

The Parochial Church Council of Ellesmere Port
2022 Annual Report

Ellesmere Port Parochial Church Council
Annual Report and Financial Statements
For the year ended 31st December 2022



Ellesmere
Port
Parish



Reference and Administrative Details of Ellesmere Port Parochial Church Council, its Members and Advisors

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) is a charity registered with the Charity Commission in November 2009, registration number 1132859. Prior to this date, the PCC was a charity excepted from registration, by statutory instrument 2007 No. 2655.

Principal Office: Parish Office
 Whitby Road
 Ellesmere Port
 Cheshire
 CH65 6UW

Staff Team

Revd Canon Gordon McGuinness	(Rector)	
Revd Gill Foster	(Associate Rector)	Chair
Revd Gordon Welch	(Curate) – retired 17 April 2022	

Mrs Charmaine Maw	Parish administrator
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Church wardens

Keith Nelson	St Thomas & All Saints
Susan Mayers	St Thomas & All Saints
Jan Tomlinson	St Lawrence
Jane Chance	St Lawrence

Deanery Synod Representatives

Term of office expires

Diana Burton	2023
Sue Johnson	2023
Kath Lyth	2023

Elected Members

Gaynor Lyth	Treasurer	2023
Karen Milne		2023
Sarah Guest		2023
Judith Derby	Gift Aid Secretary	2023
Sheron Roberts		2023
Win Moorcroft		2024
Amanda Price		2024
Gemma Alexander-Bloomfield	<i>Parish Safeguarding Officer</i>	2024
Anne Williams		2025
Pam Maxwell		2025

Advisors and Agents

The PCC's Bankers:	Barclays Bank 100 Whitby Road Ellesmere Port CH65 0AD
Independent Examiner:	Mr WJ Ford. A.C.M.A 7 Plymyard Close Bromborough Wirral
The PCC's Investment Managers:	CCLA Investment Management Ltd 80 Cheapside London EC2V 6DZ
The PCC's Insurers are:	Ecclesiastical Beaufort House Brunswick Road Gloucester GL1 1JZ
The PCC's Treasurer is:	Mrs Gaynor Lyth 27 Fern Road Whitby Ellesmere Port CH65 6PA

Introduction

The Parish consists of two worship centres: St Thomas & All Saints Ellesmere Port and St Lawrence, Stoak. The mission statement of the Parish is 'Christ in the centre of the Church; the Church at the centre of the Community'.

The staff team consists of Revd Canon Gordon McGuinness (Rector), Revd Gill Foster (Associate Rector) and Revd Gordon Welch (NSM) who retired on 17 April 2022. The PCC has the responsibility for implementing the mission statement through the programmes of the parish. The parish is also blessed with 2 Readers: Frank Mawdsley, who retired 26 November 2022 serving mainly at St Lawrence Church and Julia McGuinness. During 2022 Mrs Kath Lyth was licensed as a Pastoral Worker joining Mrs Sue Johnson as a Licensed pastoral worker. Mrs Linda Tudor began her reader training and we have one other person exploring ordained ministry.

Public Benefit

The Charity Commission requires that Charities explain how their work has a positive benefit on their beneficiaries. This report seeks to do this in its description of the parish's activities in 2022. In summary, the parish provides for church members:

- Regular opportunities to gather for worship and prayer
- Teaching on the Christian faith and how to apply it to everyday life
- Pastoral support and guidance.

- A network of cell groups including separate children and youth cells in which members can develop more intimate relationships with other members.
- Opportunities to engage in the work of the Church in the wider community and beyond

In addition, the parish provides for the wider community:

- The occasional offices of baptism, marriage and the funeral service
- Opportunities to explore the Christian faith and to have their questions asked about why Jesus Christ is important for their lives.
- A high level of volunteering in the community offered by church members.

The Ellesmere Port Church of England College together with Ellesmere Port Christ Church – Church of England School (voluntary-aided) Primary School provides opportunities for partnerships between the church and the schools. During 2021 Ellesmere Port Christ Church School became federated with Bishop Wilson Church of England (Aided) Primary School).

The Rector currently serves as the Chair of Governors at the college and a church member serves as Chair of Governors at Bishop Wilson & Christ Church Federation. There are also a number of church members serving as Foundation Governors on the newly formed federated board. We are also welcomed into many of the primary schools in the parish leading acts of worship/assemblies together with our Open the Book team which was re-started in 2022 following a hiatus due to COVID restrictions.

