

THE PARISH OF CHRIST CHURCH HEATON
ANNUAL REPORT 2023

The Parish of Christ Church Heaton in the Deanery of Bolton and the Diocese of Manchester



ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2023

To be presented at the
Annual Parochial Church Meeting
Sunday 21st April 2024

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Members of the Parochial Church Council
1st January 2023 – 31st December 2023

INCUMBENT

Revd Dave Thompson

ASSOCIATE PRIEST

Revd Philip Burman

Until 19.12.23

CHURCHWARDENS

Holly Bonfield

Irene Morris

TREASURER

Andrew Minors

GENERAL SYNOD REPRESENTATIVE

Geoffrey Tattersall

DIOCESAN SYNOD REPRESENTATIVES

Christine Syddall

Peter Syddall

DEANERY SYNOD REPRESENTATIVES (4 x Vacancies)

Hazel Tattersall

ELECTED MEMBERS (5 x Vacancies)

Raj Ariyaratnam

Shyamala Ariyaratnam

Sandy Bowie

Andrew Holmes

Pam Knight

Andrew Minors

Richard Newton

Joan Schofield

Harold Williams

Stanley Wilson

David Youngman

Until May 2023

From May 2023

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APPOINTMENT OF OFFICIALS

PCC CHAIRMAN (Ex Officio)	Revd Dave Thompson
VICE CHAIRMAN	Irene Morris
CHURCHWARDENS	Holly Bonfield Irene Morris
ASSISTANT WARDENS	Raj Ariyaratnam Peter Chapman Howard Entwistle
TREASURER	Andrew Minors
PATRONAGE SCHEME SECRETARY	Andrew Minors
BOOK-KEEPER	Victoria Tattersall
MINUTES SECRETARY	David Youngman
ELECTORAL ROLL OFFICER	Victoria Tattersall
FREE WILL OFFERING SECRETARY	Hazel Tattersall
GIFT AID ADMINISTRATOR	Peter Hodson
CLERK OF WORKS	Vacant
CENTRE MANAGER	Vacant
CHRISTIAN AID REPRESENTATIVE	Vacant
CHILDREN'S SOCIETY REPRESENTATIVE	Jane Chapman Julie Steele
EUCCHARISTIC ASSISTANTS	Shyamala Ariyaratnam Margaret Goudge Christine Hayes Richard Newton Heather Wilkinson Stanley Wilson
EDITOR OF PARISH MAGAZINE	Vacant
HEALTH & SAFETY OFFICER	Holly Bonfield
SAFEGUARDING OFFICER	Holly Bonfield

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APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE

Ex-Officio:	Revd Dave Thompson Revd Philip Burman Holly Bonfield Irene Morris	Until 19.12.23
Elected by the PCC:	Andrew Minors David Youngman	

BUILDING AND FINANCE (BUILDINGS AND FABRIC from Mar 2023) COMMITTEE

Ex-Officio:	Revd Dave Thompson Revd Philip Burman Holly Bonfield Irene Morris (Chair)	Until 19.12.23
Elected by the PCC:	Andrew Minors Richard Newton Geoffrey Tattersall Hazel Tattersall Stanley Wilson David Youngman	

MISSION AND MINISTRY COMMITTEE

Revd Dave Thompson Revd Philip Burman Raj Ariyaratnam Caroline Lade Laraine Mason Adam Syddall Geoffrey Tattersall Hazel Tattersall	Chair	Until 19.12.23
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SOCIAL AND FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE

Janet Darwell Pam Knight Irene Morris Gai Murphy Steph Oakley Judith Pearson Linda Thompson		From 04.04.23 Until 04.04.23
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VICAR'S REPORT

The need for reconciliation within church and community was at the heart of much of church life throughout the year and it has been good to restore relationships with local schools within the community.

It has also been encouraging to see people returning to church after Covid and for new people to get more involved in church life.

The numbers attending church have been growing as has attendance in our Young Church [Sunday School]. The strength of our young people's work is a testimony to all the hard work of the leaders and helpers.

It is good for us to be able to support outside agencies and Urban Outreach, The Destitution Project, Bolton Lions and Fortalice have all benefited from the kindness of our congregation.

