

The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Stretton  
St Matthew's



**Trustee Annual Report and Financial Statements for Year ending  
31<sup>st</sup> December 2021**

Registered Charity Number: 1132920

## Dedication and Acknowledgement

This report is dedicated to, and acknowledges, the work undertaken by the Ministry team, PCC and volunteers who have given so generously of their time and energy to ensure the work of the Church could continue throughout the pandemic.

Our special thanks go to two very dedicated people who made significant contributions to the Parish – Barbara Hamilton, a former Churchwarden, and Michele Gwillim, our current Churchwarden, both of whom have sadly died this year.

## St. Matthew's Church

St. Matthew's Church is situated in the village of Stretton in Warrington with the parish boundaries encompassing Appleton and Stretton, and borders Appleton Thorn and St Cross Church which is within the Benefice. The Parish of St Matthew's Stretton is in the Deanery of Great Budworth and is part of the Diocese of Chester.

The Church is a Grade II listed building with a rich heritage dating back to 1827.

The Church is built in red sandstone with Westmorland slate roofs and has a bell tower accommodating a ring of eight bells. Their rich melodic tones can be heard all over the Parish summoning people to services and celebrating special events.

The Parish consists of both urban and semi-rural areas and is growing with new housing estates in the process of being built and further developments planned. If the proposed developments take place, the Church will increasingly be located within a housing community, rather than its previously rural position. The socio-economic status of the local population is also changing, bringing new opportunities and challenges.

St Matthew's Church of England Primary School is an integral part of the Church family. It is located next to the Church which facilitates the use of the Church by the School. This allows children of all ages to familiarise themselves with the building, not just for faith-related activities, but for its history, architecture, and heritage.

The Church Hall is co-located next to the School. It has previously been used on a regular basis by several local groups such as Brownies and Stretton Parish Council as well as Church groups and hired out for celebrations. Unfortunately, pandemic restrictions have affected its usage. During the weekdays, it is used by Pre-School which is very popular and has been able to continue and expand. Gradually, groups are returning and usage for celebrations is increasing.

## The Vicar's Report – the Reverend Alan Jewell

In 2020, we were forced to learn new ways of doing things and acquired skills we hadn't previously needed. In 2021, we continued to practise and polish those skills. On Sunday mornings we have gathered a well-prepared team of people who lead worship, some in church and some from their own homes via Zoom, with the liturgy presented using PowerPoint. The result is a hybrid: you can attend church in person or virtually. We are still at the mercy of the technology – a cobbled-together assembly of laptops and iPads, cameras and microphones, a router, a projector and screen... and every so often one piece of kit won't talk to another, or the internet connection drops. We have plans to invest in the technology, and hope to have a system that will make all of this very much easier and better.

We have learned to use video conferencing for meetings and services. St Matthew's PCC has held Zoom meetings. Each week since lockdown began, Linda Buckley, our Reader, has offered a reflection on the St Matthew's Church Facebook page. Praise & Play, and the Singing Kettle, were kept alive with online singalongs.

Limited personal contact took its toll on pastoral matters: making funeral arrangements over the phone is not the same as sitting with a bereaved family as they talk about their loved one and plan their goodbyes. Continued restrictions due to the pandemic meant that some of the funerals, which might have had a service in church, went directly to the crematorium or graveside.

There were just 5 weddings in 2021. Some of these had been postponed from the previous year. Other weddings have been pushed forward to next year. In August 2021 we were very pleased to hold a service of blessing for Linda and Dennis Buckley as they celebrated their 40<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary.

In May 2021, new legislation changed the way in which marriages are registered. On the plus side, couples can now have the names of their mothers and stepparents, rather than simply the father of each, on their marriage certificate. On the downside, clergy can no longer issue marriage certificates. A marriage document must be completed and signed and sent off to the registrar. Couples then must apply to the register office for a copy of their marriage certificate.