In these ways the Parish carries out the aims expressed in its Mission Statement.

Membership and Committees

Members of the PCC are either *ex officio*, or elected by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (ACPM) in accordance with the Church Representation Rule 2020.

The PCC operates as the leadership of the parish, in conjunction with the Staff Team. There is a Finance Committee which oversees the Parish Budget and which makes recommendations to the PCC concerning the giving strategy of the Parish.

In 2022, the PCC met on eight occasions; four of which were live meetings at St Thomas & All Saints, one was a social gathering and the remainder were online meeting. All PCC members completed the required Diocesan Safeguarding Training and were DBS cleared.

In between meetings, the Finance Team met to discuss finance and fabric matters, and to make recommendations to the full PCC. The Standing Committee, consisting of the Rector, Associate Rector, Wardens, PCC Secretary, Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer, met once in 2022. Much of the day to day running of the Parish is devolved to the Staff Team.

The parish outgoings are made up of daily housekeeping and ministry costs together with the stipends of two full time ministers.

The PCC has complied with the duty under section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 (duty to regard to House of Bishops' guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults)

Review of the Year

Introduction

2022 continued with a focus on the vision set for 2021 which stated that we are looking 'To be welcoming and caring church families made up of disciples of all ages that are growing, prayerful and underpinned by God's Word; to be those who are discerning God's will together, to further His Kingdom in Ellesmere Port Parish and beyond'. We gave extra focus to this with the addition of a prayer for growth used at many PCC meetings and church services. The staff team have certain roles and responsibilities in order for the above goals to be achieved and so this report is split into three sections giving an overview of the life in the parish during 2022 - St Thomas' Church Life and Activities & St Lawrence (Gill Foster) and Outreach and Community (Gordon McGuinness).

St Thomas: Church Life and Activities

Many areas of church life continued to flourish as we moved into 2022 leaving behind the many restrictions imposed on the church due to COVID 19. The two main church services on a Sunday continued to thrive with many visitors joining the family service at 10.45am noticeably families from overseas who had re-located to the UK, some of which are now part of the church family. We were still very reticent to re-introduce prayer ministry during the services being cautious with regards to the proximity of persons, however as the year progressed prayer ministry was re-introduced and was a very welcome addition to the Sunday services. In addition to this a committed group continued to meet weekly for prayer online with a focus on healing – praying for the church family and beyond, facilitated by a pastoral worker. This together with daily online morning prayer has given the church a stronger and deeper-rooted prayer life.

Ignite which is our Sunday group for children continued with a small group of committed volunteers teaching our children week by week, with the privilege of planting seeds of faith into young and exploring minds.

The PALS group continued to grow from strength to strength now meeting in the church hall on the fourth Friday of the month to enjoy a home cooked meal together, whilst enjoying fun and fellowship. PALS has been a lynch-pin in bringing the congregations from St Thomas and St Lawrence together for support and friendship. This group has also opened it's doors to welcome many lonely and isolated folk in from the community. After many false starts 'Tea at Two' began again at the end of the year another group aiming to offer support and friendship to the lonely and isolated and also to any bereaved families. Invites to 'Tea at Two' are sent to those families for which we have conducted funerals during the year.

Easter saw many knitted chicks spread around the community filled with the obligatory egg, given as a gift to hopefully bring smiles and brighten people's day. It was sent with the reminder from Psalm 33: 2 'May your unfailing love be with us, LORD, even as we put our hope in you'. Christmas also saw many knitted 'angels of hope' distributed in the community.

We made the decision not to re-introduce a weekly notice sheet but to stick with a monthly newsletter which is emailed to everyone with dates for the forthcoming month together with news. Hard copies are always available for those without access to a computer.

Cell groups continued to meet again in person in homes. This is an area of church life that is so valued by its members and is an area of ministry and support to be developed. Our youth and children's cells continued meeting in person in church once a fortnight.

