lead teacher:-

"The window art has been a huge success and that is thanks to you. I would never have thought of this myself and it has had such an impression on the whole school community. Thank you for giving up your time and for supporting the children in such a lovely way as they drew. It is so nice to see the children admiring the windows and gathering around them to talk about what they can see. I think this will be the start of many more window art opportunities in the future!

Padma was such an inspiration to our pupils in Year 3 and 4. We couldn't have asked for anything more - Padma had so many fascinating items to share with the children and her lovely manner captured their attention. The children loved this opportunity to learn and be curious about Hinduism. Please pass on our thanks, it really was so special.

Also, we've had another email to tell us how a child was chatting away to her mum about everything she'd learned from Padma. The child then realised she'd lost her bindi and this led to her mum reaching out to a Hindu friend that she hadn't been in touch with for quite some time to arrange for a replacement one."

If you can give an hour each week to listen to children read, or you would like to take on the responsibility of being a Foundation Governor, or you would



occasionally be willing to support staff with an RE lesson (anything from sharing your favourite Bible story with the younger children, to sharing what difference faith makes in your life with older children), please speak to Revd Jane. These different gifts and skills all help to build the relationships between church and school.

Revd Jane

Charities

The Children's Society

For over 140 years the Society has worked to transform the lives and hopes of young people facing abuse, exploitation and neglect, supporting them through their most serious life challenges. The Society also campaigns tirelessly for the big social changes that will improve the lives of those who need hope most.

Jean Heath and **Barbara Kozer** co-ordinate fund raising for the Society in the Parish.

We held a Coffee Morning in March with craft stalls, bring and buy, raffle and Shoe-B-Do, which raised £720.36 and thanks go to all the stall holders and helpers and for the donations received and, of course, to all those who turn out to support this event.

In the Autumn, the House Boxes provided another source of income for the Society with a total of £943.33, an increase of nearly £60 over last year and we thank all boxholders for their generous support.

Jean held the Christingle-making event at her home this year and thanks to a wonderful turnout of helpers, the task was completed in record time, helped along with tea, coffee and mince pies and a lot of chat! We have Tesco to thank again for the supply of the oranges, cocktail sticks and sweets. The Christingles were given out at the lovely service at St Chad's on 17th December and also distributed within the Parish. A further £82.83 was raised for the Society.

Sincere thanks to all those who have contributed to the Children's Society in any way during the past year and we hope to have more opportunities to come together in 2024 to help those who need our support.

Jean Heath (648 6015)

The Leprosy Mission

Following The Leprosy Mission representative's talk in September, £960.40 was donated and including purchases from the Christmas catalogue. Donations came from the Bring and Buy on the evening of the talk, the Harvest donations and the rounding up of orders for items in the catalogue. The bulk order was just over 50% of the total amount. A copy of the Prayer Diary is in the Prayer Room and is used at Morning Prayer.

Cheryl Goddard

3rd Irby Brownies



The Brownies have continued to meet at St Chad's weekly and we have had another great year full of activities and fun.

The Brownies have been very busy this year completing guiding interest and challenge badges. We have had several girls achieve the highest programme award "Gold Award" again this year. This is a really special achievement and means that they fully completed the Brownie programme prior to moving up to Guides. We have had several girls go up to Guides this year.

We have had various overnight trips including a sleepover at The World Museum in Liverpool, PGL at Winmarleigh Hall and some evenings at the cinema and bowling. We have had several weekend trips also this year including a "Get Muddy" event in conjunction with the army, a science jamboree at Liverpool University, a craft day and a "Giant Coronation Tea Party".

We also attended a division event at Hadlow in the summer which was lots of fun and a nice way to celebrate the start of the summer break.

Anyone who has a particular interest or service which they think the Brownies would be interested to learn about please feel free to get in touch as we are always looking for new ideas for our meetings.

Lynn McCoy, Gemma Willerton

1st Thurstaston Guides



It has been a very different year for us at Guides because our numbers dropped to 6 at Easter last year. We had to make a big decision about what to do with our unit. We wanted to continue with our name and as our own group but it unfortunately wasn't financially viable to remain at St Chads. After much liaising with 2nd Irby Guides they agreed that we could join with them on a Monday night at the Methodist Church. We have

been together now for the last 2 terms but we do hope that as numbers begin to rise again we will be able to return to St Chads.

We have had a great year with many indoor and outdoor activities, including a weekend away at the Wallasey Guide HQ where Jude (leader from 2nd Irby Guides) was working towards her going away license. It was a great weekend, giving the 2 units an opportunity to get to know each other better and included a trip into Liverpool to the Quirky Quarter and up St Johns Tower.