There were 10 baptisms in 2021. Due to Covid, we have made some changes to how baptisms are conducted: for example, when we go to the font, I now ask a parent or godparent to hold the child rather than hand them to me. I have to admit, I miss the absolute pleasure and privilege of being entrusted with someone's baby, and hope that

at some point we will be able to reintroduce this part of the service! Baptisms have been greatly enhanced by the newly opened space around the font. Smaller gatherings can now be seated in that area, giving everyone a first-class view of the baptism.

The relationship between Church and School continues to enrich both. One particular highlight of 2021 (when so much had to be done virtually) was an outdoor 'Stations of the Cross' for Easter, with children following the story of Holy Week in the School grounds and Churchyard.

The Diocese expects clergy to take part in continued ministerial development. In 2021, I had my Ministerial Development Review meeting with the Archdeacon of Chester. I also met regularly with my clergy peer group and spiritual director. I attended a number of online training events, including safeguarding training, and a number of webinars provided by the Church of England's Evangelism and Discipleship team, and others.

We are hopeful that 2022 will see us not only recovering but flourishing and growing. We also face huge challenges which the pandemic has exacerbated.

In the letter to the Hebrews (12.1,2) we are encouraged to

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*run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God.*

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Every blessing,

Alan Jewell

## Aim and Purpose.

### Aim

The primary object of all Parochial Church Councils (PCCs) is the promotion of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to the doctrines and practices of the Church of England. The PCC has the responsibility to co-operate with the incumbent – the Reverend Alan Jewell – “in promoting in the parish the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical.” (The PCC (Powers) Measure 1956).

At St. Matthew’s the mission statement is “[Sharing the love of Jesus with all through friendship, prayer and service](#)”. The Church exists to serve its Parish – the whole local Community – not just its congregation.

### Structure, governance, and management

The Parochial Church Council is a corporate body established by the Church of England and is a Registered Charity (Charity No. 1132920). The PCC operates under the Parochial Church Council (Powers) Measure 1956, the Church Representation Rules 2011, and the Charities Act 2011.

Members of the PCC are either ex officio or elected at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting by those on the electoral roll, in accordance with the Church Representation Rules and the Charity Commission Guidance. They are the charity trustees who are “persons having the general control and management of the administration of the charity” (Charities Act 2011).

The PCC is chaired by the Vicar and meets monthly, with the exceptions of August and December. Meetings alternate between a full business meeting and a discussion meeting of one or two items only. This allows for the business meeting to deal primarily with the operational and financial management of the Church, with reports from sub-committees, and any urgent business. The discussion meeting allows for in-depth debate on key items and is important both for the education of members and to allocate time to topics which may have greater medium to long term significance, than could be given in a bigger agenda. Having adopted this practice over the past three years, it has helped the PCC considerably.

This year, it has not been possible to meet in person for some considerable period, so PCC meetings were held via Zoom from January to July inclusive. Whilst it had its limitations, especially for discussion meetings, it ensured the governance and management of the Church was uninterrupted. Importantly, it ensured the cohesiveness

of the PCC was maintained.

There was only one new member of the PCC this year following the Annual Meeting, who has previously served elsewhere on a PCC, so her induction was personalised. However, the recruitment, selection and induction process for PCC members and all volunteers was reviewed prior to the election as part of the governance review and is in place to ensure safe recruitment and support.

The Parish Safeguarding Officer maintains an active database ensuring DBS checks are undertaken and maintained, and that all PCC members complete the appropriate level of safeguarding training. This is reviewed annually.

The PCC has complied with the duty under Section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016, fully recognising its duty to have due regard to the House of Bishops' guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.

During the year the following served as members of the PCC:

<b>Ex Officio</b>	Revd Alan Jewell*
<b>Licensed Workers</b>	Sheila Goulston* (until 06.03.22)
<b>Church Warden</b>	Michele Gwillim* (until 23.11.21) Stephen Edwards*
<b>Lay Representatives on The Deanery Synod</b>	Linda Buckley* (until 20.05.21) Stephen Edwards
<b>Elected Members</b>	
Elected until 2021	Catherine Edwards (until 20.05.21) Alison Hughes (until 20.05.21) Rose Jewell (until 20.05.21)
Elected until 2022	Chris Ellson Kath Holbourn* Carol Rylett Jenny Snodgrass Neville Snodgrass *Standing Committee membership
Elected until 2024	Andree Hillas

The Standing Committee of the PCC meets bimonthly prior to the full business meeting of the PCC in order to set the agenda and ensure relevant papers and information are ready to inform decision-making. It also has the responsibility to transact the business of the PCC between meetings.