The Men's Group and Mothers' Union have both met regularly (sometimes together) and increased attendance at these gatherings have been very encouraging. It was good to see increased attendances at the social and fundraising activities, including the Beetle Drive, Pop Quiz and the Pancake Party.

At the end of the year we said goodbye to Philip Burman - after 6 years as the House for Duty Priest at St. Margaret's. Philip also played a major role in life at Christ Church following the departure of Janet French at the end of 2020. His role in the Benefice will not be forgotten and he retired to Lytham with our best wishes and prayers.

I would like to thank my fellow clergy, Alan & Lynne; our ordinand Deborah; the churchwardens Irene & Holly; our administrator Victoria; treasurer Andrew and organist John and the choir. In addition, I am grateful for the assistance of all the many leaders and members of the various groups, Christ Church is very much a team that can only benefit when people work together.

Moving into 2024, we are looking forward to Deborah being ordained and our new Curate Matthew joining us. Their ordination service takes place on 30 June.

I firmly believe that they are joining a church that is moving forward in worshipping and serving the living God as Father, Son & Holy Spirit.

Dave Thompson, Vicar

ANNUAL REPORT ON THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

Since the last APCM was held on 14th May 2023, the PCC has continued to hold regular meetings, having met 8 times during the year, to discuss the business and running of Christ Church ("CCH"). In addition, there has been one extraordinary meeting for specific discussion on the way forward with the investment property at 112 Markland Hill and one site visit to assess the boundary issues with The Hetlands.

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In his first full year with us, the Revd Dave Thompson has guided us admirably through those meetings with his wisdom and patience, assisted ably by our Church Wardens, Holly Bonfield & Irene Morris.

Throughout the year, PCC has dealt with its regular commitments and duties in relation to the financial affairs of CCH, and the care and maintenance of its structure and its contents, as well as the spiritual life of the church.

One of the major decisions that the PCC was called upon to make was with regard to the future of 112 Markland Hill, which had fallen into a state of disrepair. After intense debate, it was decided to spend c. £42,000 to repair and refurbish the property, which, consequently, has recently been put back on the rental market with positive results and an increase in its market valuation. The next project is likely to be the choir vestry, which is in need of a new roof after many years of leaks.

The full list of PCC members is set out at the beginning of this annual report but, in summary, Raj Ariyaratnam retired at the last APCM whilst Gai Murphy was elected a member. Raj was thanked for his many years of service to Christ Church. At the PCC meeting immediately following the APCM, Harold Williams was co-opted, bringing the total number of members, elected & ex-officio, to 18 with 4 vacancies. We also still have 4 vacancies on Deanery Synod. If anyone would like to fill one of these vacancies, please speak with the Revd Dave Thompson.

Finally, we are still without a PCC Secretary. If anyone would like to volunteer for this role, again, please speak with the Revd Dave Thompson.

David W. Youngman PCC Minutes Secretary

CHURCHWARDEN'S REPORT ON THE FABRIC, GOODS AND ORNAMENTS OF THE CHURCH AND CHURCH PROPERTIES

CHURCH BUILDINGS AND CONTENTS

All church buildings, contents and grounds continue to be overseen by the Buildings and Fabric Committee of the PCC.

The leaking Choir Vestry roof remains the most significant project that the PCC is currently considering. Plans and quotes have been sought and received for the work that will be needed to repair the Choir Vestry roof and also to upgrade the Choir Vestry building.

Vicarage

With the arrival of the Rev Dave at the end of 2022, the Vicarage is now within the Church properties.

Properties

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The property on Markland Hill became vacant during 2023 and the PCC has taken the opportunity, whilst it was empty, to refurbish it ready for a new tenant in 2024.

The property on Welbeck Road continues to be rented with no change of tenant during the year.

CHURCH GROUNDS

All Seasons continue to provide the main care of our gardens, including hedge-cutting and moss-removing needs, along with our valued volunteer gardeners who look after some of the flower beds within the grounds.

A big thank you to the Scouts and volunteers who undertook the mass clearing of the autumn leaves following the Harvest Service. They did a superb job in clearing and removing the leaves in just a few days!