We have had quite a few chippy walks which the girls love and it's an added incentive too – our favourites this year have been a night walk to West Kirby, a heads/tails walk around Irby and a beautiful summers evening walk to Parkgate. We had a great evening at the Drill trampolining centre in Birkenhead, where one of our instructors remembers Rev Jane fondly from when she used to go! It has become a regular event to meet with other units from the county to watch the latest Disney film to which we met to watch Ariel in the summer and then Wish just before Christmas. It is a great opportunity to meet girls from across the Wirral and to see how big Girl Guiding is on the Wirral. This is also the case when we meet at the Floral Pavillion just after Christmas to watch the Chrysanthemums latest performance, last year was Jack and the Beanstalk.

In the summer term there were a few events revolving around King Charles' Coronation and we were fortunate to be part of the County's Giant Tea Party in West Kirby. It was amazing to see over 300 Rainbows, Brownies and Guides celebrating together. We were involved in the North West regions 'Girls Get Muddy' event at the Army base in Liverpool. It was so well organised and the girls had such great fun.

Whilst the girls have earned many badges this year they have also been fundraising by doing pyjama and games nights for Comic Relief and Children in Need.

We have had a fun and exciting year and can't wait to continue with our adventures this year.

Ellie Randall

The Fabric, Goods and Ornaments of the Churches

Churchwarden's Report, January-April 2023

- At St Bartholomew's the initial concern for the year was the damaged boundary wall at the back of the churchyard. It had been hit by an unknown vehicle probably on Christmas Eve 2022. We decided to involve our Church Architect, which was supported by our insurers. The work on the wall was completed in April.

- The eyebolts on the tower at St Bartholomew's were due to have their annual inspection in early January. However, the weather was so appalling when the engineer arrived that we decided it was too dangerous to proceed. The inspection was rescheduled for late April, when all eyebolts were inspected, and all passed. This ensured that teddy bears could be safely launched from the tower on St *Be*artholomew's Day!
- The yew trees at St Bartholomew's were due to be pruned in February, but after further consultation with tree experts, it was decided to leave this until later in the year.
- At St Chad's Jon Oliver has continued to look after lighting and organise plumbing repairs.

Liz Whitehead

At the APCM in 2023 there were no nominations for Churchwarden, so we currently do not have any Churchwardens.

Deanery Synod report 2023

There were two meetings of the Deanery Synod in 2023. The first, on 16th February, was held at Christ Church Community Centre, Higher Bebington. After a welcome by the Reverend Mike Loach, vicar of Christ Church, and opening prayers led by the Reverend Eunice Blackmore, there were several business items, including the election of two clergy representatives to fill two vacancies on the Diocesan Synod.

The main item on the agenda was entitled 'Casting the Net Wide'. Mrs. Harriet Roberts was welcomed to the meeting and invited to give her "Vison Café" presentation. She explained that Bishop Mark wanted to hear from the parishes about their outreach activities and what they consider as important in this area. The exercise was intended to be empowering and encouraging for parishes, providing them with a means of addressing issues that may have got in the way of mission.

The second meeting was held at St John the Divine, Frankby, on 16th October, where the main topic was 'Transforming Lives Together'. Wendy Robertson, who is a community missionary, explained that TLT is an independent charity working with Chester Cathedral and the Diocese, seeking to bring about physical and spiritual transformation. As a 'faith in action' charity it works to stimulate and support church social action, focusing particularly on combatting social isolation and loneliness, as well as tackling poverty and inequality in all its forms. Following Wendy's presentation, there was an opportunity for those present to discuss the various types of social action being undertaken, or facilitated, by parishes in the deanery.

Anyone is welcome to attend the meetings of Deanery Synod, which provide an excellent forum to share ideas and offer mutual support. In addition, those who go along to the meetings become more aware of the larger Christian family in Wirral, to which we all belong.

Chris Smale

Treasurer's Report and Account

Income

We have again had a very difficult year which has had an impact on the financial running of the Parish. However, we have also been able to take advantage of certain financial grants to achieve things that would have been out of reach. Our thanks go to Revd Jane and anyone else who had a hand in applying for the relevant grants.

Parish Share

In January 2023, the PCC agreed to increase our parish share payments from 40% to 48% (£2891.90 per month instead of the £2391.90). This was conveyed to the diocese in January 2023; however we discovered in March 2024 that this was never actioned. Therefore, for the year 2023, we maintained a payment of 40% of the agreed Parish Share (£28703 paid of the £71757 as requested). The PCC finance committee (March 2024) are looking into whether we can now back pay the extra 8% and will look at what we can realistically afford for 2024. We choose not to pay full parish share in order to maintain our reserves at the required level.