The PCC is assisted by a Finance Sub-Group; Strategy Group; Fabrics Committee and the Church Hall Management Committee.

The Sub-Committee membership is voluntary with PCC members agreeing to assist with the work required in their specific area in order that the PCC is given detailed information on which to base decisions. Non-PCC members are also invited to participate, where their individual area of expertise greatly assists the work being undertaken. The Sub-Groups do not have executive responsibility. The Church Hall Management Committee is responsible for the operational management of the Church Hall and the management of bookings.

St Matthew's is represented on the Deanery Synod by the Vicar and two lay members (with one vacancy). The Deanery Synod is an intermediary between the PCC and Diocesan Synod and usually meets three times per year. In 2021, the March meeting held via zoom considered clergy wellbeing – this has been an ongoing discussion across the Church of England since the General Synod voted to support an improved approach to the care and well-being of clergy. September's meeting had presentations on the course Living in Love and Faith, prior to its rollout across the parishes, as well as on COP 26. An open meeting was hosted in November with Bishop Sam attending for a question-and-answer session. Members of the Deanery Synod vote during the year in elections to both the Diocesan and General Synods.

Formal training for the PCC has not been possible, but the bimonthly discussion meetings have ensured that members are continually developing their knowledge and expertise.

A key responsibility of the PCC is to identify how our activities are focused on achieving public benefit and positively impacting on the lives of people in our congregation and community. The Strategy work has focused significantly on how the Church can outreach and build increasingly stronger links with the local community, particularly as the pandemic restrictions reduce.

When planning the activities for the year, our incumbent, Alan Jewell, and the PCC have considered the Charity Commission guidance on public benefit and, in particular, the specific guidance on "Charities for the advancement of religion" (2011).



## Objectives and Activities

With continuing government restrictions to manage the pandemic, the PCC felt that the objectives for 2021 should be curtailed. No-one had anticipated that the pandemic and its impact would still be a core part of life in 2021, and so it was essential that objectives were set which were realistic; achievable and focused on delivering spiritual and financial recovery. Importantly, they needed to maximise the opportunities that were available as they arose, particularly in community involvement and integration.

- Developing a strategy for the Church to enable recovery and growth.

The need to develop a clear pathway for both Church development and financial recovery is critical to the survival of the Church. Balancing aspiration and resources, both human and financial, has necessitated an in-depth and honest appraisal of current provision and areas of required improvement. The Strategy Group was established and has led on this area of work, linking closely with the Finance Subgroup.

- Completing the Phase 1 development of the kitchen installation.

This essential capital project continued from 2020, having acquired the requisite funding. Building work began following a series of planning meetings and completed in the late summer, allowing the kitchen to be used as soon as restrictions allowed. This objective was seen to be a key part of the strategy and an integral element of our purpose in promoting fellowship within our congregations, as well as having the ability to outreach into the Community. The Churchwarden led a small planning group to deliver this objective.

- Strengthening Governance

As a Church, as part of our review of processes, it was felt that risk management should be strengthened. A major review of all policies and procedures was undertaken with guidance produced on all key health and safety risks; formats standardised, and the risk register regularly submitted to PCC. COVID risk assessments had been undertaken at least monthly since the start of the pandemic with rigorous cleaning schedules in place. This allowed the Church to stay open at all times, except when lockdown prohibited it, even when other Churches stayed closed. This work was led by a PCC member.

- Building Community outside the Church Walls

It is our aspiration to be seen as an integral part of our local community, not just as a beautiful building. Our links with the Church School remain very strong and as new people move into the area, and confidence to mix socially increases, this work is

increasingly important. Whilst it is a key part of our strategy, its importance necessitates it being an objective of its own. The Standing Committee leads on this objective.