The Remembrance Garden Pond has been emptied, thoroughly cleaned and refilled, with the fountain restarted – though this is a rather modest fountain! This is now maintained regularly by hand and fishing nets. All offers to get involved in this maintenance gratefully received.

The trees throughout the grounds continue to be monitored for any action needed.

CHURCH CENTRE

With no Centre Manager, our Administrator, along with the Wardens, oversee the use and needs of the Centre. Christ Church is looking for a Centre Manager to support this and do practical jobs in the Centre on an ad hoc basis.

The number of Centre bookings continues to increase with new regular and occasional events booked. We are very well supported in both the Church and the Centre by our excellent cleaner, Janet Darwell. All these Centre bookings help us to move towards paying our Parish Share.

Irene Morris - Church Warden

Holly Bonfield - Church Warden

ELECTORAL ROLL

The Electoral Roll contains 260 names. Since the last revision, 8 names have been added, 10 names have been removed and 1 amendment has been made.

Victoria Tattersall, Electoral Roll Officer

DEANERY SYNOD

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After the recent re-organisation of Deaneries within the Diocese, the Bolton Deanery met on three occasions during 2023 under the leadership of Revd Simon Cook, the new full-time Area Dean and Mr Keith Lewis, the new Lay Chair.

The first meeting was on zoom, it having been decided by the Standing Committee at the beginning of the triennium that one meeting during the winter each year should be on zoom so that members could attend at home without the need for travel. It was 'attended' by the Diocesan Head of Lay Development and our Local Ministry Officer who spoke about lay development and discipleship and emphasised that the purpose of the Lay Development team was to help the laity grow and become stronger in faith and that the Foundations for Ministry, Authorised Lay Ministry and Lay Ministry training were available to all.

The second meeting was held here at Christ Church and after the Synod had elected its officers and Standing Committee, it discussed the rather unappetising and somewhat gloomy topic of closing church buildings with the Diocesan Fragile Churches Officer [I never knew that such a person existed!] and a priest who had been involved in the process of closing a church.

Fortunately, the third meeting at St Peter's Halliwell was a much more jovial affair and was on the positive subject of Growing Churches led by Ven Mike McGurk, the Diocesan Head of Church Growth. It was for once a lively meeting.

So, notwithstanding its re-organisation the Deanery Synod is alive and well and looks forward to a perhaps more inspirational 2024.

Geoffrey Tattersall

SAFEGUARDING

A focus for the Safeguarding role this year has been website compliance. There is a requirement to have a clear safeguarding statement both on the website and on the A Church Near You website. This includes phone numbers to report any concerns to. These are in place, though we are aware that our website still needs focusing on to make it easier to find policies, including Safeguarding.

With regard to training, there are five levels of training, the first three of which are relevant here at Christ Church - Basic Awareness, Safeguarding Foundations and Safeguarding Leadership. PCC members are all required to undertake the Basic Awareness training plus have a DBS via the Church. With nine new PCC members in November 2022, there was an immediate focus on safeguarding training for them and by March 2023, these were almost all in place.

Basic Awareness training is available to any member of the congregation and anyone who would like to take this up (it takes around 75 minutes and is done online) is very welcome to approach me to find out more.

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Safeguarding Leadership training via the Diocese has not been easy to access but those required to train to this level have either done the Diocese training or have that level of training in their employment or other volunteering roles. This will be further focused on for 2024.

With regard to DBS requirement, which is now every three years (previously five), new and renewed DBSs are planned to comply with this.

The Safeguarding Policy and Statement have both been reviewed and are on noticeboards. These will be reviewed at the APCM. There is a 'Who's Who of Christ Church?' posted in Church and in the Centre which includes Safeguarding Lead contact details. A file containing the Safeguarding Policy and the Parish Safeguarding Guide is in the office and available for all volunteers to see.

Holly Bonfield, Safeguarding Officer

CHOIR

The Choir continues to sing at the 9.30. a.m. service and thoroughly enjoys being part of it. They also greatly value the social interaction with the members of the congregation in the centre afterwards. In addition the lovely service of Evensong is held on the second and fourth Sunday of the month. This quiet dignified service is a gentle end to the day.