Analysis of performance between 2022 and 2023

Our overall income from giving was down by 12% on last year, although I would like to thank everyone for their amazing generosity in these troubled times. Regular Planned giving was down 12% on last year. There has been an increase of 4% in the planned giving at St Chads which is encouraging.

Donations/Grants/Legacies/Insurance Claims/Fundraising Events

We have received two this year one from the Raby school trust of £114 (used for "It's your move" booklets for Year 6) and one from Wirral Borough Council of £1000 towards the Warm Hub.

We have received 3 legacies this year,

- £10000 from the estate of Michael Douglas, this was used towards the new floor at St Chads.
- £2000 from the estate of Ken Gill that was transferred to the Ismay charity trust
- £1000 from the estate of Martin Evans designated to church yard upkeep.

Everyone should be encouraged to read our legacy policy and think about including the church in their will.

Various fund-raising events such as Santa in Irby, Christmas Bazaar and St Beartholomew's day raised a total of £1200, thanks to everyone involved for all the effort in organising these community events.

Gift Aid and GASDS

This provides us with very valuable income and is vital to our accounts as this year it made up nearly 12% of our total income. It is cost free to the payee as long as they have paid enough tax throughout the year. With this in mind could everyone who is eligible, sign a gift aid declaration and also can current members let the Planned Giving Officers know if you have moved, are no longer eligible or have changed your name.

At this juncture I must thank Chris Turnbull and Chris Smale for the amazing work they do on this area which can be very time consuming and laborious.

Fees Received

Fees received were down this year by £457.

Hall Hire

Income was from hall hire increased by 18%, £8547 in 2022 to £10455 in 2023. There has been an increase in regular hall bookings and we are hiring out the extension to the council as a polling station each year.

Investments And Reserves

Given the interest rate rises over the year our income from investments was up from £5314 in 2022 to £6592.

We have been able to maintain our reserves at a decent level by not paying the full parish share but the nature of our situation means this needs to be maintained for the continued financial health of the PCC and to cover any unexpected expenditure which can occur at any time.

There has been no work done through the Open Door Fund this year, but plans are still under consideration.

Expenditure

I have not done a line-by-line explanation as it is impossible to compare this year to last. Our overall expenditure was up by 2% if you remove the major expenditure from the 2022 figures mainly due to increased costs of utilities.

Summary

It has been another difficult year for everyone for many reasons so to have come out the other end in a stable financial position is a credit to the generosity of everyone in the Parish.

I would like to thank Kevin Marley for his support and help over the year, also thanks to Patsy Brady for her years as Payroll Officer, Patsy has now stepped down from the role and I have taken it on along with support from MAW accountants. I would also like to thank Chris Smale and Malcolm for banking the money now that

the HSBC branch in Bromborough and the nearest branches are Chester and Liverpool.

During 2023, the finance team comprised:

Parish Giving Officers	Chris Turnbull and Chris Smale
Banker	Kate Butler/Chris Smale/ Malcom Studholme
Parish Administrator	Kate Butler
Signatory	Roger Jackson, Chris Turnbull, Chris Smale, Pat Neil, Malcolm Studholme
Hall Hire Officer	Kate Butler
Payroll Officer	Patsy Brady and Kate Butler
Committee members	Chris Smale, Malcolm Studholme, Pat Neil, Cheryl Goddard, Chris Turnbull

Kate Butler (Parish Bookkeeper)

Independent examiner's report on the accounts



CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/
members of

The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical
Parish of St. Bartholomew, Thurstaston

On accounts for the year
ended

31st December 2023

Charity no
(if any)

1132086

Set out on pages

1 to 7

(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)

Respective
responsibilities of
trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Charities Act") and that an independent examination is needed. [The charity's gross income exceeded £250,000 and I am qualified to undertake the examination by being a qualified member of [named body]]. *Delete [] if not applicable.*

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act,
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act, and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention

Basis of independent
examiner's statement

My examination was carried out in accordance with general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair' view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

**Independent
examiner's statement**

In connection with my examination, no material matters have come to my attention (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 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: 27th March 2024

Name:

Margaret Ann Walker of MAW Accountants

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

ICPA(Fellow), CPAA

Address:

33 Thingwall Road

Irby

Wirral CH61 3UE

Section B

Disclosure

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight material matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).

Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.