We continued to develop our work in the community with the FIG (Food Initiative Group) project, joining with 6 of our local schools in supporting vulnerable families - as outlined in the outreach section of this report. This work has been very much appreciated by the families concerned and has also expanded and strengthened the relationships we have with the schools. It has been a pleasure to welcome into church, class visits looking at baptism, special places, buildings and music amongst other topics. It has also been a great privilege to be invited into schools to talk about 'life as a vicar', community projects and other topics as requested by the schools. This ministry is complimented by the Open the Book team which also re-started in 2022 taking bible stories into 3 of our local primary schools. We also welcomed four of the schools into church for their Christmas Services which was a great blessing at the end of the year for all involved. Four volunteers trained on a 'Here to Listen' course and volunteered their services to our church schools providing a listening ear to children and young people, giving them the opportunity to talk in a safe and secure environment. We had planned an Experience Easter event which sadly had to be cancelled due to COVID rearing its head once more, reminding us that we were still not over it!

Sunday Supper ran its course and so not just to continue for the sake of it we decided to park this initiative for the time being, with thanks to those who had shared their stories of their personal faith journeys with us.

The Queen's Jubilee Weekend saw the Scouts host a wonderful barbecue and fun afternoon which was enjoyed by all. Sadly, of course later in the year following the death of her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II we were to host the civic memorial book at St Thomas. The church was open to all for private prayer and remembrance and was manned by volunteers welcoming all into the building.

The number of occasional offices remained very low apart from our funeral ministry. We did however manage to hold an 'in person' Blue Christmas service which was particularly appropriate for those who were spending their first Christmas without their loved one together with our usual memorial service in May. We were able to host our marriage preparation day, the first in a number of years and we welcomed five couples getting married in the parish. A thoroughly enjoyable day was had by all as we learned more about Christian marriage together and the logistics of the wedding service – hoping to allay any nerves on the big day.

Bearing in mind current guidelines we began visiting nursing homes on invitation.

Our Christmas programme took as its theme the Church of England's 'Follow the Star – the Great invitation' and planned a very full and varied programmed reaching out to the community, serving the community and ministering to those in our church family. We supported 'give a gift to a stranger' with our local hostel for young homeless adults. Church together with local schools supported the Christmas Shoebox appeal sending gifts overseas to children who would otherwise be without on Christmas Day. We hosted our Christmas fair which is always very well supported by the community and it was so good to welcome folk back into the church building some of whom we had met through our hamper project during the summer holidays – relationships being re-kindled and built once more. We continued to build on our prayer initiatives and gave the opportunity to local schools, nursing homes, businesses to add their prayers to our Christmas

prayer chain which was then hung around the church during the Christmas season – immersing the prayers in the life of the church.

We also delivered a 'thinking of you' goody bag to every bereaved family that we had looked after during 2022 giving the opportunity to re-connect with them once again.

Following on from COVID we have had to learn to work in a hybrid way – working online and in person taking into account the environmental impact of both. Ensuring that no one gets left behind and that pastoral care and support is there for everyone taking into account personal circumstances but throughout we have that knowledge that God has and is continuing to walk with us.

We have so much to be thankful for with regards to the many blessings we take for granted each and every day. In the parish we are extremely thankful that we have managed to keep our heads just above water with regards to our finances but this is an area that we need to give more focussed attention during 2023.

All of the above would not be possible without the energy and commitment of many from the church family doing as Jesus did in caring, loving and serving others using their gifts, skills and talents and perhaps more importantly giving their time. Time is precious and so we have to use our time wisely and do what He commanded us to do and that is to make disciples and it is our hope that all that is done in His name will one day come to bear fruit, fruit that will last. We are blessed that we are growing disciples who have a passion to share the Gospel message in so many creative and thoughtful ways.

Revd Gill Foster

St Thomas and All Saints: Outreach and Community

2022 started with the long climb out of Covid restrictions- we were still wearing masks in church and keeping our distance. My observation of the year was that a side effect of Covid was that 'mission' and 'church community' activities seemed to overlap more. For example, the daily online prayers, which continued well after Covid restrictions had been lifted, included a focus on mission and outreach, as we regularly prayed for our 'stones', those we love and who we long to know the love of God for themselves. In fact, online prayer is still ongoing, and all that we are doing in the community to make Christ known, is soaked in prayer.