We had a Passiontide Devotion on Palm Sunday and sang Compline during Holy Week. The service of Compline is short and peaceful and one that was used to end the day.

The services for Harvest and the Commemoration of the Departed are regular in the calendar of the Choir.

We were delighted to again be part of the Advent Carol service at the Parish Church and enjoyed singing with the augmented choir under the direction of the new Choir Master there, Philip O'Connor.

We do like being part of the Christmas services and really love watching the Young Church at the Christingle service. We presented our service of Nine Lessons and Carols and appreciated the readers who are part of it. The outside carol singing was again planned but inclement weather meant it would have to be held inside. It was sung at the back of the church with only that area lit. So candles and torches were used to great effect. It was good to see so many people happy to come and join in.

We are happy to have the help from the younger members of the Choir at the special services but we could do with more members and would very much welcome anyone who feels they would like to be involved in singing with us.

It has been lovely to have Dave as part of our services and we are very grateful for his support. We also thank Rev. David Griffiths for his taking of Evensong.

John F. Balshaw, Organist and Choirmaster

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CRÈCHE

The crèche meets in the choir vestry during the 9.30am Family Communion Service and is for children from birth to starting school.

We have a core group of very regular attenders and have been delighted to welcome some new faces during the year as well.

We aim to promote Christian values through play. The children enjoy listening to stories, singing songs, craft activities and playing with the toys. We have received some donations of toys over the last few months including a Noah's Ark snap game and some new role play equipment. We try to link the activities to bible stories and appreciation of the world around us, while also providing a welcoming environment for parents to share worries, useful tips and experiences.

Katie Hodgkiss & Katie Dunne

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YOUNG CHURCH

Yet again, we have welcomed a large number of children to our meetings each Sunday during the 9:30 am Family Communion. Even the Bishop of Bolton remarked with amazement upon this fact! We currently have 47 names on our register, with attendance meticulously recorded each week. We now easily keep in touch with parents through our WhatsApp group.

We continue to familiarise the children with stories from the Bible and to explain the significance of important festivals within the church calendar. We use a variety of ways to make our meetings memorable.

Just before Mothering Sunday, the children continued the words "My Mum's a star because..." Many read out their thoughts and brought a few tears to the mum's eyes! Palm Sunday saw an enthusiastic dramatisation of the story and on Easter day there was a frenzied flee to the church garden following the service to find mini Easter eggs which we had hidden! Reminders of the Resurrection stories followed after which the children joined in the historic celebration of the crowning of Charles III by completing a colourful display of significant emblems from the Coronation Service, which we put up in the Church Centre. After covering the Ascension, we introduced the message of Pentecost using the colours of traffic lights to explain the message given to the disciples: red to wait; amber to be ready to go, and green to go out and preach the gospel with the help of the Holy Spirit. We then made windmills to represent the rushing, mighty wind that accompanied the arrival of the Holy Spirit. Great fun! Also in May, some children held buckets at the end of the service to collect change from the congregation for Christian Aid week. They carefully counted donated money which was £100. Thank you to all who donated!

A Parade Service sermon about Solomon saw us considering the different facets of wisdom, linking them to our daily lives. We followed this with a dramatisation of the demonstration of wisdom by Solomon when he was confronted by the two women, who each claimed to be the mother of a baby.

It is never a problem to find volunteers to act out stories or to share their ideas with us in discussions. Indeed, our children are confident when they take part in special services and will willingly answer the questions requested by Dave to be answered at the end of the service.

A real highlight of our summer meetings was the story of David and Goliath, which involved the making of catapults that were enthusiastically demonstrated in church. Harry Fielding was the most successful at moving the effectiveness of the catapults, with a broad smile upon his face!

After the story of friendship of David and Jonathan and God's friendship to us, there followed the topic of Christian Values. We listed many and discussed how we could remember their importance in our daily lives. Large posters were held up in church and we continue to remind the children of them regularly. We are gratified to hear them mention and demonstrate values of kindness and respect frequently. Several children have quietly and selflessly helped other children in our activities.

