

THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL PARISH OF THE UPPER SKERNE

England & Wales · Charity number 1132664

Details

Status	Registered
Legal form	Previously excepted
Registered	2009-11-12
Register	View on the Charity Commission register

Contact

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Activities

Objects: Promoting in the ecclesiastical parish the whole mission of the Church.

Activities: Church of England Parish serving the communities of Sedgfield, Bishop Middleham, Fishburn & the Trimdons & surrounding villages.

Classification

- **How:** Provides Buildings/facilities/open Space, Provides Services, Other Charitable Activities
- **What:** Religious Activities
- **Who:** The General Public/mankind

Geography

- **Area of benefit:** UNDEFINED. IN PRACTICE, LOCAL
- Durham

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2024-12-31	£211,814	£229,695	-	-
2023-12-31	£178,397	£210,716	-	-
2022-12-31	£262,033	£153,433	-	-
2021-12-31	£153,978	£132,684	-	-
2020-12-31	£83,567	£123,819	-	-

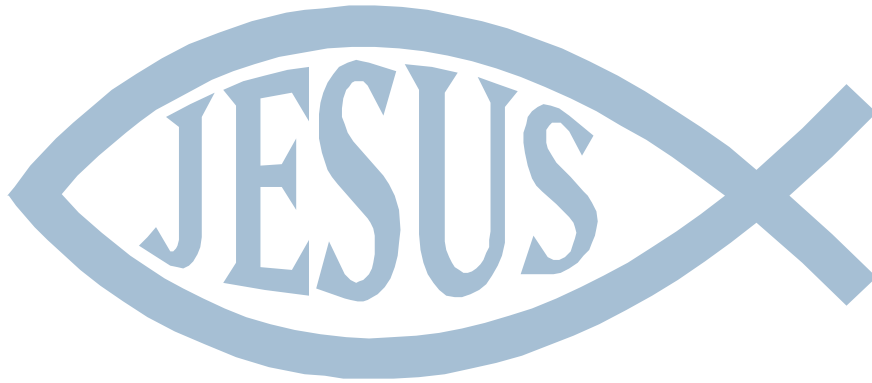
Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
Rev David James Lucas	Chair	2024-06-09
BRIAN MUTCH		
JOHN BURTON		
John Burrows		2019-04-28
MICHELE MARIE MACCALLAM BSC, CMLI		2012-07-19
Nigel Gibson		2024-05-12
Phillipa Mary Cooper		2019-04-28
Robert Elders		2023-04-30
SYLVIA RUTTER		2017-04-30
Suzanne Hopper		2023-04-30
Victoria Dobson		2023-04-30
Vivienne Anderson		2023-04-30
William George Armstrong MA		2019-04-26

Accounts

PARISH OF THE UPPER SKERNE

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL



ANNUAL REPORT

2024

At

St Edmund's Church, Sedgefield

Sunday 12th May

Commencing at

11.30 am

Annual Parochial church meeting Agenda

The Annual Parish Meeting for the Election of Churchwardens

1. Welcome and opening prayer
2. Apologies
3. Minutes of the last meeting
4. Election of Churchwardens

The Annual Parochial Church Meeting

1. Welcome by the Chair of the Meeting
2. Opening Prayer
3. Apologies for absence
4. Minutes of last meeting
5. Matters arising
6. Election of representatives of the laity to the PCC.
7. PCC membership of Licensed Lay Ministers.
8. Appointment of Independent Examiner for the PCC accounts.
10. Questions about parochial church matters.
11. Consideration of PCC reports:
 - a. Electoral Roll
 - b. Report on the proceedings of the PCC and the activities of the parish.
 - c. Safeguarding report
 - d. Acting Treasurer's report and accounts for 2023
 - e. Annual fabric report
 - f. Report on the proceedings of the Deanery Synod
 - g. Bereavement Groups
13. Any other business
14. Date of next meeting
15. Closing Prayer

A meeting of the new PCC will follow immediately.

Parish of the Upper Skerne
Minutes of APCM 30th April 2023 at 11am at St Alban's Church,
Trimdon Grange

The Annual Parish Meeting for the Election of Churchwardens

1. Welcome and Opening Prayer
2. No apologies were received
3. Minutes of the last meeting
Proposed as a true record by Anne Gray, seconded by Brian Mutch. All in favour.
4. Election of Churchwardens
There were two written nominations for churchwarden:
Michele Maccallam *Proposed*: Sharon Stephenson *seconded*: Judith Edgoose
John Burrows. *Proposed* : Sharon Stephenson *seconded* Alison Hodgson

All in favour. Rev Elizabeth Bland declared both duly elected.

The Annual Parochial Church Meeting

1. *Welcome and opening prayer by the Chair of the Meeting Rev Elizabeth Bland*
2. Apologies for absence
Apologies received from: Margaret Mason, Vivienne Anderson, Martin and Alison King, John Burrows, Judith King, Alistair Irvine, Sharon Stephenson, Lise Agnew, Janet Deane, Chris and Julia Rowsby.
3. Minutes of last meeting
Proposed as a true record by Alison Hodgson, seconded by Michele Maccallam.
4. Matters arising
No matters arising.
5. Election (if due) of parochial representatives of the laity to the Deanery Synod.
John Burton, Brian Mutch, Michele Maccallam , agreed to continue as deanery synod reps. Anne Gray and Victoria Dobson proposed as additional representatives to Deanery Synod.
proposed by Michael King, seconded by Phillipa Cooper. All in favour.
6. Election of representatives of the laity to the PCC.
Rev EB read out the names of those nominated and asked if it was the will of the APCM to accept these people to be elected onto the PCC.

St Alban's – Sylvia Rutter and Victoria Dobson
St Catherine's – Phillipa Cooper and Vivienne Anderson
St Edmund's – Brian Mutch and Robert Elders
St Mary Magdalene's – John Burton and Suzanne Hopper
St Michael's – Michele MacCallam and John Burrows.

All in favour.

7. PCC membership of Licensed Lay Ministers

Bill Armstrong informed the APCM that lay ministers are not automatically ex-officio members of the PCC, as was thought in the past.

Proposal: that the APCM agree to lay ministers being ex-officio members of the PCC (should they wish).

Proposed by John Burton seconded by Anne Gray.

All in favour

8. Appointment of Independent Examiner for the PCC accounts

Proposal to accept Gordon Fletcher as Independent Examiner for Parish Accounts.

Proposed by Phillipa Cooper

seconded by Michael King.

All in favour

9. Questions about parochial church matters

No questions

10. Instrument of Governance

a. Term of office of Deanery Synod representatives

The Church Representation rules state that anyone who serves two consecutive terms as a deanery synod rep. may not be nominated for a third consecutive term. An APCM may, however, pass a resolution that this provision does not apply to the parish. Bill Armstrong asked the meeting to pass such a resolution as we have often found it difficult to fill these roles. The meeting should be aware that such a resolution can be rescinded by a future APCM.

Proposed: Robert Elders. Seconded: Michael King.

All in favour.

b. Term of office of PCC members

Bill Armstrong asked the meeting to resolve that PCC members should be elected for a term of office of one year. This decision will be reviewed in 2025 and every 5 years after that.

Proposed: Michele MacCallam. Seconded: John Burton.

All in favour.

c. Recommendation to Bishop's Council

Rev Elizabeth asked if it was the will of the APCM to put forward the Instrument of Governance for the parish to the Bishop's Council, subject to the above amendments.

Proposed: Anne Gray, seconded: Nigel Gibson.

All in favour

11. Consideration of PCC Reports:

- a. Electoral Roll
- b. Report on the proceedings of the PCC and the activities of the parish
- c. Safeguarding report

All above reports were accepted by the APCM.

Proposed by Phillipa Cooper, seconded by John Burton. All in favour

d. Acting Treasurer's Report and accounts for 2022

Bill Armstrong has agreed to work as Acting Treasurer for the time being.

He reported that although planned giving is stable, rising costs are going to be problematic and therefore working with Rev Paul Childs on parish giving will be essential to the parish.

Proposal to accept the parish accounts: Proposed by Alison Hodgson, seconded by Brian Mutch. All in favour.

e. Annual fabric report

In addition to the report in the APCM booklet, Michele wished to add that now St Michael's has achieved Bronze Eco Award, the parish are working towards the same for its other churches.

f. Report on the proceedings of Deanery Synod

No additions were suggested.

Rev Elizabeth asked the APCM if they accepted the APCM 2023 report as a whole.

All voted in favour.

12. Any other business

Rev Elizabeth Bland announced her intended retirement in August. She feels it is time for her to step aside and assured the APCM that the parish is in good shape and will continue to thrive. She thanked everyone for the support and love she and Steve have been shown since first arriving in the parish.

Michael King expressed thanks on behalf of the parish to both Rev Elizabeth and Rev Peter for their hard work, love and care.

13. Date of next meeting

The next APCM will be 5th May 2024 at St. Edmund's Church, Sedgefield

14. Closing Prayer

Rev Elizabeth closed the meeting with the Grace and thanked everyone for attending.

A meeting of the new PCC will follow immediately

Agenda

1. *Election of vice-chair*

Nomination : Brian Mutch

Proposed by Phillipa Cooper, seconded by Sylvia Rutter

2. *Election of PCC secretary*

Nomination: Julie Robson

Proposed by Victoria Dobson, seconded by Phillipa Cooper

3. *Election of PCC treasurer (Acting)*

Nomination: Bill Armstrong

Proposed by Robert Elders, seconded by Suzanne Hopper

4. *Election of electoral roll officer*

Nomination: Julie Robson

Proposed by Michele Maccallam, seconded by Victoria Dobson

5. *Election of safeguarding officer*

Nomination: Julie Robson

Proposed by Victoria Dobson, seconded by Michele Maccallam

6. *Date of next meeting*

The next PCC meeting will be on May 17th at 7pm in St Michael's church.

Written Reports for APCM 2024

Electoral Roll Report

The Electoral roll has increased by 4 (as shown in the table below).
Many thanks to those who have helped in collating this information.

Church Attendance – Electoral Roll			
Electoral Roll 2022/2023		186	
Deductions		9	
Additions		13	
Electoral Roll 2023/2024		190	
Distribution			
St Alban		22	
St Catherine		16	
St Edmund		92	
St Mary Magdalene		25	
St Michael		35	

Julie Robson Electoral Roll Officer

Annual Report on the proceedings of the PCC and the activities of the parish

Aims and Purposes

The PCC of the Parish of the Upper Skerne has the responsibility of co-operating with the incumbent, once appointed, in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. It also has maintenance responsibilities for the Churches in the Parish.

Objectives and Activities

In August 2023, Rev Elizabeth Bland retired and associate priest, Rev Peter Robson, was officially licensed to the parish in October 2023.

A new Team Rector, Rev David Lucas was appointed in February 2024 and will join the parish in June, his installation taking place in St Edmund's Church on 9th June.

The PCC is committed to enabling as many people as possible to worship at our churches and to become part of our parish community in the Parish of the Upper Skerne. The PCC maintains an overview of worship throughout the parish and makes suggestions on how our services can involve the many groups that live within our parish. Our services and worship put faith into practice through prayer and scripture, music and sacrament.

When planning our activities for the year, we have considered the Commission's guidance on public benefit and, in particular, the supplementary guidance on charities for the advancement of religion. In particular, we try to enable ordinary people to live out their faith as part of our parish community through:

- Worship and prayer; learning about the gospel; and developing their knowledge and trust in Jesus.
- Provision of pastoral care for people living in the parish.
- Missionary and outreach work.

To facilitate this work it is important that we maintain the fabric of our Churches.

The parish churches continue their fortnightly pattern of worship, with the exception of St Alban's which has a monthly Holy Communion service on the first Sunday of the month. Services are no longer available via Zoom as it was felt there was no longer a need for this. The parish notice sheets are still fortnightly and continue to be delivered both in person and also by email. Many thanks to all those who hand deliver the notice sheets. This has been very much appreciated for all those who are unable to attend church.

.Achievements and Performance

This is the eighteenth full year of meetings of the PCC of the Parish of the Upper Skerne. Since the last APCM, the PCC met in the following months– February, May, July and October (2023) and February and April (2024).

All meetings were held in person.

The May meeting was a special PCC meeting to discuss the Parish Profile and Mission Courses as suggested by Rev Ruth Young. As a result of this, a Baptism Matters course was arranged and representatives from all of our churches attended.

A Baptism Group was then established and new ideas have been trialled with great success, including the sponsoring of a children's bible for all children baptised at St Alban's and activity booklets for children attending baptisms.

The Communications Group has introduced a new format for the monthly parish magazine, producing a shorter, colour version. Questionnaires have been distributed to seek parishioners' feedback on the new format.

Although we have a Facebook page, it is not updated regularly and as the administrator has been hard to track down it is felt that a new Facebook page should be set up. The parish website, and A Church Near You website are regularly updated.

Julie Robson PCC Secretary

Safeguarding Report

Safeguarding in the Parish of the Upper Skerne:

Legally, the Parish has a number of requirements and responsibilities. The PCC was provided with all documents necessary to comply with its duty to have regard to the House of Bishop's guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults. This is reviewed annually.

Safeguarding Issues:

Over the past year there have been no safeguarding issues.

Safeguarding Training

Safeguarding refresher training at all 3 levels has mostly been completed by those requiring it, with just one or two outstanding courses to be completed.

The new online parish dashboard is now well established and updated regularly. It is a simple to use, online tool, accessed via computer or smart phone, that helps keep track of safeguarding in our churches. It keeps you up-to-date with local and national changes in safeguarding requirements. Green lights give assurance that we are

complying with safeguarding requirements and amber and red lights highlight actions which need to be completed.

DBS checks were needed again as they now need renewing every 3 years.

John Burrows (Validator) and Julie Robson (Administrator) to date, have completed the renewals for those needing them.

Julie Robson Parish Safeguarding Officer

Acting Treasurers Report and Accounts for 2023

Income returned closer to normal, following the exceptional situation in 2022. The total income was £178,397 which represents an increase of 34% over the parish income in 2021, a year which was still affected by the pandemic.

Planned giving across the parish remained stable. At a time when costs are increasing it needs to be noted that planned giving is falling well behind where it needs to be.

Collections at services increased by 15% - a sign that the recovery from the pandemic has run its course. This figure includes collections at baptisms, weddings and funerals, as well as cash put in the plate on Sundays. There was an increase of 74.5% in fees from weddings and funerals as the number of weddings, in particular, returned to pre-pandemic levels.

Expenditure increased from £153,433 in 2022 to £210,716 – an increase of 37%. This was largely due to the spending of £43,500 on fabric improvements at St Edmund's. This money was drawn from the Gordon Morris Bequest, a restricted fund.