Prayer has also deepened the discipleship of many church members and increased their confidence in reaching out with the Good News of Jesus; many who serve on the FIG (Food Initiative Group) would say that their experience of prayer has led them to get involved. FIG itself is an example of how a Covid inspired pastoral activity has grown into an outreach ministry that is reaching many families in our community, through food hampers, fun days and other activities hosted or arranged by people in the church. In all these activities we ensured that we kept Jesus at the centre, letting people know why and in whose name we were carrying out our programme. 2022 also saw the return of church and community coming together in civic worship. The annual civic service re-commenced as did the Remembrance service, but with one important difference: there was no service in church. Instead, the act of remembrance was followed by an outdoor service, including music and drama from the CofE Collage, readings, prayers and a talk. The

weather was very kind, and because we were outdoors the congregation was much larger than could have been accommodated in St Thomas. In the days after, people stopped me in the street to say how much they had been impacted by the service. Silver linings...

Sadly, the Covid crisis gave way to other challenges to our community and country: the invasion of Ukraine had the knock on effect of rising prices and by the end of the year the cost of fuel was sky rocketing. As Christians, we were not immune to the struggles of our neighbours, but we did have access to the spiritual resources God provides. As such, our witness to Christ could shine just a bit more visibly given the darkness of our times. As we move forward, it might be the case that a part of our evangelism may be the way we meet and deal with, crises that affect everyone. This sort of outreach was encouraged and strengthened by our Lent course 'On the Breadline', which sought to have us thinking and acting Christianly in areas where there is real physical as well as spiritual poverty.

Gill and I attended the Clergy Conference in May where the focus was on effective evangelism in today's world. What has become clear is that, whereas courses like Alpha still have their place, those outside the church are needing to see the difference Jesus makes to the lives of their Christian friends, more than they are needing to be persuaded of the truth of our faith. The challenge to the church, including ourselves, is not to leave evangelism to the 'professionals' and instead, get into the habit of sharing our stories, of how God is active in our day to day lives. Call it 'friendship evangelism' if you like, but it's something we can all do.

The year also saw us hosting an art exhibition in the church, which drew in 254 visitors, (including our Mayor), 9 schools (100 plus children) and which raised the church's profile in the town. The exhibition included 20 exhibits by 17 local artists, and was inspired by our own 'Artist in Residence', Charmaine (aka the Parish Administrator!)

As the year progressed we resumed something like our normal activities: assemblies at Christ Church and other primary schools, the welcome service for the College Yr 7s and carol singing in the Arcades during the Christmas season.

We also ran a Falcon Camp, jointly with Christ the King, Birkenhead, which meant a reunion with Debbie Wilkinson. Despite it being run during the hottest summer on record, a good time was had by all, and we had the privilege of sharing God's love through fun activities with young people who might otherwise not had a summer holiday away from home.

This will be my last report to our parish APCM as I move into retirement. As is the usual practice, I will have a 6 month sabbatical before being allowed to resume any sort of public ministry. My hope and prayer is that the friendship evangelism I described above may be something that flourishes in my new community. Maybe I'll be invited back to tell you how things are going....

Revd Canon Gordon McGuinness

Saint Lawrence, Stoak

2022 began the transition in the life of St Lawrence with the retirement of Revd Gordon Welch on Easter Day. A day which everyone knew was looming but with a heavy heart! Gordon and his wife Jean had served the congregation at St Lawrence for many years and had fostered a great sense of belonging with the love shared with those in their pastoral care. However, knowing

this day would finally arrive the transition process brought new people on board in overseeing matters within the life of the church which has been a huge encouragement.

A great sense of being the Body of Christ in Stoak was most apparent with the sad loss of some very faithful members of the congregation coming together to support the bereaved families in their time of great sadness which was very much appreciated by those concerned. This however has meant that the steady numbers attending worship on a Sunday has declined and is something that we are acutely aware. With this in mind, we have encouraged our ABC families to join us for major festivals and it was a joy to welcome them to the Harvest festival service in which they played a major part in leading the service. They also led a nativity service something quite new for St Lawrence and which was enjoyed by all who attended. This is something we shall be building on in 2023 together with the joint services which have been enjoyed by many in 2022.

We have also encouraged the congregations to get involved with the outreach initiatives of the parish and so many gifted knitters joined in with the Easter chick and angel projects and felt a real sense of doing their bit in sharing the Good News of Jesus.

A number of folk have joined in with the PALS lunch and Tea at Two which is very encouraging in bringing both ends of the parish together.