CHURCH ACCOUNTS 2023

The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of St Bartholomew, Thurstaston
Registered Charity Number 1132086

Statement of Financial Activities for the Year Ending 31 December 2023

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Endowment Funds	Total 2023	Total 2022
Receipts & Payments account					
Receipts					
<i>Voluntary Receipts</i>					
Planned Giving St Bartholomew	18518			18518	23786
St Chad	13511			13511	12935
Other Collections St Bartholomew	1493			1493	1875
St Chad	593			593	552
Total	34115	0	0	34115	39148
<i>Donations</i>					
Wallbox	0			0	
Recurring Donations	1750			1750	
Sum up				0	5
Non recurring Donations (see note 1)	655			655	2305
Total donations	2405	0	0	2405	2310
	36520			36520	41458
<i>Grants received (see note 2)</i>	902			902	2736
<i>Legacies (see note 15)</i>	10000			10000	
<i>Tax recovered</i>	9554			9554	10723
Total	20456	0	0	20456	13459
Total Donation Income	56976	0	0	56976	54917
<i>Activities for Generating Funds (See note 3)</i>	1199			1199	898
<i>Church Activities (See note 4)</i>	15409			15409	13956
<i>Income from Investments (See note 5)</i>	6592			6592	5314
TOTAL	80177	0	0	80177	75085
Payments					
<i>Cost of generating voluntary income (See note 6)</i>	153			153	135
<i>Mission Giving (See note 7)</i>	125			125	137
<i>Church Activities (See note 8)</i>	68127			68127	66463
<i>Major Works - new floor at Chads</i>				0	16178
TOTAL	68405	0	0	68405	82913
Excess of Receipts over Payments	11772	0	0	11772	-7828
Transfers between funds					
Total					
Bank Current and Deposit Accounts 1 Jan	65,235	175,042		4,843	245,120
Bank Current and Deposit Accounts 31 Dec	71,668	189,151		7,729	268,548
	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Endowment Funds	Total 2023	Total 2022
Statement of Assets and Liabilities					
Assets					
Cash at bank and in hand and undeposited funds	9			9	13
CAF Current Account	38530			38530	32,812
CAF Gold Account	29021			29021	28,487
Total	67560	0	0	67560	61,312

Investment Assets (See note 9)							
Marrell Trust			8600			8600	7,660
Ismay Charity					7729	0	4,843
Tudor Trust			26250			26250	23,506
Eileen Shaw Trust			113438			113438	104,282
Open Door	0.00		40863			40863	39,594
Reserve Fund	4108					4108	3,981
Total	71668	0	189151	0	7729	268548	245,178
Other Monetary Assets							
Gift aid claimable	7459					7459	8,644
Total Assets	79127	0	189151	0	7729	276007	253,822
Liabilities (See note 11)	429					429	-
Total Assets less Liabilities	78699		189151		7729	275579	253,822

Approved by the PCC on and signed on their behalf by Rev E Jane Turner (PCC Chairperson)

E Jane Turner 28/4/24

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Endowment Funds	Total 2023	Total 2022
Notes to the accounts					
1. Non recurring donations					
Gift Aided Donations	10			10	933
Non-Gift Aided Donations	645			645	1,372
Total	655	0.00	0.00	0	2,305
2. Grants Received					
Grant from Diocese Energy Grant				0	986
Jubilee Grant funding				0	1,000
Raby School Trust - 114 received 102 spent	12			12	
Wirral Borough Council - Warm Hub 1000 received 110.23 spent	890			890	
Wirral Borough Council - Together Fund - Tots & Tinies				0	750
Total	902	0.00	0.00	0	2,736
3. Generating Funds					
Christmas Fair/Santa in Irby	924			924	715
Other fund raising events coronation and Bears day	274			274	183
Total	1199	0.00	0.00	0	898
4. Main Church Activities					
Fees Received	3422			3422	3,879
Contribution to heating	168			168	167
Hall Hire	10455			10455	8,547
Tots and Tinies	1274			1274	1,000
Magazine subscriptions	221			221	193
Magazine income	119			119	170
Insurance claims	-250			-250	-
Total	15409	0.00	0.00	0	13,956
5. Income from Investments					
Bank Interest	2024				708
Marrell Trust	206			206	217
Ismay Charity	138			138	558
Tudor Trust	784			784	1,176
Shaw Trust	3441			3441	2,655
Total	6592	0.00	0.00	0	5,314
6. Costs of Generating Voluntary Income					

Planned Giving Envelope Systems	109					109	135
Harvest Supper						0	-
Christmas Fair/Santa in lrbv	44					44	-
Total	153	0.00	0.00	0.00	0	153	135