Other increases in expenditure were in parish share (33%), another indication of a return to normality after the pandemic. Future increases are likely to be much smaller. The Administrator's salary increased by 9%, reflecting a cost-of-living increase. Utility bills increased by 49% as a result of the nation energy crisis. These were offset by a further fall in general running expenses (-8.5%). Clergy expenses remained stable but are likely to increase with the arrival of our new Team Rector.

All of the **church accounts** this year were in deficit – ranging from St Edmund's (£-8,185) to St Mary Magdalene's (-£345).

Looking forward, there are factors which need to be considered. Our parish share pledge is to continue to increase in line with inflation. The static level of giving in the parish will inevitably necessitate some serious thought. After the visit of the Revd Paul Child to the PCC to talk about parish giving, the PCC made a decision, in principle, to recommend that our churches should seriously consider joining the Parish Giving Scheme. This is a decision which each DCC needs to consider at their next meetings. At another meeting, the Archdeacon of Durham asked us to review our current formula for allocating parish share among our churches. That review led to a relative reduction in the amount paid by St Catherine's, and a relative increase in that paid by St Edmund's. The adjustments were staged with the second phase due at the end of this year.

Rising energy costs and general inflation are also likely to continue to have an impact on our churches. One other factor is the decision to produce the magazine in colour. Last year the average monthly cost of photocopying was £82.50; this year it has been £208.20. This is a factor which needs to be considered in the coming review of the magazine format.

Bill Armstrong

April 2024

Parish of the Upper Skerne

Parish Accounts 2023

1. Summary of Accounts

RECEIPTS/INCOME		Parish	St A	St C	St E	St MM	St M
	Voluntary giving						
1	Planned giving	£2,760.00	£825.00	£2,312.00	£21,485.27	£14,025.41	£13,602.00
3	Collections at services	£317.45	£3,425.38	£4,307.60	£4,085.37	£6,642.98	£2,344.32
4	All other giving and voluntary receipts, including special appeals (recurring and one-off)	£2,198.00	£269.00	£2,062.00	£17,830.11	£1,178.77	£2,135.52
6	Gift Aid recovered (planned giving and one-off donations)	£18,637.17	£909.74	£1,576.88	£7,951.18	£2,798.26	£3,738.47
7	Legacies received (capital value)				£3,000.00		
8	Grants (include recurring and one-off)	£1,000.00			£1,000.00		
	Total voluntary giving						
	Activities for generating funds						
9	Fundraising activities (gross proceeds)				£1,424.09	£1,959.80	£3,155.45
	Income from investments						
10	Dividends, interest, income from property etc.			£111.49	£6,187.63	£314.16	£277.08
	Church activities						
11	Fees retained by PCC (weddings, funerals etc.)	£30,331.00	£749.00	£1,925.00	£9,344.00	£3,994.00	£1,244.00
12	Trading activities (gross proceeds), NOT fundraising	£3,432.00	£120.00	£320.00	£1,126.48	£725.00	£670.00
	Other incoming resources						
13	Other receipts/income not already listed PLEASE NOTE BRIEF DETAILS IN BOX E	£97,315.15		£786.45	£72,060.31	£1,668.00	£6,000.00
	Totals (from Financial Statements)						
A	RECEIPTS/INCOME						
B	COMBINED TOTAL	£155,990.77	£6,298.12	£13,401.42	£145,494.44	£33,306.38	£33,166.84
	PAYMENTS/EXPENDITURE						
	Costs of generating funds						
	Costs of fundraising activities				£125.50		£379.76
	Church activities						
	Mission giving and donations	£6,544.00	£324.50	£982.29	£9,102.12	£2,153.57	£432.20
	Diocesan parish share contribution	£72,500.00	£2,750.00	£6,700.00	£27,000.00	£16,608.00	£16,650.00
	Salaries, wages and honoraria	£6,937.50		£484.00	£6,944.00	£771.00	
	Clergy and staff expenses	£1,991.64					
	Church expenses						
	Mission and evangelism costs						
	Church running expenses (including governance)	£22,577.77	£1,480.30	£3,509.32	£10,094.70	£6,134.71	£4,061.47
	Church utility bills		£1,597.27	£625.85	£7,140.19	£2,818.83	£1,429.84
	Costs of trading	£49.99		£320.00	£1,160.00	£807.00	£660.00
	Major capital expenditure						
	Major repairs to the church building				£43,500.43		
	Major repairs to church hall/other PCC property including redecoration						£4,410.00
	New building work to the church, church hall, clergy housing or other PCC property.						
	Other expenditure						
	Other payments/expenditure not already listed PLEASE NOTE BRIEF DETAILS IN BOX E	£47,771.18	£1,560.00	£1,560.00	£48,612.44	£4,358.00	£12,889.50
	Totals (from Financial Statements)						
	PAYMENTS/EXPENDITURE						
	COMBINED TOTAL	£158,372.08	£7,712.07	£14,181.46	£153,679.38	£33,651.11	£40,912.77
		-£2,381.31	-£1,413.95	-£780.04	-£8,184.94	-£344.73	-£7,745.93

2. Consolidated Account

	Note	Unrestricted Funds £	Unrestricted designated Funds	Restricted Funds £	Endowment Funds £	TOTAL 2023 £	TOTAL 2022 £
	RECEIPTS/INCOME						
	Voluntary giving						
1	Planned giving	£55,009.68				£55,009.68	£54,833.20
3	Collections at services	£21,123.10				£21,123.10	£18,328.78
4	All other giving and voluntary receipts, including special appeals (recurring and one-off)	£6,140.21	£995.14	£19,521.05		£26,656.40	£20,253.04
6	Gift Aid recovered (planned giving and one-off donations)	£18,637.17				£18,637.17	£15,273.23
7	Legacies received (capital value)	£3,000.00				£3,000.00	£103,366.36
8	Grants (include recurring and one-off)			£1,000.00		£1,000.00	£17,261.72
	Total voluntary giving	£103,910.16	£995.14	£20,521.05		£125,426.35	£229,316.33
	Activities for generating funds						
9	Fundraising activities (gross proceeds)	£6,539.34				£6,539.34	£7,314.71
	Income from investments						
10	Dividends, interest, income from property etc.	£1,498.93		£5,391.43	£695.59	£6,890.36	£3,419.65
	Church activities						
11	Fees retained by PCC (weddings, funerals etc.)	£30,331.00				£30,331.00	£17,383.40
12	Trading activities (gross proceeds), NOT fundraising	£3,446.48				£3,446.48	£4,327.61
	Other incoming resources						
13	Other receipts/income not already listed PLEASE NOTE BRIEF DETAILS IN BOX E	£5,763.87				£5,763.87	£271.66
	Totals (from Financial Statements)						
A	RECEIPTS/INCOME	£47,579.62	£0.00	£5,391.43	£695.59		£32,717.03
B	COMBINED TOTAL	£151,489.78	£995.14	£25,912.48	£695.59	£178,397.40	£262,033.36
	PAYMENTS/EXPENDITURE						
	Costs of generating funds						
	Costs of fundraising activities	£505.26				£505.26	£1,117.08
	Church activities						
	Mission giving and donations	£2,231.89		£17,040.79		£19,272.68	£14,466.01
	Diocesan parish share contribution	£72,500.00				£72,500.00	£54,500.00
	Salaries, wages and honoraria	£15,136.50				£15,136.50	£13,851.60
	Clergy and staff expenses	£3,380.44				£3,380.44	£3,401.83
	Church expenses						
	Mission and evangelism costs						
	Church running expenses (including governance)	£33,256.61				£33,256.61	£36,335.55
	Church utility bills	£13,611.98				£13,611.98	£9,131.55
	Costs of trading	£2,996.99				£2,996.99	£2,244.99
	Major capital expenditure						
	Major repairs to the church building	£0.00		£43,500.43		£43,500.43	£17,830.31
	Major repairs to church hall/other PCC property including redecoration	£4,410.00				£4,410.00	
	New building work to the church, church hall, clergy housing or other PCC property.					£0.00	
	Other expenditure						
	Other payments/expenditure not already listed PLEASE NOTE BRIEF DETAILS IN BOX E	£1,052.45		£1,093.00		£2,145.45	£554.33
	Totals (from Financial Statements)						
	PAYMENTS/EXPENDITURE						
	COMBINED TOTAL	£149,082.12	£0.00	£61,634.22	£0.00	£210,716.34	£153,433.25

3. Statement of Parish and Church Balances at 31st December 2023

	Parish	St A	St C	St E	St MM	St M	
CCLA		£13,920.40		£79,449.73	£9,836.88	£15,808.34	£119,015.35
DBF			£62,383.68	£10.24		£5,790.10	£68,184.02
Business			£1,503.13		£3,618.32	£2,035.03	£23,265.79
			£16,109.31				
Current	£11,900.89	£2,021.67	£5,257.15	£14,117.02	£25,072.70	£1,500.00	£59,869.43
TOTALS	£11,900.89	£15,942.07	£85,253.27	£93,576.99	£38,527.90	£25,133.47	£270,334.59
Restricted Funds	£913.02		£62,383.68	£99,514.06		£579.41	£163,390.17
Designated Funds				£2,681.73	£2,866.83		£5,548.56
Endowments			£3,094.35	£105.00	£1,209.29	£10,769.91	£15,178.55

4. Restricted and Designated Funds

St Catherine's Building Fund (restricted)

Expenditure	£9,084.97
Interest	£3,014.54
End of year balance	£62,383.68

St Edmund's – Canon Eden Account (restricted)

Interest	£5.05
End of year balance	£10.24

St Edmund's – Gordon Morris bequest (restricted)

Expenditure	£39,115.03
Interest	£3,068.36
End of year balance	£63,462.39

St Michael's – various Trust Funds (restricted)

Interest	£21.67
End of year balance	£230.29

St Michael's – Boiler Fund (restricted)

End of year balance	£370.41
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PCC Account – AV equipment (restricted)

End of year balance	£221.02
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PCC Account – Refugee Support (restricted)

Income	£1,240.00
Expenditure	£3,800.00
End of year balance	£692.00

St Edmund's – various designated funds

Income	£1,260.97
Expenditure	£108.25
End of year balance	£3,942.70

PCC Account – youth work (designated)

Opening Balance	£954.73
No activity	

Annual Fabric Report

The two Churchwardens attended the Swearing in Service and have attended various training events during the year.

One or both of the wardens have attended all DCC and PCC meetings along with Ministerial team meetings, Steering Group, Worship Leaders' meetings along with a presence on Environment, Governance, Communications and Baptism Matters Groups.

The five churches are generally in good condition with maintenance being carried out as necessary with all relevant approvals. Several of the churches are awaiting overdue Quinquennial Inspections which have not caught up following Covid-19, these are being actively pursued.

We thank Julie for all her hard work as Parish Administrator.

The Wardens have worked closely with Peter and Elizabeth, before her retirement, and look forward to working with our new Rector, Rev. David Lucas

Michele McCallum & John Burrows

Report on the proceedings of Deanery Synod

March 23: Held at St Aidan's Billingham

Billingham parish update, with the return of Rev David Brooks after three years away.

Genesis Project at Grove Hill Middlesbrough

Supporting children, to bring communities together to reach out to people and organisations, to work together to raise aspirations, tackle poverty, isolation, and loneliness.

St Chads

Food waste and affordable food

May:23 Held at St Marys Long Newton

Helping those in their 20s to 40s come to grow in faith.

Growing Faith, Talk given by Catherine Simpson, who works two days a week as a school Chaplain and delivers the Growing Faith initiative.

September 23: Held at St Pauls Bishopton Road

First meeting of new Triennium

January 30: Held at St Marys Norton

Focus on Discipleship

No meeting since.

I wrote the following in 2020, and it is still the same today.

Reflection: All very interesting, but still feel we are a long way off integrating into the Deanery, I feel that we are still a long way off from being a full part of what is actually going on, perhaps this will come about when the new Rector arrives

Brian Mutch Deanery Synod Representative

Parish of the Upper Skerne Bereavement Support Service

BALM (Bereavement And Loss Meetings)

Over the last year I have continued working with bereaved people by scheduled telephone appointments and group sessions from all over Co. Durham.

1. Referrals.

BALM accepts self-referrals, but most service users are referred (via email or telephone) by NHS social prescribing co-ordinators, community psychiatric nurses, psychologists and other health-care professionals based at Sedgefield, Ferryhill, Spennymoor and Newton Aycliffe.

2. Reasons for referral.

Most service users are referred because they feel isolated after losing a close relative or partner and need to build up their confidence and self image before they are able to leave their homes. They usually need a number of telephone appointments before they feel able to join groups of any kind. There is no limit to the number of sessions, and discharge from the service is by mutual agreement.

3. Telephone sessions.

These are by appointment and take place on Mondays and Tuesdays, usually 4 per day. They last up to an hour each.

4. Group sessions.

These are at Ferryhill Ladder Centre on the first Tuesday of each month and Bishop Middleham Village Hall on the third Tuesday of each month. Revd Peter Robson co-leads the Bishop Middleham group sessions. Each session lasts 2 hours and attendance can vary between 3 and 10 service users.

5. Average monthly number of service users.

As an average monthly number, during the month of March 2024, numbers of different service users totalled 27 over 2 groups and 27 scheduled phone calls.

6. Finance.

BALM is financed by donations, mostly from occasional fund-raising events. Expenses consist mostly of booking a room in the village hall for 2 hours once a month. We do not have to pay for using the Ladder Centre, as they requested the sessions to be set up as one of their regular services. We occasionally buy appropriate books on the subject of bereavement, to help listeners and service users. Our balance currently is £395.81.

Janet Deane, 18th April 2024.

OSF (One Step Forward) - formerly Sedgefield Bereavement Support Group

Over the last year we have continued supporting bereaved people in our area, predominantly at our weekly Group Sessions held at St Edmund's church. In addition, we have continued providing daily support to regular members via our OSF WhatsApp Group. Although we're unable to commit to regular telephone support, we do provide telephone consultations on an ad hoc basis, as well as support via email or by service users messaging our OSF Facebook page.

1. Referrals:

The majority of OSF service users come to us via self-referral, but some are also referred (via email or telephone) by Skerne Medical, NHS Care Co-ordinators, Social Prescribing Link Workers, Community Resilience Workers and other health-care professionals, based at Sedgefield, Fishburn, the Trimdons, Wynyard & occasionally Spennymoor. Sedgefield Co-op Funeralcare occasionally put newly bereaved people in touch with us too.