After a summer break of just three weeks, we focused on the theme of Creation, which

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was told to the children through a PowerPoint presentation and a video and consolidated with the children creating their own Creation wheel. When ill health forced Joanna's absence, Alison Perry swung into action and fully supported me as we learned the Christmas songs. Thank you so much Alison! Thank you also to Pauline, who has been a stalwart support for many years. At the Christingle service we rocked and rolled with the shepherds as they went to Bethlehem after singing a quiet carol. The prayers at the service were delivered by the children and Daisy Dunne, one of our teenage helpers, volunteered to read the Bible passage. A poem was thoughtfully read by Teddy Carruthers, one of our Year 6 boys.

Throughout the year, our families willingly give items to the Grub Tub for Urban Outreach. The clatter of tins, packets and bottles as the children drop them in on their way to the centre is carefully supervised by another teenage helper, Amelia Harrison, who read the first lesson at the Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols clearly and assuredly. Many packets of cheese biscuits and toys were given for the "Christmas Dinner on Jesus" appeal and at the Toy Service for Bolton Lions and Fortalice. Thank you, parents, for all your support with these appeals and throughout the year. Thank you to all in our Church family, who helped to ensure the success of both Christmas appeals.

So, a New Year began, and following the reading at the January Parade Service, we covered the story of Samuel with a game of "Chinese whispers" to reinforce that Eli gave the message that Samuel must give to God when he called again, and that Samuel must reply correctly. Many children had never played the game before and how they enjoyed it!

I wish to thank all our leaders, Joanna, Pauline and Alison, and our teenage helpers, Amelia, Daisy, Guenna, Amelie and Amelia for their loyal support and help and Adam for putting photos onto the Facebook page. Finally, thank you to Dave for his cheerful encouragement and for always saying "Yes" to our requests!

Julie Steele

MEN OF CHRIST CHURCH (MCC)

I am pleased to report that the MCC had an active year of events and functions.

I reported upon the events of the first quarter of the year in my report last year. Subsequently, in May, the next event was a social drinks evening at Bob's Smithy at which it was good to see some new (and old) faces for an informal get together.

Towards the end of August, we held a social bowls evening at Heaton Village Club, which was attended by both young and old. Everyone involved felt that it was a great success so we are looking to hold a similar event on the evening of Thursday 4 July this year.

We held our AGM on 21 September, again at Bob's Smithy, at which the members of the committee were re-elected.

On the evening of Halloween, jointly with the Mothers' Union, we invited the Revd Chris Bracegirdle to give a talk entitled, "My Life in Ministry & Afterwards". The event in the

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Church Centre was well attended and highly illuminating, reflecting Chris's eloquence and ease of public speaking.

Two dozen men attended the annual dinner in November, at Ridgmont House, which was a pleasing four more than the previous year. It turned out to be a very enjoyable evening of good food and good company, and this year everyone received the meal they had ordered!

It was good to revive the brief Renewal of Commitment service towards the end of January and thanks are due to Revd Dave Thompson for explaining and publicising the role of the MCC. With Lent arriving very early this year, the Shrove Tuesday Pancake Party, held in the Church Centre, quickly followed. Over 100 tickets were sold for the event and a number of additional people paid at the door on the night. Over £400 was raised for Christ Church funds, a record for this event, compared to £290 with 75 people in attendance in 2023, which itself was a record. Thanks to all those who attended and special thanks to those who helped in what was a very busy kitchen. Thanks, in particular, are due to Aubrey Chapman and Laraine Mason (who is now an honorary MCC member!) for performing the chef duties. Thanks are also due to the entire extended Syddall family for all their hard work ahead of the party, on the night and clearing up afterwards. However, I would, once again, like to record my personal thanks to Adam Syddall for preparing not just one but two quizzes and for all his huge efforts in organising such a successful event.

At the time of writing, we are preparing to take on the Coffee Bar duties after the 9.30 a.m. service on Mothering Sunday. Once again, many thanks to Adam Syddall for arranging volunteers and to all those who helped on the day.

The committee continues to comprise myself, Adam Syddall as Honorary Secretary, Neville Beech as Honorary Treasurer with Andrew Minors, Carl Stilwell and the Revd Dave Thompson as serving members.