Keeping on top of the fabric has been a challenge but with two very enthusiastic wardens they have overseen the cleaning of tower together with other minor jobs such as electrical work that has to be done in order for the services to run smoothly.

November 2022 saw Frank Mawdsley, our reader step back and retire from his leading and preaching duties, he has however kept on with his role of welcoming folk into church – standing outside in all weathers with a smile and a welcome is much appreciated by all.

And so, we move into 2023 without many of the much-loved members of our congregation who passed away in 2022 but looking to the future with the growth of our a ABC service and seeking God's will as we witness to his love in the village of Stoak and beyond.

Revd Gill Foster

Ellesmere Port PCC
Statement of Financial Activities
For the period from 01 January 2022 to 31 December 2022

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds	Total funds	Prior year total funds
Receipts					
Planned giving	66,532.50	-	-	66,532.50	67,887.76
Collections and other giving	6,895.00	2,760.29	-	9,655.29	8,084.89
Other voluntary receipts	5,301.80	22,820.32	-	28,122.12	5,615.50
Gift Aid recovered	17,610.53	-	-	17,610.53	22,717.45
Other receipts	191,859.84	-	-	191,859.84	-
Activities for generating funds	880.06	146.50	-	1,026.56	1,926.73
Investment Income	26,691.19	-	-	26,691.19	21,896.88
Receipts from church activities	30,530.25	-	-	30,530.25	26,312.42
Total income	346,301.17	25,727.11	-	372,028.28	154,441.63
Payments					
Cost of generating funds	4.50	-	-	4.50	-
Missionary and Charitable Giving	3,582.00	-	-	3,582.00	4,499.59
Parish Share	99,523.68	-	-	99,523.68	97,330.74
Clergy and Staffing costs	29,451.54	-	-	29,451.54	18,667.56
Church Running Expenses	22,930.52	5,910.51	-	28,841.03	30,618.36
Hall Running Costs	5,285.87	-	-	5,285.87	3,435.29
Church Repairs & Maintenance	-	-	-	-	-
Hall Repairs & Maintenance	813.14	-	-	813.14	728.23
New Building work	-	-	-	-	-
Governance Costs	-	-	-	-	-
Seymour Drive	(140.43)	-	-	(140.43)	2,186.00
FIG	-	16,673.70	-	16,673.70	-
Total expenditure	161,450.82	22,584.21	-	184,035.03	157,465.77
Net income / (expenditure) resources before transfer	184,850.35	3,142.90	-	187,993.25	(3,024.14)
Transfers:					
Gross transfers between funds - in	91,820.83	510.62	20,749.41	113,080.86	6,245.00
Gross transfers between funds - out	(90,006.50)	(2,324.95)	(20,749.41)	(113,080.86)	(6,245.00)
Other recognised gains / losses					
Gains/losses on investment assets	-	-	(1,866.58)	(1,866.58)	5,074.98
Gains on revaluation, fixed assets, charity's own use	-	-	-	-	-
Net movement in funds	186,664.68	1,328.57	(1,866.58)	186,126.67	2,050.84
Reconciliation of funds					
Total funds brought forward	489,854.56	31,614.27	20,749.41	542,218.24	540,167.40
Total funds carried forward	676,519.24	32,942.84	18,882.83	728,344.91	542,218.24

Ellesmere Port Parochial Church Council

Financial Statements for the year ended
31st December 2022

Accountants Report

I report on the accounts of the P.C.C. for the year ended 31st December 2022, which are set out on the attached pages.

The P.C.C. Trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts, and consider that the audit requirement of section 43(2) of the Charities Act 1993 (the Act) does not apply. It is my responsibility to state, on the basis of procedures specified in the General directions given by the Charity Commissioners under section 43(7)(b) of the Act, whether particular matters have come to my attention.

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the P.C.C. and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from Trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the view given by the accounts.

In connection with my examination, **no matter has come to my attention:**

- which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:
 - to keep accounting records in accordance with section 41 of the Act, and
 - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and to comply with the accounting requirements of the Act.
- have not been met, or
- to which in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

William John Ford A.C.M.A./ C.G.M.A.



Member of the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants
7 Plymyard Close
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Wirral
CH62 6DS
20th April 2023