2. Reasons for referral:

Most service users come to us because they feel lost/isolated/bereft after losing a partner or close relative & need to talk through their grief in a confidential, non-judgmental environment - by people who understand some of what they are going through. Third-party referrals tend to be for very similar reasons. Service users might be suffering from depression, or struggling with their mental health - or they may not have much human interaction, which only heightens their difficulties in attempting to come to terms with their grief. Some may have been bereaved very recently - others may be many years down the line when something happens which acts as a trigger, reawakening their feelings of loss & despair. New service users may first need a couple of telephone appointments before they feel ready to come along to a Group session, or they might wish to meet with the Facilitator in advance. There is no limit to the number of sessions people may attend. For some service users one session is enough to give them the confidence or lift they're seeking; others will attend weekly over a period of a few months; and others continue to drop in & out as they are able, over the course of several years. A handful of 'regulars' have been coming pretty much since the group was first set up by Panny Pighills 8.5 years ago.

3. Group sessions:

OSF meet weekly & our sessions are held every Thursday afternoon in The Welcome Room at

St Ed's. Each session lasts 2 hours (2pm - 4pm) and attendance can vary between ca 8 and 16.

I facilitate the group sessions, along with the help of our other 4 Listeners. Last year we very tragically lost one of our original Listeners, Helen Masterman, which was an extremely difficult time for everyone, with the group seeking solace in one another. It also meant that sadly we were down to only 3 Listeners (Eileen, Jackie & myself). Fortunately, in May '23 we were able to welcome 2 new Listeners to the Group (Jo & Siiri). This meant that after the relevant Safeguarding training etc our numbers were looking healthy again, making it easier to accommodate one-to-one sessions (as part of the wider group environment) when these are requested from time to time. Sadly, one of our new Listeners, Siiri, is restarting full-time employment next month, so we will again be 4 (although happily she's requested to remain part of the wider group at large). Jo, our other new Listener is a nurse and can't always attend every Thursday, but we always ensure there are at least 2 Listeners present at Group sessions. During these sessions we have an Open Door Policy, thus ensuring that Walk-ins have access to bereavement support services too.

4. Support via WhatsApp:

One of our original Listeners suggested starting a Group on WhatsApp during Lockdown, to run alongside weekly telephone support calls (when we were unable to hold face-to-face sessions). The 'Group Chat' was originally a means for the group to keep in touch with one another, at a time when many were feeling anxious and were becoming increasingly isolated too. However, the Group proved such a popular & effective way of providing more frequent (daily) support, that it has remained in place ever since. This means that the group can have contact with each other outside of our weekly sessions if they wish & consequently several friendships have grown. It's encouraging to see how most of the group look out for one another, which has led to some getting together for lunch at weekends, joining other groups together, giving lifts to hospital appointments/the station & offers of shopping when ill etc. The Group Chat operates between the hours of 8am - 11pm & we currently have 20 members supporting one another in this way.

5. Finance:

OSF is a not-for-profit group & receives no funding -it is financed purely by voluntary contributions & occasional donations/fund-raising events. The group is grateful that there is no charge to use the Welcome Room - service users make a voluntary contribution (ca £1), which is then split equally between OSF funds (to provide refreshments, occasional flowers, print costs etc.) and Church funds (contributing to heating, lighting & upkeep of the church). Our balance currently is £384.85.

6. Average number of Service Users/month:

As an average monthly number, during the month of March 2024, the group totalled 26 (including 2 new Self-Referrals) & we held 4 Group Sessions.

7. A.O.B:

Other activities have included:

- Our annual Group Christmas Meal at the Dun Cow (a drink for each member was paid for from OSF funds).
- Attending the Opening of the new Co-op Funeralcare premises in Sedgefield & liaising with staff & other related third parties.
- Planning & Training (Risk Assessments/Safeguarding Training/DBS Checks/Insurance discussions/Familiarisation for new Listeners).
- Various Meetings (Listeners/Parish/Skerne Medical).
- Training in Listening Skills (for both new & existing Listeners) is currently being arranged, in conjunction with the Parish, the Diocese of Durham & BALM.

Sue Archer, 26th April 2024.

Parish of the Upper Skerne

Parish Accounts 2023

1. Consolidated Account

	Note	Unrestricted Funds £	Unrestricted designated Funds	Restricted Funds £	Endowment Funds £	TOTAL 2023 £	TOTAL 2022 £
RECEIPTS/INCOME							
	Voluntary giving						
1	Planned giving	£55,009.68				£55,009.68	£54,833.20
3	Collections at services	£21,123.10				£21,123.10	£18,328.78
4	All other giving and voluntary receipts, including special appeals (recurring and one-off)	£6,140.21	£995.14	£19,521.05		£26,656.40	£20,253.04
6	Gift Aid recovered (planned giving and one-off donations)	£18,637.17				£18,637.17	£15,273.23
7	Legacies received (capital value)	£3,000.00				£3,000.00	£103,366.36
8	Grants (include recurring and one-off)			£1,000.00		£1,000.00	£17,261.72
	Total voluntary giving	£103,910.16	£995.14	£20,521.05		£125,426.35	£229,316.33
	Activities for generating funds						
9	Fundraising activities (gross proceeds)	£6,539.34				£6,539.34	£7,314.71
	Income from investments						
10	Dividends, interest, income from property etc.	£1,498.93		£5,391.43	£695.59	£6,890.36	£3,419.65
	Church activities						
11	Fees retained by PCC (weddings, funerals etc.)	£30,331.00				£30,331.00	£17,383.40
12	Trading activities (gross proceeds), NOT fundraising	£3,446.48				£3,446.48	£4,327.61
	Other incoming resources						
13	Other receipts/income not already listed PLEASE NOTE BRIEF DETAILS IN BOX E	£5,763.87				£5,763.87	£271.66
	Totals (from Financial Statements)						
A	RECEIPTS/INCOME	£47,579.62	£0.00	£5,391.43	£695.59		£32,717.03
B	COMBINED TOTAL	£151,489.78	£995.14	£25,912.48	£695.59	£178,397.40	£262,033.36
PAYMENTS/EXPENDITURE							
	Costs of generating funds						
	Costs of fundraising activities	£505.26				£505.26	£1,117.08
	Church activities						
	Mission giving and donations	£2,231.89		£17,040.79		£19,272.68	£14,466.01
	Diocesan parish share contribution	£72,500.00				£72,500.00	£54,500.00
	Salaries, wages and honoraria	£15,136.50				£15,136.50	£13,851.60
	Clergy and staff expenses	£3,380.44				£3,380.44	£3,401.83
	Church expenses						
	Mission and evangelism costs						
	Church running expenses (including governance)	£33,256.61				£33,256.61	£36,335.55
	Church utility bills	£13,611.98				£13,611.98	£9,131.55
	Costs of trading	£2,996.99				£2,996.99	£2,244.99
	Major capital expenditure						
	Major repairs to the church building	£0.00		£43,500.43		£43,500.43	£17,830.31
	Major repairs to church hall/other PCC property including redecoration	£4,410.00				£4,410.00	
	New building work to the church, church hall, clergy housing or other PCC property.					£0.00	
	Other expenditure						
	Other payments/expenditure not already listed PLEASE NOTE BRIEF DETAILS IN BOX E	£1,052.45		£1,093.00		£2,145.45	£554.33
	Totals (from Financial Statements)						
	PAYMENTS/EXPENDITURE						
	COMBINED TOTAL	£149,082.12	£0.00	£61,634.22	£0.00	£210,716.34	£153,433.25

2. Statement of Parish and Church Balances at 31st December 2023

	Parish	St A	St C	St E	St MM	St M	
CCLA		£13,920.40		£79,449.73	£9,836.88	£15,808.34	£119,015.35
DBF			£62,383.68	£10.24		£5,790.10	£68,184.02
Business			£1,503.13		£3,618.32	£2,035.03	£23,265.79
			£16,109.31				
Current	£11,900.89	£2,021.67	£5,257.15	£14,117.02	£25,072.70	£1,500.00	£59,869.43
TOTALS	£11,900.89	£15,942.07	£85,253.27	£93,576.99	£38,527.90	£25,133.47	£270,334.59
Restricted Funds	£913.02		£62,383.68	£63,472.63		£230.29	£126,999.62
Designated Funds				£3,942.70			£3,942.70
Endowments			£3,094.35	£105.00	£1,209.29	£10,769.91	£15,178.55

3. Restricted and Designated Funds

St Catherine's Building Fund (restricted)

Expenditure	£9,084.97
Interest	£3,014.54
End of year balance	£62,383.68

St Edmund's – Canon Eden Account (restricted)

Interest	£5.05
End of year balance	£10.24

St Edmund's – Gordon Morris bequest (restricted)

Expenditure	£39,115.03
Interest	£3,068.36
End of year balance	£63,462.39

St Michael's – various Trust Funds (restricted)

Interest	£21.67
End of year balance	£230.29

St Michael's – Boiler Fund (restricted)

End of year balance	£370.41
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PCC Account – AV equipment (restricted)

End of year balance	£221.02
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PCC Account – Refugee Support (restricted)

Income	£1,240.00
Expenditure	£3,800.00
End of year balance	£692.00

St Edmund's – various designated funds

Income	£1,260.97
Expenditure	£108.25
End of year balance	£3,942.70

PCC Account – youth work (designated)

Opening Balance £954.73

No activity

4. PCC Treasurer's Report

Income returned closer to normal, following the exceptional situation in 2022. The total income was £178,397 which represents an increase of 34% over the parish income in 2021, a year which was still affected by the pandemic.

Planned giving across the parish remained stable. At a time when costs are increasing it needs to be noted that planned giving is falling well behind where it needs to be. Collections at services increased by 15% - a sign that the recovery from the pandemic has run its course. This figure includes collections at baptisms, weddings and funerals, as well as cash put in the plate on Sundays. There was an increase of 74.5% in fees from weddings and funerals as the number of weddings, in particular, returned to pre-pandemic levels.

Expenditure increased from £153,433 in 2022 to £210,716 – an increase of 37%. This was largely due to the spending of £43,500 on fabric improvements at St Edmund's. This money was drawn from the Gordon Morris Bequest, a restricted fund.

Other increases in expenditure were in parish share (33%), another indication of a return to normality after the pandemic. Future increases are likely to be much smaller. The Administrator's salary increased by 9%, reflecting a cost-of-living increase. Utility bills increased by 49% as a result of the nation energy crisis. These were offset by a further fall in general running expenses (-8.5%). Clergy expenses remained stable but are likely to increase with the arrival of our new Team Rector.

All of the **church accounts** this year were in deficit – ranging from St Edmund's (£-8,185) to St Mary Magdalene's (-£345).

Looking forward, there are factors which need to be considered. Our parish share pledge is to continue to increase in line with inflation. The static level of giving in the parish will inevitably necessitate some serious thought. After the visit of the Revd Paul Child to the PCC to talk about parish giving, the PCC made a decision, in principle, to recommend that our churches should seriously consider joining the Parish Giving Scheme. This is a decision which each DCC needs to consider at their next meetings. At another meeting, the Archdeacon of Durham asked us to review our current formula for allocating parish share among our churches. That review led to a relative reduction in the amount paid by St Catherine's, and a relative increase in that paid by St Edmund's. The adjustments were staged with the second phase due at the end of this year.

Rising energy costs and general inflation are also likely to continue to have an impact on our churches. One other factor is the decision to produce the magazine in colour. Last year the average monthly cost of photocopying was £82.50; this year it has been £208.20. This is a factor which needs to be considered in the coming review of the magazine format.

Bill Armstrong

April 2024



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 the Ecclesiastical Parish of the Upper Skerne		
On accounts for the year ended	31 st December 2023	Charity no (if any)	1132664
Set out on pages	Remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets		
	I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31/12/2023		
Responsibilities and basis of report	As the charity trustees of the Trust, 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 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 (~~other than that disclosed below~~) in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect: • accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or • the accounts do not accord with the accounting records I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached. * Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.		
Signed:	G Fletcher	Date:	20 th March 2024
Name:	GORDON FLETCHER		
Relevant professional qualification(s) or body (if any):	C.M.I.I.A. MEMBER OF INSTITUTE OF INTERNAL AUDITORS		
Address:	104 BROWNING HILL COXHOLE CO. DURHAM DH6 4SA		

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight 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.



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 the Ecclesiastical Parish of the Upper Skerne

On accounts for the year
ended

31st December 2023

Charity no
(if any)

1132664

Set out on pages

(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31/12/2023

Responsibilities and
basis of report

As the charity trustees of the Trust, 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 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 (~~other than that disclosed below~~) in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

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

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

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

Signed:

G Fletcher

Date:

20th March 2024

Name:

GORDON FLETCHER

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

C.M.I.I.A.

MEMBER OF INSTITUTE OF INTERNAL AUDITORS

Address:

104 BROWNING HILL

COXHOLE

CO. DURHAM DH6 4SA

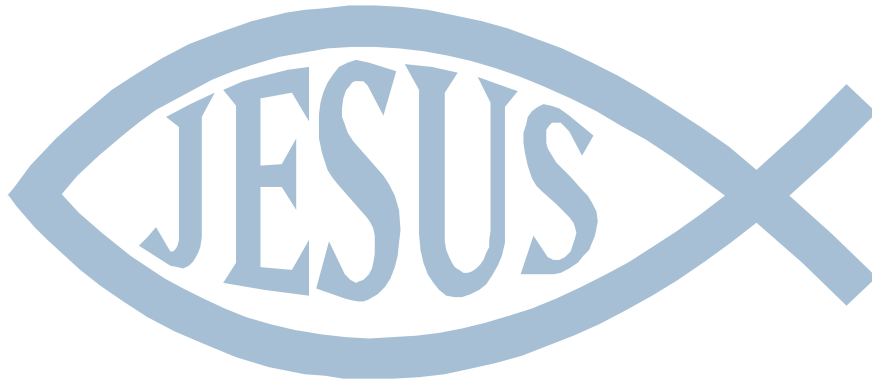
Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).