As always, the MCC committee would appreciate any offers from anyone who would like to contribute to the work of the MCC to help maintain and organise our programme of events. At the same time, I would like to offer my thanks, and those of the committee, to everyone quietly fulfilling the many duties and roles without which CCH would not be able to thrive.

David W. Youngman, MCC Chairman

CHRIST CHURCH PLAYERS

It's a pleasure to report that the Players 2023 Murder mystery was another success, with full and lively audiences at each of the 4 performances, and a net profit of over £3,000 . We were however saddened by the death of Martin's wife Sue after a well fought battle against cancer. Sue was a long-standing member of our church, who for many years had been staunch supporter of the Players helping backstage and giving us much encouragement. We give thanks for her and for all she was and did and continue to remember her and Martin, Jenny and Katie in their loss. As a result of the Players

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success, we have been able from our funds to give a cheque for £50.00, in memory of Sue to a charity of Martin's choice, £760.00 to the Destitution Project in Bolton, and to date, £5,000.00, to church funds.

As always, the success of productions is not just down to members of the cast. Rather it depends on a large number of people behind the scenes. In particular, Pam and Paul Knight who with their usual aplomb master minded all the ordering, buying, and serving of a delicious meal at all four performances as well as efficiently running the box office; Judith Pearson our ever-patient director; Martin Miller and Geoffrey Pearson who as always erected and organised the set; and a band of willing volunteers drawn from congregations and friends who sold raffle tickets, helped out front and backstage, made cakes, served food, and washed and cleared up etc without a single complaint. Also crucial were all our sponsors who so generously gave raffle prizes; and of course, everyone who came and set about solving the murder.

Plans were well in place to put on another Murder Mystery this coming year during the first week in May, but unfortunately due to unforeseen circumstances, this production has had to be postponed until February 2025. However, with the hard work of our dedicated cast member and supporters in all guises we are hoping once again to be able to bring enjoyment to a lot of people albeit later than we had planned.

Brenda Griffiths, Chair

LUNCHEON CLUB

Once again we have had another enjoyable and successful year, in which we had an average of 41 members coming per month. Sadly we have lost a few of our regulars but have gained several new members. Most of these are from the local community, which is good to see, as we are an outreach club. As well as Christ Church people, we are always looking to attract new members, either by word of mouth or distributing our programmes. We feel that we give value for money, as we are still able to keep the cost to £5 for our usual lunch of soup, pudding, cheese and biscuits and in the summer months ham salad instead of soup. Also, we have a variety of interesting speakers which I organise. We are always delighted to see everyone enjoying both the food and the fellowship. We always manage to have soup over, despite giving second helpings to those who would like it and we distribute this to members who are ill or housebound, which is always much appreciated.

As always, I have tried to organise a variety of speakers/entertainment throughout the year. We began 2023 with an 'old favourite' Mr David Lloyd, showing us photographs of old Bolton and talking about how times were back then. He's always a popular speaker and engenders lots of reminiscences and questions from our members. David stepped into the breach once again in May, when the original speaker was ill and this time talked about future plans for Bolton.

In February we had an excellent talk and slide presentation from Geoffrey Pearson, telling us about the Rotary project which they support, sending wheelchairs to Africa. This was a very heart-warming and emotional talk, showing us slides of when he and Judith took these wheelchairs out to Africa and presented them both to adults and

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children. It made us aware of what a wonderful project this was, giving mobility and independence to those who had been unable to get around due to disability.

For our March meeting, once again we welcomed Anne and Gordon Sharpe (Spellbound Productions). They are a wonderful couple, who have been coming to us for a good many years. Their films are always very professional and interesting, with excellent soundtracks. This time, their main film was about their trip to Alaska.

Then in April, another favourite – a return visit from Matt and Yvonne, with part 2 of their 'American Adventure on Wheels.' As previously, their talk was fascinating, covering all the places they had visited in their RV.

In June, we were given a talk by Mr Stephen Sanders, about his role when he was a toastmaster and Stephen looked very smart dressed up in his full toastmaster regalia. The anecdotes he told were very witty and everyone could certainly hear him with his distinctive delivery.