7. Mission Giving

Diocesan Family of Schools						0	-
Friends of Chester Cathedral Deanery Synod	25					25	25
Ismay Charity donation						0	-
art exhibition and flood relief						0	-
Gifts (Retiring Church Warden)	100					100	112
Total	125	0.00	0.00	0.00	0	125	137

8. Church Activities

Parish Share	28703					28703	24,384
Salaries							
Caretaker	394					394	394
Cleaners	3069					3069	2,944
Parish Clerk	3560					3560	3,560
Parish bookeeper	1800					1800	1,650
Pastoral Expenses							
Rector's Expenses	2213					2213	1,354
Rector's Office Expenses	887					887	880
Rector's Expenses	3239					3239	3,179
Gifts	25					25	
Mission Costs							
Deanary Contribution	30					30	
Assisting Clergy Fees & Expenses						0	86
Organist's Fees							
Service Costs (worship materials)	781					781	2,942
Website	215					215	233
Youth						0	60
Tots & Tinies	1169					1169	1,126
St Bartholomew Overheads							
Church Insurance (see note 16)	6594					6594	5,994
C26: Church Licences	93					93	87
C23: Church Building Maintenance	550					550	1,367
C19: Churchyard Upkeep	1141					1141	2,245
C24: Church Organ Expenses						0	150
C21: Church Electricity	1089					1089	612
C22: Church Heating Oil	2183					2183	968
St Chad's Overheads							
Hall Insurance (see note 16)	0					0	
Hall Licences	392					392	371
Hall Building Maintenance	903					903	1,771
Hall Grounds Maintenance	115					115	1,160
Hall Electricity	1495					1495	656
Hall Gas	1382					1382	2,191
Hall Water	763					763	1,003
St Chads Building Maintenance	517					517	365
Magazine Costs Production Expenses	50					50	48
Admin Expenses							
Office equipment	1174					1174	1,269
Office Software	806					806	1,165
Office Stationary	2027					2027	1,710
Office Phone & Internet	674					674	460
Bank Charges	95					95	81
Total	68127	0.00	0.00	0.00	0	68127	66,463

9. Investments

The investments relate to 5 funds:

- (i) The Morrell Trust is invested with the CBF Church of England Investments, split between the Fixed Interest Securities Fund and the Global Equity Income Fund.
 - (ii) The Ismay Charity is invested with the CBF Church of England Global Equity Income Fund with the balance held in the bank account for distribution at the discretion of the incumbent, or for eventual reinvestment.
 - (iii) The Tudor Trust. This is invested with CBF Church of England income investments, The property fund, the UK equity fund and the global equity income fund
 - (iv) The Eileen Shaw Trust is a restricted fund producing income for general church use and is invested in C of E Global Equity, Property, UK Equity, Investment and Fixed income Funds
- The fund is held by Chester DBF as Diocesan Authority on behalf of the PCC
- This trust is now shown in the PCC's statement of Assets and Liabilities
- (v) The Reserve fund is a small general reserve held for emergency work at St Chads

(vi) The Open Door Fund is held for specific work on St Bartholomews

10. St Chad's Building

St Chad's building is 50 years old and was built using donations. The first extension was built using funds from the sale of land on which Village Court was built. The new extension was built over 10 years ago.

11. Liabilities	2023	2022	2021
<i>Retained wedding and funeral fees</i>	429		0
<i>Hall Hire paid in advance</i>			538
Total		0.00	538

The Parish has been unable to meet its Parish Share contribution in full for several years. The Parish achieved a payment amounting to 40% of the total request for 2023 (£28703 paid of £71757 requested). The Parish are mindful that they have not been able to reach a full payment, but will look to increase payment to the Diocese as income allows.

12. PCC member payments

PCC member Jon Oliver was paid £316.80 because of his employment as Verger.

13. Accounts

This financial statement has been prepared in accordance with Church Accounting Regulations 2006 using the Receipts and Payments basis.

The Gift Aid refers to money received in 2023 for the 2022 financial and tax year. Also no reference is made to stock held or debtors

14. Reserves Policy

We have no Quinquennial provision and we aim to carry a minimum of 3 months turnover i.e approximately £30000

15. Legacies

we received 3 legacies, £10000 from the estate of Michael Douglas
£2000 from the estate of Ken Gill that was transferred to the Ismay Charity fund
£1000 from the estate of Martin Evans designated to churchyard upkeep,

16. Insurance

The insurance figure is now a combined figure for both churches