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

Accounts

PARISH OF THE UPPER SKERNE

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL



ANNUAL REPORT

2023

At

St Alban's Church, Trimdon Grange

Sunday 30th April

Commencing at

11 am

Annual Parochial church meeting Agenda

The Annual Parish Meeting for the Election of Churchwardens

1. Welcome and opening prayer
2. Minutes of last meeting
3. Election of Churchwardens

The Annual Parochial Church Meeting

1. Welcome by the Chair of the Meeting
2. Opening Prayer
3. Apologies for absence
4. Minutes of last meeting
5. Matters arising
6. Election of parochial representatives of the laity to the Deanery Synod.
7. Election of representatives of the laity to the PCC.
8. PCC membership of Licensed Lay Ministers.
9. Appointment of Independent Examiner for the PCC accounts.
10. Questions about parochial church matters.
11. Instrument of Governance
 - a. Term of office of Deanery Synod representatives
 - b. Term of office of PCC members
 - c. Recommendation to Bishop's Council
12. Consideration of PCC reports:
 - a. Electoral Roll
 - b. Report on the proceedings of the PCC and the activities of the parish.
 - c. Safeguarding report
 - d. Acting Treasurer's report and accounts for 2022
 - e. Annual fabric report
 - f. Report on the proceedings of the Deanery Synod
13. Any other business
14. Date of next meeting
15. Closing Prayer

A meeting of the new PCC will follow immediately.

Parish of the Upper Skerne
Minutes of APCM, 29th May 2022 at 11am at St Catherine's Church,
Fishburn

1. Opening prayers, following a short bible reading, were led by The Revd. Elizabeth Bland, who welcomed those attending the APCM.

2.a Present:

The Revd. Elizabeth Bland, The Revd. Peter Robson, Rev Eileen Tarren, Rev Martin King, Brian Mutch, Bill Armstrong, John Burton, Glennis Defty, Malcolm Rutter, Sylvia Rutter, Robert Elders, Ann Elders, Michele Maccallam, Julie Robson, Anne Gray, Linda Clement, Janet Deane, Neil Stevenson, Sam Agnew, David Slater, Lesley Tate, Alison King, Suzanne Hopper, Malcolm Brown, Helen Gray, Alison Hodgson, Judith Edgoose, Linda Chapman, Vivienne Anderson, Margaret Mason

2.b Apologies

Michael King, Judith King, Alistair Irvine, Lisa Agnew, John Burrows, Phillipa Cooper, Robert Cooper, Ann Eyley and Ron Eyley.

3 .Minutes of the 2021 APCM

The minutes were approved as a true record, proposed by John Burton, seconded by Michele Macallam and passed unanimously.

4 Matters Arising

None.

5.Election of Church Wardens:

Written nominations were received for Michele Maccallam & John Burrows and these nomination forms were signed and seconded. Both nominees were accepted unanimously, and The Revd. Elizabeth Bland declared them elected.

6 .Election of PCC members

Readers and Clergy are ex-officio members

PCC members: DCC's have proposed representatives as follows:

St Alban's:	Malcolm Rutter
	Sylvia Rutter
St Catherine's:	Phillipa Cooper
	Margaret Mason
St Edmund's:	Brian Mutch
	Anne Gray

St Mary Magdalene's:	Lesley Tate
	John Burton

St Michael's:	Michelle MacCallum
	John Burrows

These people were accepted unanimously by the APCM

The Revd. Elizabeth Bland thanked all those who have offered to stand again for the PCC, and welcomed the new member. She thanked PCC members and all the DCC members from each Church for all their hard work.

7. Election of Deanery Synod Representatives

There was no need to elect new members for Deanery Synod as the current Synod members, John Burton and Brian Mutch are in post for another year. There is still 1 place remaining for anyone who feels they would like to represent the parish on Synod and Michele Macallam offered to stand for the remaining year. Anne Gray proposed, Bill Armstrong seconded and it was carried unanimously. Rev Elizabeth thanked John and Brian for all they continue to do as our Deanery Synod reps.

8. Secretary Report to PCC.

Acceptance of the report agreed unanimously.

Rev Elizabeth thanked Julie for her work as PCC secretary.

9. Electoral Roll Report

Julie Robson reported that the number on the electoral roll has fallen to 189 and thanked those in each church who helped with gathering the information. Revd Bland thanked JR for her work on the electoral roll.

10. Report on the Proceedings of the Deanery Synod

Brian Mutch had nothing else to add to his report and this was accepted and agreed unanimously.

11. Presentation of Accounts

Bill Armstrong presented the accounts and Rev Elizabeth asked the meeting to accept theses officially. John Burton proposed and Michele Macallam seconded. Agreed unanimously. Rev Elizabeth thanked Bill for all his hard work as treasurer.

12 Appointment of Auditor

BA proposed the continued use of SKS Bailey Group as Parish auditors for 2021-2022. This was seconded by John Burton & passed unanimously.

13. Church Wardens Report

Church Wardens report in booklet. There were no questions.

Michele Macallam added that the parish is still waiting for a faculty to replace St Michael's boiler. She also informed the meeting that Durham County Council had agreed to take over the maintenance of St Edmund's graveyard.

Acceptance of report agreed unanimously. Rev Elizabeth thanked Michele and John for their continued hard work and support.

14. SACT Report

Report is in booklet. EB thanked JK for all her work with SACT.

15. Safeguarding Report

Safeguarding report in booklet.

Report accepted unanimously

16. Any Other Business

No a.o.b.

. Meeting concluded with the Grace at 11.33am

Written Reports for APCM 2023

Electoral Roll Report

The Electoral roll has decreased by 3 (as shown in the table below)
Many thanks to those who have helped in collating this information.

Church Attendance – Electoral Roll		
Electoral Roll 2021/2022		189
Deductions	4	
Additions	1	
Electoral Roll 2022/2023		186
Distribution		
St Alban	21	
St Catherine	15	
St Edmund	88	
St Mary Magdalene	27	
St Michael	35	

Julie Robson Electoral Roll Officer

Annual Report on the proceedings of the PCC and the activities of the parish

Aims and Purposes

The PCC of the Parish of the Upper Skerne has the responsibility of co-operating with the incumbent, once appointed, in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. It also has maintenance responsibilities for the Churches in the Parish.

Objectives and Activities

Since December 2020 Parish of the Upper Skerne has been without a full time Team Rector. The Rev Elizabeth Bland continues part time as Team Vicar with the temporary help of associate priest Rev Peter Robson.

The PCC is committed to enabling as many people as possible to worship at our churches and to become part of our parish community in the Parish of the Upper Skerne. The PCC maintains an overview of worship throughout the parish and makes suggestions on how our services can involve the many groups that live within our parish. Our services and worship put faith into practice through prayer and scripture, music and sacrament.

When planning our activities for the year, we have considered the Commission's guidance on public benefit and, in particular, the supplementary guidance on charities for the advancement of religion. In particular, we try to enable ordinary people to live out their faith as part of our parish community through:

- Worship and prayer; learning about the gospel; and developing their knowledge and trust in Jesus.
- Provision of pastoral care for people living in the parish.
- Missionary and outreach work.

To facilitate this work it is important that we maintain the fabric of our Churches.

Now that the worst of the pandemic seems to be over, churches have returned to a fortnightly pattern of worship, with the exception of St Alban's which has a monthly Holy Communion service on the fourth Sunday of the month. Services continue to be available via Zoom from St Edmund's. The parish notice sheets are now produced fortnightly and continue to be delivered both in person and also by email. Many thanks to all those who hand deliver the notice sheets. This has been very much appreciated for all those who are unable to attend church.

Achievements and Performance

This is the seventeenth full year of meetings of the PCC of the Parish of the Upper Skerne. The PCC met on the following dates in 2022– February, May, July and October, with a special meeting in December to discuss the Parish Prioritisation Process Workbook with Ven Libby Wilkinson and Ven Rick Simpson

All meetings were held in person.

There were four meetings of the PCC Standing Committee in January, April, June and October 2022.

Church closures due to the Coronavirus pandemic, have limited opportunities to address the themes chosen for last year and so they will remain the same for this year.

1. Diocesan Priorities – Growth, Families & Young People, Poverty
2. Finances
3. Safeguarding Training
4. Spiritual Growth
5. New service Patterns

It was decided that, since services have settled into a regular pattern, there was no need to continue with the Parish Recovery Group.

A new Communications Group has been established to look at effective ways of communication throughout the parish. Questionnaires were sent out to parish members and these are now being processed, with the aim of improving all forms of communication, especially website, notice sheets and magazine.

We have Facebook and Twitter pages & a website, as well as individual church information on A Church Near You website.

PCC Minutes are issued to members via email. DCC minutes are received following DCC meetings in each of the churches.

Julie Robson PCC Secretary

Safeguarding Report

Safeguarding Issues:

Over the past year there have been no safeguarding issues.

Safeguarding in the Parish of the Upper Skerne:

Legally, the Parish has a number of requirements and responsibilities. The PCC was provided with all documents necessary to comply with its duty to have regard to the House of Bishop's guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults. This is reviewed annually.

Safeguarding Training

All safeguarding refresher training at all 3 levels has been completed by anyone requiring it. Basic Awareness and Foundation training is completed online, but Leadership was done in person over 2 sessions at St Alban's church in November 2022.

DBS Checks

DBS checks were needed again as they now need renewing every 3 years.

John Burrows (Validator) and Julie Robson (Administrator) to date, have almost completed the renewals for those needing them.

Julie Robson Parish Safeguarding Officer

Acting Treasurers Report and Accounts for 2022 (Accounts on separate sheets)

Income was considerably increased in 2022 by two significant factors: a bequest to St Edmund's Church of £103,366.36, and fund-raising to replace the boiler at St Michael's which raised £16,010.72. If these two amounts were removed from the parish income it would leave a sum of £142,656, which would be very close to the parish income in 2021. The bequest to St Edmund's was 'to maintain the fabric of the building' and so has been placed in a restricted fund for that purpose.

Planned giving across the parish remained stable although collections at services increased by 30% - another sign of recovery from the pandemic as this figure includes collections at baptisms, weddings and funerals. This is also reflected by the increase of 12.5% in fees from weddings and funerals.

Expenditure increased from £132,684 in 2021 to £153,433 – an increase of 16%. This was almost entirely due to the spending of £15,640 on the replacement of St Michael's boiler and a further £2,190 on the installation of LED lighting. In addition, £3,141 was spent on building work at St Edmund's.

Other increases in expenditure were in parish share (3%), and in the Administrator's salary (32%). These were offset by falls in general running expenses (-15%) and in clergy expenses (-24%).

Most of the **church accounts** were in surplus – ranging from St Edmund's (£6,164) to St Michael's (£1,434). St Alban's and St Catherine's were in deficit by £555 and £448 respectively.

Looking forward, there are factors which need to be considered. Our parish share pledge has increased this year by 33% to £72,500. This was a correction in our pledge level following the years of the pandemic and it is unlikely that we will face such an increase again. It is, however, likely that the diocese will ask us to consider an increase in line with inflation, currently 10.4% but predicted to fall later in the year. At a time when the level of giving in the parish is static, this will inevitably necessitate some serious thought. We have been asked, as part of the Parish Prioritisation Process, to work with the Revd Paul Child on parish giving. It will be interesting to hear his thoughts. As part of the same process, the Archdeacon of Durham has asked us to review our current formula for allocating parish share among our churches. That might lead to some adjustments in the amounts contributed by each of our churches.

Rising energy costs and general inflation are also likely to have an impact on our churches, especially as energy contracts come up for renewal.

Bill Armstrong April 2023

Annual Fabric Report

The two Churchwardens attended a Swearing in Service online and have attended various training events during the year since May 2022

One, or both, of the wardens have attended all but one DCC and all PCC meetings along with Ministerial Team meetings, Steering Group, Worship Leaders' meetings and the various meetings of the Parish Recovery Group which has planned and successfully maintained the re-opening of all five churches in the Parish but has now terminated. Arrangements for Funerals, Weddings and Baptisms have been kept constantly under review.

Faculties have been completed for the re-ordering of the Garden of Remembrance at East End Cemetery, St Mary Magdalene's, Trimdon Village. The transfer of maintenance of St Edmund's graveyard to the local authority was completed.

The boiler replacement and installation of LED lighting were completed at St Michael's where a Bronze Eco Award was achieved.

The wardens are represented on the Environment, Governance and Communications Groups.

The five churches are in generally good condition with maintenance being carried out as necessary with all relevant approvals. Several of the churches are awaiting overdue Quinquennial Inspections.

We thank Julie for all her hard work as Parish Administrator.

The Wardens have continued to work closely with Elizabeth and Peter seeking to ensure that they both have our full support.

Michele McCallum & John Burrows 21/4/23

Report on the proceedings of Deanery Synod

February:

Stockton Community Partnership, established to bring communities together to reach out to people and organisations, to work together to raise aspirations, tackle poverty, isolation, and loneliness.

May:

Growing Faith, Talk given by Catherine Simpson, who works two days a week as a school Chaplain and delivers the Growing Faith initiative.

September:

Held at St Albans, Items discussed: DSMPC membership, Parish Share, how to grow disciples.

November: Diocesan Transformation.

I wrote the following in 2020, and it is still the same today.