After our summer break, we had an amusing talk by Mr Stephen Freeborn, telling us tales from when he worked as a pharmacist. He has written a book entitled 'Keep on Taking the Tablets – the Weird, Wonderful and Downright Wacky World of the Pharmacist'. His delivery of anecdotes from this book was hilarious and he brought along copies which we were able to purchase at the end.

Our next speaker in contrast, Mr Philip Caine, entertained us with his talk entitled 'Barrow to Baghdad and Back Again – My Career Story'. This was a fascinating insight into his past life and the many jobs he had taken on. Philip's life experiences and time in Asia and the Middle East are the inspiration for his thrillers, copies of which he brought with him and members were able to purchase signed copies.

In November, once again I was let down at the last minute due to illness. After numerous phone calls, I managed to get the speaker who we are also having next year (Steve Williams) and I was very grateful to him for coming at such short notice. He gave the talk 'Unsung Lancastrians' (which we were due to have in 2024) which was excellent and I'm sure his next talk will be just as good.

Then in December, the highlight of our year was having a choir from St Peter's Smithills Dean entertain us with their Christmas performance. Their singing was beautiful and a big thank you to both Joanna Steele and Adele Whittingham for all their hard work and dedication putting the performance together - it gave our members a lot of pleasure. We hope they will be able to come again in 2024.

Now to our Luncheon Club outing in May. Our last coach trip was before lockdown so it was wonderful to get back to having one again. This time, Pam kindly volunteered to organise a trip to Barton Grange, with a cruise along the canal and then a very enjoyable lunch at the Flower Bowl. Afterwards, we could wander around the garden centre with its many stalls and have a cup of tea. We were blessed with good weather, which made it even more pleasurable. Everyone said how much they had enjoyed it – our grateful thanks to Pam for organising this trip out.

As always, my thanks for all those helped to make our Luncheon Club so enjoyable and successful. Obviously, a huge thank you to all those volunteer helpers, who give up their

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time and expertise preparing the soups and puddings. Also thanks to all those who work in the kitchen, serving, clearing away and washing up which are all essential to the smooth running of the Club. Thank you to the hard working Committee – small in number but large in effort. A huge thank you especially to Steph who oversees all the food and organises the kitchen so efficiently and cheerfully, arranging both the soup and sweet rotas and also doing the shopping for food supplies. Thanks also to Committee member Janet Balshaw, in charge of the soup which is always delicious and Elsie Aldred who prepares the cheese and biscuits which are greatly appreciated. A very important member of our small Committee is Pam Hodson – we are very lucky to have such an efficient and reliable Treasurer. Not only does she collect and distribute the money but also prices out the food and makes sure that our finances are kept in impeccable order. She now also sends out birthday cards to each member and at our Christmas meeting she distributes Christmas cards to everyone. We are very grateful to John Balshaw for his expertise selling raffle tickets – our funds have grown thanks to all his effort. Also grateful thanks to his daughter Katie, who now helps to set up and lay the tables and dismantle them afterwards. This is a great help to me and my husband Mike, who also helps with the raffle and setting up the room. All these volunteers enable our Luncheon Club to flourish so successfully. A huge thank you to all our volunteers for their assistance and support throughout the year.

Pauline Cull, Luncheon Club Leader

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BEAVERS

2023 was a fun filled year.

We celebrated Chinese New Year, did a number of hikes including night hikes, we baked, we cooked, we visited Pets at Home, we had Easter Bingo, we went geocaching, we did fire lighting, we had ice cream at Smithills Farm after a hike, we had a taekwondo lesson in the hut, we had a water fight, we painted rocks and did axe throwing, we had a whole group bonfire night, we went to Bibbys for a Pirate Picnic and again in October for a Spooky Halloween Picnic, we had a Simmer Camp and to end 2023 on a high, we had a Christmas Sleepover at Gullivers World.

As well as all that we covered the criteria for the following badges;

- health and well being badge
- experiment badge
- Animal Friend badge
- Communicator badge
- Adventure badge
- Nights Away badges
- Air Activities badge
- International badge
- Disability badge
- Faith badge

Now we look forward to our 2024 adventures.

Adele Twist

17TH BOLTON SCOUTS

The Scouts section of 17th Bolton Scouts have had a rather active year, with many hiking adventures around the area such as up to Winter Hill, navigating around Smithills Estate and a canal walk to the Middlebrook.

We have also brushed up on basic skills, such as fire-lighting and campsite preparation, which helped the Scouts when we did a camp at the hut and travelled to Blackpool as part of our Summer Camp.

They have also been introduced to Shooting and Archery this year and I hope with a new Scout Leader, these skills will be built on.

On a personal note, it has been a joy to be part of this group and Church and it has been unfortunate due to personal family circumstances that I have had to step down from the role of Scout Leader.

All the best for the future.

Edward Orlinski

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MOTHERS' UNION

The Mothers' Union theme for 2023 builds on its triennial theme of an evolving response to the world around us with a gradual progression from "Transformation - Now!" to "Transformation in Action" "Where would the Anglican Communion be without the Mothers' Union? At home and across the world the Mothers' Union offers the love and hope of Christ, helping to transform communities through teaching, prayer and pastoral care and by working with others to stop violence, injustice and hunger." - Stephen Cottrell, Archbishop of York.

We are delighted that our own MU branch is mirroring this theme of action. At the start of the year we had 37 members but during the course of the year, a number of other members joined us, mostly either transfers from other branches or previously lapsed members, however, we welcomed a brand new member and it is hoped that we will make this official at the Mothering Sunday service next year with a push on recruitment of new members, something that we have not done as a branch for a very long time. On a sad note, we lost several of our members in 2022. We thank God for their commitment to Mothers' Union and for all that they were able to offer throughout their years of membership.

For the first time since 2019, we had an exciting programme of events during 2023, made possible through the incredible support offered to us by Rev'd Dave Thompson (also a member of our branch!). These included a hugely positive re-launch meeting in January to discuss ideas for the future and a very well attended "Strawberries and Cream" event in the sunshine in the Vicarage garden in May, attended by members and other parishioners (including 2 children!) and which we hope will become a regular annual event. Margaret Goudge kindly opened up her beautiful garden for us again in the summer and hosted a cream tea event, raising over £220 for the MU "Away From It All" campaign - the first major fundraising event we have held since before Lockdown. Our heartfelt thanks to Margaret for organising this wonderful event. We held a joint event with the MCC in October and look forward to collaborating with them for events in 2024. These events all took place on the 5th Tuesday of the month where one fell and we hope to continue this as a minimum next year.

Our successful Knitting Club continues to run each month; a wonderful social event for those that attend and we hope that this will continue to grow. Projects have included sending items such as hats and blankets to the neonatal unit at Royal Bolton Hospital. We are pleased to be able to continue to assist with Baptisms and the purchase of the Baptism books given to each family. We would like to express our heartfelt thanks to Clare King who continues her role as Baptism Coordinator and we would also like to take this opportunity to thank the volunteers on the rota. We are also hugely grateful to Margaret Goudge in her position as Deanery Correspondent which involves a huge amount of work behind the scenes, liaising with other branches, passing on information from our Diocesan office, regularly attending a wide number of events on our behalf and much more. We would also like to offer an enormous thank you to Lynne Fisher who continues to keep us all in the loop via email with MU news, details about current fundraising activities and projects and much more.

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Prayer: Loving Lord, unite us together as Mothers' Union in our shared vision of a world where everyone prospers and God's love is shown through our lives of faithful action, as we reach out as your hands across the world. Amen. "Let us run with determination the race that lies before us. Let us keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, on whom our faith depends from beginning to end." Hebrews 12:1-2

Ruth Syddall, Treasurer

**INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF CHRIST
CHURCH, HEATON**

I report on the accounts of the parish of Christ Church, Heaton for the year ended 31 December 2023.

Respective responsibilities of PCC and examiner

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

Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the PCC 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 you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

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

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

Name: Kathryn Hodgkiss FCA Relevant professional qualification or body: ICAEW
Address: J F Balshaw & Co, 20 Old Kiln Lane, Heaton, Bolton. BL1 5PD Date: 19th March, 2024