Reflection: All very interesting, but still feel we are a long way off integrating into the Deanery, I feel that we are still a long way off from being a full part of what is actually going on, perhaps this will come about when and if we ever get back to normal

Brian Mutch Deanery Synod Representative

Parish of the Upper Skerne

Parish Accounts 2022

1. Consolidated Account

	Note	Unrestricted Funds £	Unrestricted designated Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Endowment Funds £	TOTAL 2022 £	TOTAL 2021 £
	RECEIPTS/INCOME						
	Voluntary giving						
1	Planned giving	£54,833.20				£54,833.20	£54,023.43
3	Collections at services	£18,328.78				£18,328.78	£14,103.03
4	All other giving and voluntary receipts, including special appeals (recurring and one-off)	£13,536.04		£6,717.00		£20,253.04	£10,583.90
6	Gift Aid recovered (planned giving and one-off donations)	£15,273.23				£15,273.23	£31,400.13
7	Legacies received (capital value)			£103,366.36		£103,366.36	£4,590.99
8	Grants (include recurring and one-off)	£4,642.00		£12,619.72		£17,261.72	£1,000.00
	Total voluntary giving	£106,613.25		£122,703.08		£229,316.33	£115,701.48
	Activities for generating funds						
9	Fundraising activities (gross proceeds)	£5,673.71		£1,641.00		£7,314.71	£6,805.03
	Income from investments						
10	Dividends, interest, income from property etc.	£552.60		£2,867.05		£3,419.65	£115.08
	Church activities						
11	Fees retained by PCC (weddings, funerals etc.)	£17,383.40				£17,383.40	£15,453.20
12	Trading activities (gross proceeds), NOT fundraising	£4,327.61				£4,327.61	£3,378.00
	Other incoming resources						
13	Other receipts/income not already listed PLEASE NOTE BRIEF DETAILS IN BOX E	£271.66				£271.66	£1,830.11
	Totals (from Financial Statements)						
A	RECEIPTS/INCOME	£28,208.98	£0.00	£4,508.05	£0.00	£32,717.03	£27,581.42
B	COMBINED TOTAL	£134,822.23	£0.00	£127,211.13	£0.00	£262,033.36	£143,282.90
	PLANNED GIVERS AND LEGACIES						
14	Number of planned givers					124	
16	Number of new legacies received in year					1	
	PAYMENTS/EXPENDITURE						
	Costs of generating funds						
	Costs of fundraising activities	£1,117.08				£1,117.08	£1,362.38
	Church activities						
	Mission giving and donations	£3,272.04	£9,793.97	£1,400.00		£14,466.01	£3,338.35
	Diocesan parish share contribution	£54,500.00				£54,500.00	£52,850.00
	Salaries, wages and honoraria	£13,851.60				£13,851.60	£10,542.60
	Clergy and staff expenses	£3,401.83				£3,401.83	£4,486.98
	Church expenses						
	Mission and evangelism costs						
	Church running expenses (including governance)	£33,114.97		£3,220.58		£36,335.55	£42,562.25
	Church utility bills	£9,131.55				£9,131.55	£10,481.25
	Costs of trading	£2,244.99				£2,244.99	£2,950.99
	Major capital expenditure						
	Major repairs to the church building	£2,690.00		£15,140.31		£17,830.31	£1,200.00
	Major repairs to church hall/other PCC property including redecoration						
	New building work to the church, church hall, clergy housing or other PCC property.						
	Other expenditure						
	Other payments/expenditure not already listed PLEASE NOTE BRIEF DETAILS IN BOX E	£554.33				£554.33	£2,909.38
	Totals (from Financial Statements)						
	PAYMENTS/EXPENDITURE						
	COMBINED TOTAL	£123,878.39	£9,793.97	£19,760.89	£0.00	£153,433.25	£132,684.18

2. Statement of Parish and Church Balances at 31st December 2021

	Parish	St A	St C	St E	St MM	St M	
CCLA		£13,488.12		£105,362.71	£8,359.69	£12,272.05	£139,482.57
DBF			£68,454.11	£5.00	£5,216.07	£8,172.42	£81,847.60
Business			£3,455.67		£4,114.01		£34,460.58
			£17,867.83			£9,023.07	
Current	£11,300.30	£4,077.86	£2,326.13	£18,906.47	£25,639.85	£1,323.43	£63,574.04
TOTALS	£11,300.30	£17,565.98	£92,103.74	£124,274.18	£43,329.62	£30,790.97	£319,364.79
Restricted Funds	£3,473.02		£68,454.11	£99,514.06		£579.41	£172,020.60
Designated Funds	£954.73			£2,681.73	£2,866.83		£6,503.29
Endowments			£3,094.35	£105.00	£1,209.29	£10,074.32	£14,482.96

3. Restricted and Designated Funds

St Catherine's Building Fund (restricted)

Interest	£928.83
End of year balance	£68,454.11

St Edmund's – Canon Eden Account (restricted)

Interest	£1.43
End of year balance	£5.19

St Edmund's – Gordon Morris bequest (restricted)

Income	£99,509.06
End of year balance	£99,509.06

St Michael's – various Trust Funds (restricted)

Interest	£6.12
End of year balance	£208.62

St Michael's – Boiler Fund (restricted)

Income	£16,010.72
Expenditure	£15,640.31
End of year balance	£370.41

PCC Account – AV equipment (restricted)

Expenditure	£78.98
End of year balance	£221.02

PCC Account – Refugee Support (restricted)

Income	£4,652.00
Expenditure	£1,400.00
End of year balance	£3,252.00

St Edmund's – various designated funds

Income	£1,411.70
Expenditure	£1,347.51
End of year balance	£2,681.73

PCC Account – youth work (designated)

Opening Balance £954.73

No activity

4. PCC Treasurer's Report

Income was considerably increased in 2022 by two significant factors: a bequest to St Edmund's Church of £103,366.36, and fund-raising to replace the boiler at St Michael's which raised £16,010.72. If these two amounts were removed from the parish income it would leave a sum of £142,656, which would be very close to the parish income in 2021. The bequest to St Edmund's was 'to maintain the fabric of the building' and so has been placed in a restricted fund for that purpose.

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Rising energy costs and general inflation are also likely to have an impact on our churches, especially as energy contracts come up for renewal.

Bill Armstrong

April 2023



Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/
members of

Charity Name

The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of the Upper Skerne

On accounts for the year
ended

31st December 2022

Charity no
(if any)

1132664

Set out on pages

(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)

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

Responsibilities and
basis of report

As the charity trustees of the Trust, 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 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 (other than that disclosed below *) in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

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

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

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

Signed:

G Fletcher

Date:

13th March 2023

Name:

GORDON FLETCHER

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

CHARTERED MEMBER OF THE INSTITUTE OF INTERNAL
AUDITORS
— C.M.I.I.A.

Address:

104 BROWNING HILL

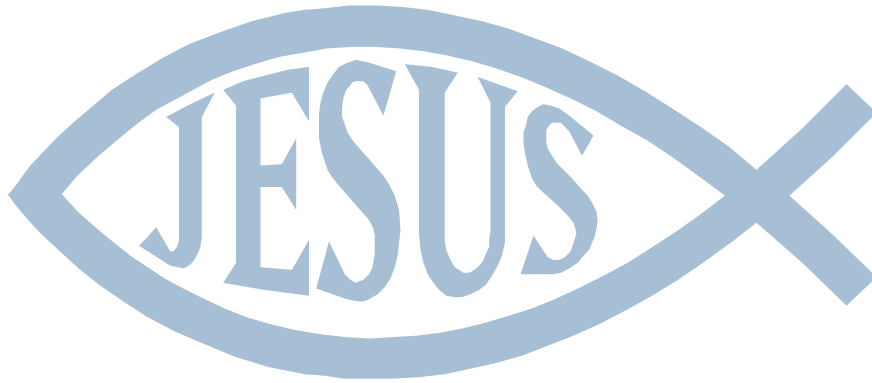
COXHOLE

DH6 4SA

Accounts

PARISH OF THE UPPER SKERNE

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL



ANNUAL REPORT

2022

At

St Catherine's Church, Fishburn

Sunday 29th May

Commencing at

11 am

Annual Parochial church meeting Agenda

1. Prayers
2. Apologies for Absence
3. Minutes of last meeting
4. Matters Arising
5. Election of Church Wardens
6. Election of PCC Members
7. Election of Deanery Synod Representative
8. Secretary Report to the PCC
9. Electoral Roll Report
10. Report on the Proceedings at Deanery Synod
11. Presentation of Accounts (see separate report)
12. Auditor/Independent Examiner for Accounts Report (see separate)
13. Church Wardens Report
14. Sedgefield Area Churches Together Report
15. Safeguarding Report
16. Any other business
17. Closing Prayers

Parish of the Upper Skerne
Minutes of APCM, 23rd May 2021 at 7 pm , Via Zoom and in person at
St Edmund's Church, Sedgefield

1. Prayers were led by The Revd. Elizabeth Bland, who welcomed those attending in person & those attending via Zoom

2.a Present:

In person –

The Revd. Elizabeth Bland, The Revd. Peter Robson, Brian Mutch, Bill Armstrong, John Burrows, John Burton, Phillipa Cooper, Malcolm Rutter, Sylvia Rutter, Brenda Moore, Robert Elders, Ann Elders, Michael King, Julie Robson, Asa Whatnell, Kathryn Mulvanney, Anne Gray.

Via Zoom -

The Revd. Martin King, Alison King, Suzanne Hopper, Chris Rowsby, Michele Maccallam, Janet Dean, Jill Bowman, Lesley Tate.

2.b Apologies

Judith King, Linda Clements, Julie Rowsby

Meeting for the Election of Churchwardens

1.Election of Church Wardens:

Written nominations were received for Michele Maccallam & John Burrows and these nomination forms were signed and seconded. Both nominees were accepted unanimously, and The Revd. Elizabeth Bland declared them elected, and thanked Bill Armstrong for his service and support during the difficult past year.

Annual Parochial Church Meeting

1. Minutes of the 2020 APCM

The minutes were approved as a true record, proposed by Bill Armstrong & seconded by Michael King and passed unanimously.

2 Matters Arising

None.

3.Election of PCC members

Readers and Clergy are ex-officio members

PCC members: DCC's have proposed representatives as follows:

St Alban's:	Malcolm Rutter
	Sylvia Rutter
St Catherine's:	Phillipa Cooper
	Carol Mason
St Edmund's:	Brian Mutch
	Anne Gray

St Mary Magdalene's:	Lesley Tate
	John Burton

These people were accepted by the APCM

The Revd. Elizabeth Bland thanked all those who have stood down from the PCC for all their work & welcomed the new members, she thanked PCC members and all the DCC members from each Church for all their hard work.

4. Election of Deanery Synod Representatives

There was no need to elect new members for Deanery Synod as the current Synod members, John Burton and Brian Mutch are in post for another 2 years. There is still 1 place remaining for anyone who feels they would like to represent the parish on Synod. Thanks were expressed to Brian & John for taking on this role once again.

5. Electoral Roll Report.

JR reported this was an update of the Roll this year, not a full revision, she thanked those in each church who helped with this. The number on the roll has fallen to 192. Revd Bland thanked JR for her work on the electoral roll.

6. Secretary's Report

No comments were made about the report.

The acceptance of JR report was proposed by JBurrows and seconded by AG & passed unanimously. Revd Bland thanked JR for her work on the report & all her work as secretary..

7. Report on the Proceedings of the Deanery Synod

BM said there was nothing to report on Deanery Synod as there have been no meetings over the past year due to the pandemic situation.

8. Presentation of Accounts

BA explained the printed accounts; they are for the period March 2020 to April 2021. He stated that this year's accounts are bound to be affected by the Covid 19 pandemic; however, it is not clear as yet, by how much.

Weddings and funerals have been affected by church closures and so cash collection which would normally be taken at these services have been badly affected. Planned giving has held up well. Parish share payments were reduced last year and will be reviewed later this year. Acceptance of this report was proposed by PC seconded by AG & passed unanimously.

PC proposed a vote of thanks to district treasurers & BA for all they do.

EB echoed PCs comments to say it is really appreciated that people look after the finances and she hopes and prays for a rosier future.

9. Church Wardens Report

Church Wardens report in booklet. There were no questions. Acceptance of this report was proposed by PC & seconded by MK & passed unanimously. EB thanked JB & BA for all their work in what has been an exceptionally challenging period and for their wonderful support.

10 Appointment of Auditor

BA proposed the appointment of SKS Bailey Group as Parish auditors for 2020-2021. This was seconded by MK & passed unanimously. Charges have remained the same as last year.

11. Safeguarding Report

Safeguarding report in booklet.

There have been no incidents reported this year.

JR thanked CM and RS for the very detailed data base which they prepared. She will be able to identify training needs as they arise and will contact anyone who needs to refresh their training. She also thanked all those in the individual churches who are willing to act as points of contact for safeguarding. EB thanked JR for her work as safeguarding officer. Acceptance of the report was proposed by JB & seconded by PC.

12. SACT Report

Report is in booklet. EB thanked JK for all her work with SACT.

13. Team Vicar's Report

This report is in the booklet, there were no questions. MK thanked EB, on behalf of the Parish for all she has done in the last year to maintain worship in the parish. He also thanked PR for his support. This was supported by all in attendance.

14. A.O.B

14.1 Letter from Judith Featherstone and Sylvia Rutter.

EB read out a letter from JF and SR, informing the APCM that the Luncheon Club at St Alban's would not be reopening, even when restrictions are eased. It was not an easy decision to make, as the club has been running for almost 40 years. However it was felt that because of the health issues and ages of the attendees, no chances could be taken with their health. The bank account will be closed and any money given to St Alban's church as a donation.

Meeting closed with the Grace at 7.23 pm

Secretary Report of the PCC

Aims and Purposes

The PCC of the Parish of the Upper Skerne has the responsibility of co-operating with the incumbent, once appointed, in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. It also has maintenance responsibilities for the Churches in the Parish.

Objectives and Activities

Since December 2020 Parish of the Upper Skerne has been without a full time Team Rector. The Rev Elizabeth Bland continues part time as Team Vicar with the temporary help of associate priest Rev Peter Robson.

The PCC is committed to enabling as many people as possible to worship at our churches and to become part of our parish community in the Parish of the Upper

Skerne. The PCC maintains an overview of worship throughout the parish and makes suggestions on how our services can involve the many groups that live within our parish. Our services and worship put faith into practice through prayer and scripture, music and sacrament.

When planning our activities for the year, we have considered the Commission's guidance on public benefit and, in particular, the supplementary guidance on charities for the advancement of religion. In particular, we try to enable ordinary people to live out their faith as part of our parish community through:

- Worship and prayer; learning about the gospel; and developing their knowledge and trust in Jesus.
- Provision of pastoral care for people living in the parish.
- Missionary and outreach work.

To facilitate this work it is important that we maintain the fabric of our Churches.

Now that the worst of the pandemic seems to be over, churches have returned to a fortnightly pattern of worship, with the exception of St Alban's which has a monthly Holy Communion service on the fourth Sunday of the month. Services continue to be available via Zoom from both St Edmund's and St Michael's and home communions are now being offered. Contact has been kept with parishioners through regular phone calls from both clergy and laity. The parish notice sheets are now produced fortnightly and continue to be delivered both in person and also by email. Many thanks to all those who hand deliver the notice sheets. This has been very much appreciated for all those who are shielding.

As part of our whole parish preparation for embarking on the process of advertising for a new incumbent in the Upper Skerne, and after taking advice from the Archdeacon of Auckland, Rick Simpson, all governance committee members were invited to attend 3 half day away sessions. These sessions, led by Rev Martin Anderson, were designed to help the parish, as a whole, to work closely together and show evidence to the Diocese that it is ready to move forward to work with and welcome a new incumbent.

Julie Robson PCC Secretary

.Achievements and Performance

This is the sixteenth full year of meetings of the PCC of the Parish of the Upper Skerne. The PCC met on the following dates in 2021 – February, May, July and November, with 2 special meetings in February and March. The first four meetings were conducted on Zoom because of restrictions on meeting in person but by July restrictions were lifted and the meetings were held in person.

There were two meeting of the PCC Standing Committee in July and November.

There have also been 2 PCC meetings in February and May 2022.

Church closures due to the Coronavirus pandemic, have limited opportunities to address the themes chosen for last year and so they will remain the same for this year.

1. Diocesan Priorities – Growth, Families & Young People, Poverty
2. Finances
3. Safeguarding Training
4. Spiritual Growth
5. New service Patterns

A Parish Recovery Group was set up at the start of the pandemic in order to look at alternative ways of worshipping as well as leading the parish through some very difficult times. The group, consisting of Rev Elizabeth Bland, John Burrows, Bill Armstrong, Michael King, Brian Mutch, Phillipa Cooper, Michele Maccallam, Julie Robson and Rev Peter Robson, now meet less regularly due to the resumption of normal church services. Meetings are held on Zoom and have been very useful to implement a parish wide response and return to usual practices.

Communication: email continues to be the preferred method of sending and receiving information. We have a Facebook page & a website, which is proving popular. We have also set up a Twitter page to keep people updated. PCC Minutes are issued to members via email. DCC minutes are received following DCC meetings in each of the churches.

Julie Robson PCC Secretary

Church Attendance – Electoral Roll

Electoral Roll 2020/2021	192
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Deductions	9
------------	---

Additions	6
-----------	---

Electoral Roll 2021/2022	189
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Distribution

St Alban	22
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St Catherine	16
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St Edmund	90
-----------	----

St Mary Magdalene	27
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St Michael	34
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Deanery Synod Report

The first meeting that I went to after the pandemic was September 21.

This was mainly taken up with election of members of which I was selected for the Diocesan synod. Then a talk about Eco churches. An explanation of what Deanery synod does for new members and is one of the largest in the Diocese.

Next meeting 30th November all about the new resourcing church at Wynyard and Parish Share.

Next meeting 28th February What churches were doing for the Jubilee

Stockton community partnership which took up most of the meeting and has NO bearing for us as we are NOT in the Stockton council area. However, there was a round table discussion about parishes supporting communities i.e. Foodbanks etc
Brian Mutch

Financial Review

See Attached Treasurer report

Administrative Information

The Parish of the Upper Skerne covers an area including St Michael's Church, Bishop Middleham, St Catherine's Church, Fishburn, St Edmund's Church, Sedgfield, St Mary Magdalene's Church, Trimdon Village & St Alban's Church, Trimdon Grange. It is part of the Diocese of Durham, within the Church of England.

The church office moved to St Alban's Church, Trimdon Grange in January 2021

The address for correspondence is : St Alban's Church, Northside Terrace, Trimdon Grange TS29 6HB

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) is a charity registered with the Charity Commissioners. Registered Charity Number: 1132664.

<i>Incumbent</i>	In Vacancy
<i>Team Vicar</i>	The Revd. Elizabeth Bland
<i>Associate Priest</i>	The Reverend Peter Robson

<i>Readers</i>	Mr Bill Armstrong Mr Michael King	Parish Treasurer
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<i>Wardens</i>	Mrs Michele Maccallam Mr John Burrows
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<i>Deanery Synod</i>	Mr Brian Mutch Mr John Burton	PCC Lay Chair
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PCC members who were elected from April 2021 until the date this report was approved are:

<i>St Edmund's :</i>	Mr Brian Mutch Mrs Anne Gray
<i>St Michael's :</i>	Mrs Michele Maccallam Mr John Burrows
<i>St Alban's</i>	Mrs Sylvia Rutter Mr Malcolm Rutter
<i>St Catherine's:</i>	Mrs Phillipa Cooper Mrs Carol Mason
<i>St Mary Magdalene's</i>	Mrs Lesley Tate Mr John Burton
<i>PCC Secretary</i>	Mrs Julie Robson

Structure, governance and management

The Parochial Church Council is a corporate body established by the Church of England. The PCC operates under the Parochial Church Council Powers Measure. The PCC is a Registered Charity The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. All Church attendees are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and stand for election to the PCC.

Attendance at PCC Meetings January – December 2021

Name of PCC Member	No of meetings Attended	% attendance
The Revd. Elizabeth Bland	6	100%
John Burrows	6	100%
Michele Maccallam	6	100%
Michael King	4	66%
Anne Gray	6	100%
Bill Armstrong	5	83%
John Burton	4	66%
Brian Mutch	6	100%
Sylvia Rutter	3	50%
Malcolm Rutter	4	66%
Carol Mason	6	100%
Lesley Tate	3	50%
Phillipa Cooper	6	100%
Linda Clement (until May 2021)	4	100%

Church Wardens' Report

Parish of the Upper Skerne
Churchwardens' Report to APCM 29 May 2022

The two Churchwardens attended a Swearing in Service online and have attended various training events during the year since May 2021

One, or both, of the wardens have attended every DCC and all, except one, PCC meeting along with Ministerial Team meetings, Worship Leaders' meetings and the various meetings of the Parish Recovery Group which has planned and successfully maintained the re-opening of all five churches in the Parish, even with the revisions of Government and Church of England Guidance or Regulations. The arrangements for Funerals, Weddings and Baptisms have been kept constantly under review.

Faculties have been applied for at St Mary Magdalene's, for the re-ordering of the Garden of Remembrance at East End Cemetery, and for the new boiler installation at St Michael's. Emergency repairs to the retaining wall at St Michael's were arranged under List B approval from Archdeacon Rick. The transfer of maintenance of St Edmund's graveyard to the local authority is anticipated to be completed in the near future.

The transfer of the Parish Office to St Albans has shown to be an excellent decision. We thank Julie for all her hard work.

The Wardens have continued to work closely Elizabeth and Peter seeking to ensure that they both have our full support.

Michele McCallum

John Burrows

Sedgefield Area Churches Together Annual Report 2021-2022

Another year when Covid has significantly impacted our lives; it has forced us to re-evaluate some of the things we do and our outlook on life in general. Despite restrictions, SACT has had an active year.

Cafe COP – one of the first opportunities for people to meet together. A time to reflect on our responsibility to the planet. Some wonderful displays and stalls in St Edmund's and in the Parish Hall.

Advent Group – A good representation from each of the denominations. Meaningful discussion followed from Chris Humble's lead in these sessions.

Tree at the Christmas Tree Festival using decorations made at Cafe COP

Carols in the car park – we were looking forward to this again as it was so successful last time. The weather defeated us though. However, Carols on the Green did go ahead with a large gathering of people

Taize Service – a lovely reflective service organised held at St Albans.

Lent Day – A study day, led by Chris, that was well represented by people from the different denominations. The informal feedback afterwards was very positive.

SACT continues to enable the different Christian denominations to work collaboratively. I am proud of what it has achieved. I hope and pray that the Christian message may continue to be shared and celebrated in the Sedgefield area and beyond.

Judith King

May 2022

Moderator SACT

Safeguarding Report

Safeguarding Issues:

Over the past year there have been no safeguarding issues.

Safeguarding in the Parish of the Upper Skerne:

Legally, the Parish has a number of requirements and responsibilities. The PCC were provided with all documents necessary to comply with their obligations. A file of information including guidance notes, checklists, policies and procedures were distributed to all five churches. Together with posters which must be displayed in each church.

Safeguarding Training

A named contact for each church agreed to help with Safeguarding within their church and helped considerably with sorting out training requirements that some parishioners would need to undertake to comply with Diocesan policy.

It will be 3 years in September since the last whole parish safeguarding training was done and so Julie Robson, as safeguarding officer, will review this with the Diocesan Safeguarding Team to establish what refresher training needs to be undertaken.

There are several levels of training in operation.

Basic on-line training, for all church officers and anyone who has to complete any other higher level of training.

Foundation course is also now available on line. Recommended for anyone who has a role which involves work with children, young people or vulnerable adults. Also for church wardens, PCC members, vergers, bell tower captains and bell ringing teachers.

Leadership for people who **lead** activities for children and young people and/or adults who may be vulnerable. Also church wardens, parish safeguarding officer, bell tower captains and bell ringing teachers.

Safer Recruitment and People Management for anyone involved in the recruitment or line management of church officers (employees, elected members and volunteers), those responsible for administering DBS, church wardens and parish safeguarding officer.

Raising Awareness of Domestic Abuse for all clergy, Readers, Liscensed Lay Ministers and anyone holding the Bishop's licence, commission, authorisation or permission, parish safeguarding officer, PCC members

Julie Robson

Parish Safeguarding Officer.

Parish of the Upper Skerne

Parish Accounts 2021

1. Consolidated Account

RECEIPTS/INCOME			2020	Difference
Voluntary giving				
Planned giving	£54,023.43		£51,166.79	£2,856.64
Collections at services	£14,103.03		£6,846.71	£7,256.32
All other giving and voluntary receipts, including special appeals (recurring and one-off)	£10,583.90		£7,001.43	£3,582.47
Gift Aid recovered (planned giving and one-off donations)	£31,400.13			£31,400.13
Legacies received (capital value)	£4,590.99		£0.00	£4,590.99
Grants (include recurring and one-off)	£1,000.00		£0.00	£1,000.00
Total voluntary giving	£115,701.48		£65,014.93	£50,686.55
Activities for generating funds				
Fundraising activities (gross proceeds)	£6,805.03		£3,482.88	£3,322.15
Income from investments				
Dividends, interest, income from property etc.	£368.00		£353.37	£14.63
Church activities				
Fees retained by PCC (weddings, funerals etc.)	£25,895.00		£10,714.00	£15,181.00
Trading activities (gross proceeds), NOT fundraising	£3,378.00		£2,868.00	£510.00
Other incoming resources				
Other receipts/income not already listed PLEASE NOTE BRIEF DETAILS IN BOX E	£1,830.11		£1,129.07	£701.04
Totals (from Financial Statements)				
TOTAL RECEIPTS/INCOME	£153,977.62		£83,562.25	£70,415.37
PAYMENTS/EXPENDITURE				
Costs of generating funds				
Costs of fundraising activities	£1,362.38		£412.00	-£950.38
Church activities				
Mission giving and donations	£3,338.35		£3,045.50	-£292.85
Diocesan parish share contribution	£52,850.00		£60,650.00	£7,800.00
Salaries, wages and honoraria	£10,542.60		£8,277.30	-£2,265.30
Clergy and staff expenses	£4,486.98		£5,357.90	£870.92
Church expenses				
Mission and evangelism costs	£0.00		£0.00	£0.00
Church running expenses (including governance)	£42,562.25		£25,198.78	-£17,363.47
Church utility bills	£10,481.25		£11,838.65	£1,357.40
Costs of trading	£2,950.99		£339.99	-£2,611.00
Major capital expenditure				
Major repairs to the church building	£1,200.00		£7,426.00	£6,226.00
Major repairs to church hall/other PCC property including redecoration	£0.00		£2,356.80	£2,356.80
New building work to the church, church hall, clergy housing or other PCC property.	£0.00		£0.00	£0.00
Other expenditure				
Other payments/expenditure not already listed PLEASE NOTE BRIEF DETAILS IN BOX E	£2,909.38		£3,659.78	£750.40
Totals (from Financial Statements)				
TOTAL PAYMENTS/EXPENDITURE	£132,684.18		£128,562.70	-£4,121.48
COMBINED TOTAL	£21,293.44		-£45,000.45	

2. Statement of Parish and Church Balances at 31st December 2021

	Parish	St A	St C	St E	St MM	St M	
CCLA		£13,313.02		£3,452.36	£8,251.15	£12,106.53	£37,123.06
DBF			£70,619.63	£108.76	£1,209.29	£7,860.35	£79,798.03
Business			£3,452.33		£3,153.15		£24,456.06
			£17,850.58				
Current	£11,300.30	£4,077.86	£3,723.28	£14,438.21	£23,222.92	£9,162.92	£65,925.49
TOTALS	£11,300.30	£17,390.88	£95,645.82	£17,999.33	£35,836.51	£29,129.80	£207,302.64

3. Restricted and Designated Funds

St Catherine's Building Fund (restricted)

Interest	£36.77
End of year balance	£70,619.63

St Edmund's – Canon Eden Account (restricted)

Interest	£0.06
End of year balance	£108.76

St Mary Magdalene's – Tithe Act (restricted)

Interest	£0.63
End of year balance	£1,209.29

St Michael's – various Trust Funds (restricted)

Interest	£215.20
End of year balance	£7,860.35

Parish Account – retirement collections (restricted)

Income	£1,465.20
Expenditure	£1,465.20
Account closed	

Parish Account – AV equipment

Income	£300.00
End of year balance	£300.00

St Edmund's – various designated funds

Income	£818.16
Expenditure	£121.25
End of year balance	£4528.67

Parish Account – youth work (designated)

Opening Balance	£954.73
No activity	

4. PCC Treasurer's Report

This year's accounts show a welcome return to a more normal situation, following the effects of the pandemic last year. Despite the fact that church buildings were again closed for worship between January and March, all of the figures for giving, cash collections and fees show an increase on 2020.

In addition, a reduction in parish share payments of £7,800 and the receipt of Gift Aid repayments for both 2019 and 2020, helped the parish towards an overall surplus of £21,040.

All our churches saw a surplus in 2021. The surpluses were, at least in part, explained by the fact that we received two years of Gift Aid repayments.

Overall income increased by £70,000 to a more normal amount of £153,724. This was partly due to two years' Gift Aid repayment (which brought in an additional £13,950). Other sources of income also increased. Planned giving increased by £2,850. The return of baptisms, weddings and funerals led to an increase in collections at those services of £7,256, although it should be noted that this is only 50% of the fall in collections last year. Income from fees increased by £15,180 – more than the drop in fees income last year. Fund-raising activities produced an increase of £3,320 although, again, this does not represent a return to the situation in 2019. Overall expenditure also increased by only £4,120, despite the reduction in our parish share. This can largely be explained by a return to more normal levels of activity in our churches.

Planned giving was quite steady showing an increase of 5.5%. This represents an encouraging feature as it is slightly above the level of giving in 2019. 2021 saw a recovery in other collections, although these are still 30% below the 2019 level. This is explained by the continuing impact of the pandemic on baptisms, weddings and funerals.

The decision was made to reduce further the amount pledged for 2021 Parish Share payments, beyond the reductions forced on us in 2020 by the pandemic. The diocese reduced its request for 2022, acknowledging the fact that we had to draw on our reserves to meet the costs of the pandemic. Now that our financial situation shows signs of recovery, we should be prepared to face an increased Parish Share request from the diocese.

Bill Armstrong

April 2022



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 PCC of the Ecclesiastical Parish of the Upper Skerne

On accounts for the year
ended

31st December 2021

Charity no
(if any)

1132664

Set out on pages

(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended DD / MM / YYYY.

Responsibilities and
basis of report

As the charity trustees of the Trust, 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 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 (other than that disclosed below *) in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

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

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

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

Signed:

ELIZABETH LOUISE LAVERY

Date:

10/5/22

Name:

ELIZABETH LOUISE LAVERY

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

ACCA

Address:

FRANKLIN HOUSE, STOCKTON ROAD
SEDFIELD, STOCKTON ON TEES,
TS21 2AG

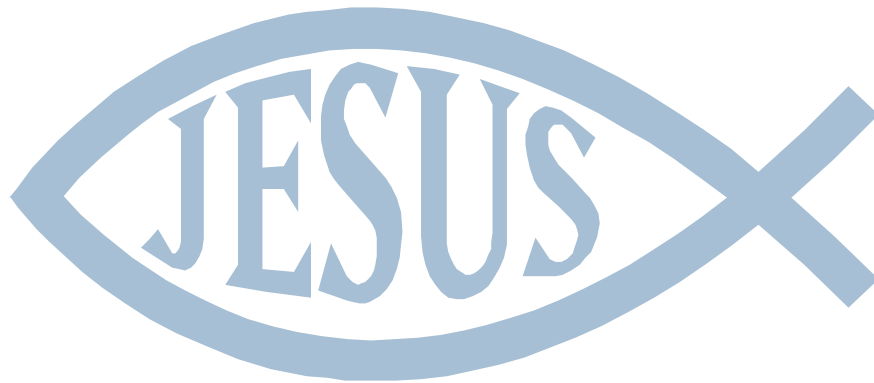
Disclosure

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

Accounts

PARISH OF THE UPPER SKERNE

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL



ANNUAL REPORT

2021

At

St Edmund's Church, Sedgefield

And via Zoom

Sunday 23rd May

Commencing at

7 pm

Agenda

1. Prayers
2. Apologies for Absence

Annual Parochial church meeting

1. Minutes of last meeting
2. Matters Arising
3. Election of Churchwardens
4. Election of PCC Members
5. Election of Deanery Synod Representatives
6. Electoral Roll Report
7. Secretary's Report
8. Report on the proceedings at the Deanery Synod
9. Presentation of Accounts
10. Church Wardens Report
11. Auditor/Independent Examiner for Accounts
12. Safeguarding Report
13. Report by Team Vicar
14. Report from SACT
15. Any Other Business

Closing Prayers

Parish of the Upper Skerne
Minutes of APCM, 12 October at 7 pm , Via Zoom and in person at St
Edmund's Church, Sedgfield

1. Prayers were led by The Revd. Elizabeth Bland, who welcomed those attending in person & those attending via Zoom
She welcomed The Revd. Peter Robson to the Parish.

2.a Present:

In person –

The Revd. Elizabeth Bland, The Revd. Peter Robson, Brian Mutch, Bill Armstrong, Michele Maccallam, Linda Clements, John Burrows, John Burton, Phillipa Cooper, Steve Bland,

Via Zoom -

The Revd. Martin King, Alison King Rachel Stephenson, Brenda Moore, Robert Cooper, Suzanne Hopper, Julie Latheron, David Latheron, Michael King, Chris Rowsby, Julia Rowsby, Anne Gray.

2.b Apologies

Anita Howarth, Janet Deane, Phillip Deane, Lesley Tate, Judith King, Carole Mason, Sylvia Rutter, Malcolm Rutter.

Meeting for the Election of Churchwardens

1.Election of Church Wardens:

Written nominations were received for William Armstrong & John Burrows these nomination forms were signed and seconded. Both nominees were accepted, and The Revd. Elizabeth Bland declared them elected, and thanked them for their service during the difficult last eighteenth months.

Annual Parochial Church Meeting

1. Minutes of the 2019 APCM

The minutes were approved as a true record, proposed by John Burton & seconded by Brian Mutch, and passed unanimously.

2 Matters Arising

None.

3.Election of PCC members

It was requested that if any changes are made by the DCC's that they inform Rachel Stephenson.

Readers and Clergy are ex-officio members

PCC members: DCC's have proposed representatives as follows:

St Alban's: Malcolm Rutter

Sylvia Rutter

St Catherine's: Phillipa Cooper

Carol Mason
St Edmund's: Brian Mutch
Anne Gray
St Mary Magdalene's: Lesley Tate
John Burton
St Michael's: Michele MacCallam
Linda Clements

These people were accepted by the APCM,
The Revd. Elizabeth Bland thanked all those who have stood down from the PCC for all their work & welcomed the new members, she thanked PCC members and all the DCC members from each Church for all their hard work.

4. Election of Deanery Synod Representatives

Brian Mutch (proposed by John Burton & seconded by Michele MacCallam) & John Burton (proposed by Phillipa Cooper & seconded by Linda Clements) were elected unanimously to represent the Parish at Deanery Synod, there is 1 unfilled role , the elections are for a 3 year period. Thanks were expressed to Brian & John for taking on this role once again and to Su Jordan who stepped down.

5. Electoral Roll Report.

RS reported this was an update of the Roll this year, not a full revision, she thanked those in each church who helped with this. The number on the roll has fallen to 195. Revd Bland thanked RS for her work on the electoral roll.

6. Secretary's Report

No comments were made about the report.
The acceptance of RS report was proposed by BM and seconded by CRo & passed unanimously. Revd Bland thanked RS for her work on the report & all her work as secretary, as she is stepping down from her post.

7. Report on the Proceedings of the Deanery Synod

BM agreed to write a report on the previous year & RS will circulate this via e mail.

8. Presentation of Accounts

Copies of the accounts and summary of the year were distributed before the meeting via e mail. BA explained the printed accounts; they are for the period March 2019 to April 2020, he stated that the deficit is due to the St Edmund's Church roof repair. St Catherine's is the only church with a surplus; all others have small surpluses, except St Edmund's, which is larger. Planned giving is slightly up, but collections were down. He stated that this year's accounts are bound to be affected by the Covid 19 pandemic; however, it is not clear as yet, by how much.

Acceptance of this report was proposed by JB seconded by MK & passed unanimously.

PC proposed a vote of thanks to district treasurers & BA for all they do

9. Church Wardens Report

Church Wardens report in booklet. There were no questions. Acceptance of this report was proposed by LC & seconded by JB & passed unanimously. EB thanked JB & BA for all their work in what has been an exceptionally challenging period.

10 Appointment of Auditor

BA proposed the appointment of SKS Bailey Group as Parish auditors for 2019-2020. This was seconded by MK & passed unanimously. It was agreed, however, that if the cost of the work has increased significantly then this will be discussed at the next APCM.

11. Safeguarding Report

Safeguarding report in booklet EB thanked Christine Mutch, who is stepping down from her role, for all her work in the past 18 months and to RS for her help. She thanked all who had taken part in training. Acceptance of the report was proposed by JB & seconded by PC.

12. SACT Report

Report to be circulated via e mail.

13. Team Vicar's Report

This report is in the booklet, there were no questions. MK thanked EB, on behalf of the Parish, for all she has done in the last 18 months, this was supported by all in attendance.

14. A.O.B

14.1 Zoom Church Tap Twinning

EB reported that £630 was raised, which is a fabulous amount, she distributed tap twinning certificates to all the churches as well as the Vicarage & Rectory. She thanked all who supported this effort and to Katherine Cooper-Young and all the children of Zoom Church, who raised so much.

Meeting closed with the Grace at 7.30 pm

Secretary Report of the PCC

Aims and Purposes

The PCC of the Parish of the Upper Skerne has the responsibility of co-operating with the incumbent, once appointed, in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. It also has maintenance responsibilities for the Churches in the Parish.

Objectives and Activities

In December 2020 The Revd. Geoff Short OBE retired from his role as Team Rector of the Parish of the Upper Skerne. The Rev Elizabeth Bland continues part time as Team Vicar with the temporary help of associate priest Rev Peter Robson.

The PCC is committed to enabling as many people as possible to worship at our churches and to become part of our parish community in the Parish of the Upper Skerne. The PCC maintains an overview of worship throughout the parish and makes

suggestions on how our services can involve the many groups that live within our parish. Our services and worship put faith into practice through prayer and scripture, music and sacrament.

When planning our activities for the year, we have considered the Commission's guidance on public benefit and, in particular, the supplementary guidance on charities for the advancement of religion. In particular, we try to enable ordinary people to live out their faith as part of our parish community through:

- Worship and prayer; learning about the gospel; and developing their knowledge and trust in Jesus.
- Provision of pastoral care for people living in the parish.
- Missionary and outreach work.

To facilitate this work it is important that we maintain the fabric our Churches.

The Covid pandemic has had a big impact on our worship with churches being closed for services for the best part of a year. During this time, services have been held via Zoom and contact has been kept with parishioners through regular phone calls from both clergy and laity. The weekly parish notice sheets have been delivered both in person and also by email. Many thanks to all those who hand deliver the notice sheets. This has been very much appreciated for all those who are shielding.

Achievements and Performance

This is the Fifteenth full year of meetings of the PCC of the Parish of the Upper Skerne. The PCC met on the following dates in 2020 – February, September, October and November. Most of these meetings were conducted on Zoom because of restrictions on meeting in person.

There was one meeting of the PCC Standing Committee in January.

Because of church closures due to the Coronavirus pandemic, there has been no opportunity to build on the themes chosen for last year and so they will remain the same for this year.

1. Diocesan Priorities – Growth, Families & Young People, Poverty
2. Finances
3. Safeguarding Training
4. Spiritual Growth
5. New service Patterns

A Parish Recovery Group was set up at the start of the pandemic in order to look at alternative ways of worshipping as well as leading the parish through some very difficult times. The group, consisting of Rev Elizabeth Bland, John Burrows, Bill Armstrong, Michael King, Brian Mutch and Rachel Stephenson, met weekly via zoom.

New ways of worship have been explored with a family service via zoom which has been very successful and can be accessed on Youtube.

Communication: email continues to be the preferred method of sending and receiving information. We have a Facebook page & a new website, which is proving popular. We have also set up a Twitter page to keep people updated. The “A Church Near You” website continues to be a successful new way of people being able to contact the Parish.

PCC Minutes are issued to members via email. DCC minutes are received following DCC meetings in each of the churches.

Julie Robson PCC Secretary

Church Attendance – Electoral Roll

Electoral Roll 2019/2020	195
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Deductions	8
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Additions	5
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Electoral Roll 2020/2021	192
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Distribution

St Alban	21
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St Catherine	15
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St Edmund	93
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St Mary Magdalene	29
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St Michael	33
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Financial Review

See Attached Treasurer report

Administrative Information

The Parish of the Upper Skerne covers an area including St Michael's Church, Bishop Middleham, St Catherine's Church, Fishburn, St Edmund's Church, Sedgely, St Mary Magdalene's Church, Trimdon Village & St Alban's Church, Trimdon Grange. It is part of the Diocese of Durham, within the Church of England.

The church office moved to St Alban's Church, Trimdon Grange in January 2021

The address for correspondence is : St Alban's Church, Northside Terrace, Trimdon Grange TS29 6HB

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) is a charity registered with the Charity Commissioners. Registered Charity Number: 1132664.

<i>Incumbent</i>	In Vacancy
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<i>Team Vicar</i>	The Revd. Elizabeth Bland
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<i>Associate Priest</i>	The Reverend Peter Robson
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<i>Readers</i>	Mr Bill Armstrong	Parish Treasurer
	Mr Michael King	

<i>Wardens</i>	Mr Bill Armstrong
	Mr John Burrows

<i>Deanery Synod</i>	Mr Brian Mutch	PCC Lay Chair
	Mr John Burton	

PCC members who were elected from April 2020 until the date this report was approved are:

St Edmund's : Mr Brian Mutch
Mrs Anne Gray

St Michael's : Mrs Michele Maccallam
Mrs Linda Clements

St Alban's Mrs Sylvia Rutter
Mr Malcolm Rutter

St Catherine's: Mrs Phillipa Cooper
Mrs Carol Mason

St Mary Mrs Lesley Tate
Magdalene's Mr John Burton

PCC Secretary Mrs Julie Robson

Structure, governance and management

The Parochial Church Council is a corporate body established by the Church of England. The PCC operates under the Parochial Church Council Powers Measure. The PCC is a Registered Charity The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. All Church attendees are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and stand for election to the PCC.

Attendance at PCC Meetings January – December 2020

Name of PCC Member	No of meetings Attended	% attendance
The Revd. Elizabeth Bland	4	100%
John Burrows	2	50%
Michael King	4	100%
Rachel Stephenson	3	75%
Bill Armstrong	4	100%
John Burton	3	75%
Brian Mutch	4	100%
Sylvia Rutter	2	50%
Malcolm Rutter	2	50%
Carol Mason (from Oct 2020)	0	0%
Anne Gray (from Oct 2020)	2	100%
Lesley Tate(from Apr 2020)	1	25%
Phillipa Cooper	4	100%
Linda Clement	4	100%
Michele MacCallam	3	75%

Church Wardens' Report

Parish of the Upper Skerne
Churchwardens' Report to APCM 23 May 2021

The two Churchwardens attended a Swearing in Service on line and have attended various training events during the short year since October 2020.

One or both of the wardens have attended every DCC and PCC meeting along with Ministerial Team meetings and the almost weekly meetings of the Parish Recovery Group which has planned and successfully implemented the re-opening of all five churches in the Parish, even with the sometimes daily revisions of Government and Church of England Guidance or Regulations. The ever changing arrangements for Funerals, Weddings and Baptisms have been kept constantly under review.

Work on bringing in the revised Insurance arrangements has overlapped into the re-opening of the churches in respect of producing and updating Health and Safety Policies for each church and related Risk Assessments. Assessments of numbers permitted into each church have been carried out and have worked well under the circumstances.

Repairs have been arranged and completed to St Alban's roof, the re-lighting and paving renewal at St Mary Magdalene and tree removal and replanting have been arranged at St Michael's. Arrangements for the transfer of the Parish Office to St Alban's finally came to fruition and seem to be working well.

The Wardens have continued to work closely with Elizabeth and more recently with Peter seeking to ensure that Elizabeth has our full support.

Bill Armstrong
John Burrows

Team Vicar's Report.

Team Vicar's Report

There was a television advert recently which said something like 'Maybe 2020 will be the year when we start to see things more - clearly...': it was having a bit of word play, of course, around the fact that perfect vision is called 20:20 vision. It was certainly a year when we had more time to reflect, to gaze inwards at ourselves; there was less going on in the outside world; we were at home much more; there was space to think – perhaps, sometimes, too much time to think. Has the past year enabled us to see more clearly what is important? Well, time will tell.

The imposition of the first lockdown fell somewhere around the middle of Lent. It took me until the second half of Holy Week to feel confident enough to advertise and host a Zoom service. The first Zoom Eucharist was, I think, on Maundy Thursday – and very strange it felt too. The Easter Day Zoom was quite well-attended, and there was positive feedback: someone said that it felt like a real parish service and that, although only I was receiving the bread and wine, it felt as if everyone was included. Zoom services continued on a weekly basis during the remainder of the year. Numbers fluctuated, depending on whether or not we were permitted to open churches, and how many services were happening in church buildings, but over the course of the year

there was a steady increase in those attending. Robert Cooper enabled us to join with wonderful choirs in singing hymns on our Zoom services: knowing we were muted meant we could really 'let rip' in the privacy of our homes! Thanks to the Cooper family we were secure in the knowledge that we were operating legally under copyright law. The email circulation list grew during 2020: the 'Friday Round-up' email was plainly valued so much that people wanted their friends and relations to be able to receive it as well. The decision was taken to increase the spiritual content in the notice sheet, both in the paper copies which were being delivered to those unable to access the internet, and in the electronic version. The weekly reflection and prayers were appreciated, as were the orders of service (paper versions and on the website) for prayers at home.

The Churchwardens, Bill Armstrong and John Burrows, worked with people across the parish in ensuring Risk Assessments were conducted to establish how many people were safely able to attend funerals and other services in church. For many months, the self-designated 'Parish Recovery Group' met weekly on Zoom to discuss how best to deal with the unprecedented situation. That we recommenced worship in our buildings as early as we did is in no small part due to the clear desire amongst so many of our regular worshippers that we should do so, and to the willingness and commitment of the people in each church who donned masks, slathered on hand sanitizer and enabled it to happen. We owe a debt of gratitude to them, to our churchwardens, clergy and Readers, and to all who served on the Parish Recovery Group and PCC.

The project which was begun by the Team Rector, Revd Geoff Short, to create a set of seasonal Orders of Service for use across the parish, continued during 2020. The new service booklets, with covers in seasonal colours, have been an excellent innovation and have brought clarity and consistency in worship across the parish. Bill Armstrong's commitment to continuing that work, and his facility with the mysteries of Visual Liturgy, have enabled that task to be completed.

We saw some significant staff changes during the year. Having unfortunately been on sick leave throughout 2020, Revd Geoff Short formally took early retirement on health grounds at the end of December. We wish him and Paula good health and happiness in their new home in Northumberland. In October, it was a pleasure to welcome Revd Peter Robson on to the team as Associate Priest (House for Duty). We do not know exactly how long he will be working with us but he and Julie are valuable additions to our leadership team. At the end of the year, Rachel Stephenson stepped down as Parish Administrator after 14 years of faithful and profoundly Christian service to the parish as a whole. We miss her; but happily Julie Robson was on hand to take over and has settled into the role, and the new Parish Office at St Alban's, extremely well.

Looking ahead, nobody can be in any doubt that there we will be facing challenges. In common with most charities, the church has been hit hard financially by the pandemic. We need to have some honest conversations about giving, both with our regular worshippers; and in the wider community, who value our church buildings as places to mark significant moments in their lives, with baptisms, weddings and funerals.

There is room for some creative thinking about the shape of our future worship pattern. Our use of technology increased enormously during 2020: with Zoom; the live streaming of the Christmas Day service; the Zoom Church acts of worship for children which have been posted on YouTube by Katherine Cooper-Young; and Twitter - but there is scope for so much more.

How we use our buildings is something else to consider. Whilst many people were pleased to return to them to worship, one thing we discovered during the year was that we don't need church buildings to sustain a vibrant worshipping Christian community. As one newcomer to our parish said after joining our Sunday morning Zoom worship during the first lockdown, "It's so good to find a church which feels like a real community worshipping on line." Our buildings occupy key places in our communities: are we using them as effectively as we could to tell people the good news of how much God loves them?

2020 was undoubtedly a very difficult year. But one thing we have discovered is that, with God's presence and inspiration, we are stronger than we realised. Secure in that knowledge, we go forth in hope and joy, knowing that we have a faithful God who will hold us and guide us through whatever the future holds. Thanks to us all, from us all, for what we have contributed to our life as a community of Christians in the past year. And above all, thanks be to God.

Elizabeth Bland

Sedgefield Area Churches Together Annual Report for the DCC 2020-2021

'God moves in a mysterious way, his wonders to perform' – so wrote William Cowper in a hymn. How true!

SACT has facilitated communication, worship and activities between the various denominations in the Sedgefield area for many years now. I am proud of what it has done in the past, though perhaps it could have been accused of being in 'a bit of a rut', as for the most part it has led the same annual activities for many years: – Carols on the Green, the Good Friday Procession, a lent group and coffee mornings being perhaps the most notable, though in the last few years Food Bank, a stall at the Farmers' market and film shows have been added to the list.

Initially when the pandemic struck, our meetings were postponed but, like many others, we eventually opted for the 'Zoom route'. At our first Zoom meeting we discussed whether we should put everything on hold until the virus was history (having little understanding of just how long the epidemic, which then turned into a pandemic, would go on for), or whether we should be more proactive. The latter was agreed. What a game changer.

Last year saw: an Advent YouTube service (195 views); a drive-in carol service (100 car sell-out); a Lent Zoom Course, and an Easter YouTube service (134 views). All of

these were the product of huge collaborative effort from the various churches and the local community. Who knows what the next year will bring, God does indeed move in mysterious ways.

If you would like to join the team please contact me.

Judith King,
Moderator SACT

Safeguarding Report

Safeguarding Issues:

Over the past year there have been no safeguarding issues.

Safeguarding in the Parish of the Upper Skerne:

Legally, the Parish has a number of requirements and responsibilities. The PCC were provided with all documents necessary to comply with their obligations. A file of information including guidance notes, checklists, policies and procedures were distributed to all five churches. Together with posters which must be displayed in each church.

Safeguarding Training

A named contact for each church agreed to help with Safeguarding within their church and helped considerably with sorting out training requirements that some parishioners would need to undertake to comply with Diocesan policy.

As Safeguarding Officer for the parish, Julie Robson will undertake a review of training requirements and updates.

At the moment all training is done via zoom over 2 sessions of 2 hours each.

There are several levels of training in operation.

C0 – Basic on-line training, this course is recommended for servers, welcomers, refreshment helpers, sides-persons, PCC and DCC members, choir/ music groups and bell ringers.

C1 Foundation course is also now available on line. Recommended for choir, music group, bell ringing, home visiting, lunch clubs and befriending schemes).

C2 Leadership for people who **lead** activities for children and young people and/or adults who may be vulnerable.

C3 Foundation/Leadership for ministers – for clergy, authorised lay ministers and Readers

Thank you to everyone who has undertaken the training which will help make our churches safer and thank you Christine Mutch and Rachel Stephenson for all their hard work in setting up an excellent data base and safeguarding file.

Julie Robson
Parish Safeguarding Officer.

Parish of the Upper Skerne

Parish Accounts 2020

1. Consolidated Account

	RECEIPTS	TOTAL		2019	
	Voluntary receipts				
1	Tax efficient planned giving	£49,402.76		£50,006.21	-£603.45
2	Other planned giving	£1,779.03		£3,547.16	-£1,768.13
3	Collections at services	£6,846.71		£21,220.87	-£14,374.16
	All other giving and voluntary receipts, including Special Appeals (recurring and one-off)	£7,001.43		£15,615.40	-£8,613.97
6	Gift Aid recovered	£0.00		£18,720.88	-£18,720.88
7	Legacies received (capital value)	£0.00		£0.00	
8	Grants (include recurring and one-off)	£0.00		£6,469.11	-£6,469.11
	TOTAL Voluntary receipts:	£65,029.93		£115,579.63	-£50,549.70
	Activities for generating funds				
9	Gross receipts from fundraising activities	£3,482.88		£9,348.27	-£5,865.39
	Investment income				
	Dividends, interest, receipts from property etc.	£342.93		£539.63	-£196.70
	Church activities				
11	Statutory fees retained by the PCC (weddings, funerals etc.)	£10,714.00		£22,816.90	-£12,102.90
12	Gross receipts from trading (e.g. hall lettings, magazine, bookstall) NOT fundraising.	£2,868.00		£3,010.60	-£142.60
	Other receipts				
13	Other receipts not already listed	£1,129.07		£1,501.02	-£371.95
	TOTAL RECEIPTS (FROM FINANCIAL STATEMENTS)	£83,566.81		£152,796.05	-£69,229.24
	EXPENDITURE				
	Costs of generating funds				
17	Fundraising activities (costs and payments)	£412.00		£277.25	£134.75
	Church activities				
18	Mission giving and donations	£3,045.50		£9,783.92	-£6,738.42
19	Diocesan parish share contribution	£60,650.00		£78,105.00	-£17,455.00
20	Salaries, wages and honoraria	£8,277.30		£10,362.70	-£2,085.40
21	Clergy and staff expenses	£5,357.90		£7,761.37	-£2,403.47
	Church expenses				
22	Church expenses: Mission and evangelism costs	£0.00		£0.00	
23	Church running expenses (including Governance)	£20,455.18		£31,080.12	-£10,624.94
24	Church utility bills	£11,838.65		£13,016.30	-£1,177.65
25	Cost of trading	£339.99		£84.99	£255.00
	Major capital expenditure				
27	Major repairs to the church building	£7,426.00		£39,984.32	-£32,558.32
28	Major repairs to church hall or other PCC property, including redecoration	£2,356.80		£0.00	£2,356.80
29	New building work to the church, church hall, clergy housing or other PCC property	£0.00		£0.00	
	SUB-TOTAL of all expenditure payments above:	£120,159.32		£190,455.97	
99	Other payments not already listed	£3,659.78		£3,016.83	£642.95
	TOTAL PAYMENTS (FROM FINANCIAL STATEMENTS)	£123,819.10		£193,472.80	-£69,653.70
C					
D	COMBINED TOTAL	-£40,252.29		-£40,676.75	

2. Statement of Parish and Church Balances at 31st December 2020

	Parish	St A	St C	St E	St MM	St M	
CCLA		£13,306.08		£3,450.56	£9,456.15	£12,106.53	£38,319.32
DBF			£70,582.86	£108.70	£1,209.29	£7,856.25	£79,757.10
Business			£4,451.93	£3,070.31	£2,866.83	£1,810.64	£30,048.49
			£17,848.78				
Current	£9,772.07	£4,147.65	£2,423.38	£2,023.74	£14,269.38	£1,345.00	£43,017.29
TOTALS	£9,772.07	£17,453.73	£95,306.95	£8,653.31	£27,801.65	£23,118.42	£182,106.13
Restricted Funds			£70,582.86	£108.70	£1,209.29	£7,856.25	£79,757.10
Designated Funds	£954.73			£26,640.87	£2,866.83		£30,462.43

3. Restricted and Designated Funds

St Catherine's Building Fund (restricted)

Opening Balance	£70,284.42
Interest	£298.44
End of year balance	£70,582.86

St Edmund's – Canon Eden Account (restricted)

Opening Balance	£108.24
Interest	£0.46
End of year balance	£108.70

St Mary Magdalene's – Tithe Act (restricted)

Opening Balance	£1,617.29
Interest	£6.41
Replacement of chancel lights	£414.41
End of year balance	£1,209.29

St Michael's – various Trust Funds (restricted)

Opening Balance	£7,618.73
Interest	£237.52
End of year balance	£7,856.25

Parish Account – Ron Eyley collection (restricted)

Income	£165.00
Expenditure	£165.00
Account closed	

Parish Account – Revd Geoff Short collection (restricted)

Income	£341.20
End of year balance	£341.20

St Edmund's – various designated funds

Opening Balance	£4,421.51
No activity	

Parish Account – youth work (designated)

Opening Balance	£954.73
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No activity

4. PCC Treasurer's Report

This year's accounts reflect the difficulties caused by the response to the coronavirus pandemic. Church buildings were closed for worship between mid-March and early July. Weddings could not be held, and funeral services could not be held in church. This had a serious effect on income from fees and from cash collections at regular services, as well as baptisms, weddings and funerals. Even with a reduction in parish share payments of £17,450, the year saw an overall deficit of £40,250. This was similar to the deficit in 2019 but that was almost entirely covered by the roof repairs at St Edmund's.

Only one of our churches saw a surplus in 2019: St Mary Magdalene's (£4,120.38). This was due to the arrival of a generous new giver and the withdrawal of £8,000 from the investment account, which more than offset the fall in cash collections and fees income. St Alban's was particularly hard-hit by the fall in cash collections and reported a deficit of £4,319. St Catherine's also reported a large deficit of £5,600 and St Edmund's reported a deficit of £4,526. St Michael's showed a relatively small deficit of £284.

Overall income fell by £69,000. This was partly due to the fact that the Gift Aid repayment (which should have brought in £17,450) did not arrive within the financial year. In addition, there was a drop in fees for weddings and funerals of £12,100. Collections at weddings, funerals and baptisms fell by £14,370. The lack of fund-raising activities caused a further shortfall of £5,865. Overall expenditure was also reduced by £69,650. This can be explained by the decision to reduce parish share payments; the lack of any major repair work; and by other reductions in spending which resulted from the closure of churches during lockdown.

Planned giving was quite steady showing only a slight fall of £1.2%. This represents an encouraging feature in such a difficult year. It still means, however, that we continue to struggle financially at a time of rising costs across the board (parish share, utility bills, insurance). The impact of coronavirus could well have a continuing adverse effect on giving in 2021. 2020 saw a major fall in other collections. This is explained by the impact of the pandemic on baptisms, weddings and funerals. This further emphasises the point that such collections are largely beyond our control and so cannot be relied on as a source of income.

The decision to reduce Parish Share payments was taken only after much discussion. It was followed by a decision to reduce further the amount pledged for 2021. The diocese has made the point that it too is facing financial difficulties as a result of the pandemic. All parishes are being asked to consider whether they can increase their payments during this year. While it is too early to do this at the moment, it is something we will need to discuss later in the year. It should be noted, however, that the balance in investment accounts has been reduced by over £27,000 as a result of churches withdrawing funds in order to keep current accounts in credit.

Bill Armstrong

May 2021



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 PCC of the Ecclesiastical Parish of the Upper Skerne

On accounts for the year
ended

31st December 2020

Charity no
(if any)

1132664

Set out on pages

(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31st December 2020.

Responsibilities and
basis of report

As the charity trustees of the Trust, 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 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 (other than that disclosed below *) in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

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

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

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

Signed:

Whoweny

Date:

30/4/21

Name:

ELIZABETH LOUISE LAVERY

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

ACCA

Address:

FRANKLIN HOUSE, STOCKTON ROAD,
SEAGEFIELD, STOCKTON ON TEES,
TS21 2AG

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight 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.