## Meeting our Objectives

### Developing the strategy

The Strategy Group, led by the Vicar, initially used “A Vision for the Church of England in the 2020s”, a document produced by the Archbishop of York in November 2020 as the starting point for discussion. However, it soon became clear that to focus debate and ensure its relevance to St Matthew’s, we needed to honestly appraise our Church, our ministry, and our performance.

The Vicar suggested using work undertaken by the Church Growth Research Programme (CGRP) who had identified several factors in their research “From Evidence to Action” relating to church growth. Whilst it is recognised that no one single factor guarantees growth in a Church, there were eight factors which were likely to be found in any combination in growing churches. Helpfully, they produce checklists which can be used by churches to identify their strengths and weaknesses in each area. These are followed by a series of questions to clarify your response.

The eight factors are:

- Clear mission and purpose
- Actively engaging with local context
- Willing to change and adapt
- A welcoming culture, ongoing relationships
- Leaders innovate, envision, and motivate
- Lay people active in leadership
- Engaging children and young adults
- Nurturing disciples

In a series of initially fortnightly meetings, the Strategy Group worked through the checklist, giving independent scores initially before discussion on each set of questions. All members agreed that to make the exercise worthwhile, brutal honesty was required and received! Scores out of 10 were given for each section and some of these started at 2/10. Whilst disconcerting and a little uncomfortable, by the end of the process it was felt that a truly honest appraisal had been undertaken. Some factors it was agreed that at the current time have less relevance, and we do not have the resources available to

make progress. An example of this is provision for young people. Whilst considerable work is done with pre-school and primary school age children, there are very few young people attending Church. In the locality however, there are facilities already available in adjacent Churches for young people which we can access and signpost to, so this was agreed to be a more sensible way to proceed.

Having completed the checklist and brainstormed areas of improvement in each factor, a priority order was agreed. Underpinning all the discussion was a need to balance the development of a clear pathway to recovery and that some desirable elements whilst very worthy would have to be deferred for the time being.

The Finance Subgroup were closely aligned with the work as they focused on financial recovery – identifying ways of increasing income, reducing expenditure and general cost improvement. It was essential that the two streams of work were congruent as Church growth is dependent on successful financial recovery.

Government restrictions limited some progress but gave the opportunity to prioritise areas of work. This objective will span a number of years, but work commenced in several areas as we developed an action plan:

- Communication about our mission and purpose – initially to the wider PCC via presentations and regular updates about the Strategy. The bigger challenge will be how do we effectively communicate with our community, which is geographically spread and increasingly diverse. Christmas was a great opportunity to start the process with a leaflet drop to all the new houses outlining the events and services and contact details for further information about the Church.
- Actively engaging with our local context – understanding the potential changes occurring around the Church and within the community following the publication of Warrington Council's Local Plan 2021. Whilst there is local opposition to the extent and location of housing development, we need to be positive about opportunities for mission and realistic about the impact of the Plan. The need for proactivity in responding to and shaping the Plan as it is revised was clearly recognised, in order to influence potential changes.
- Willingness to change and adapt – the pandemic necessitated changes to services and rather than return to the previous status quo, work is underway to identify areas of improvement as well as reflection on what has worked well. Streaming services remains popular so will continue. Funds have been identified to replace the audio-visual system with a permanent bespoke system which will be less susceptible to breakdown.

- Welcoming culture – the need to ensure that everyone, new to Church or regular worshipper, receives a genuinely warm welcome has been a focus for us. With COVID restrictions requesting limited personal contact and reduced communication between members of the congregation, this has not always been easy, but as restrictions lifted and the opportunity to offer fellowship and refreshment increased, this remains an important objective.
- Leadership – we have a small Ministry team and a small band of volunteers. Shielding has reduced the ability of many of our congregation from physically helping in Church. However, our volunteer base has increased as activities have developed notably for Praise and Play, the Community Coffee Morning and participation in streamed services. The latter allows volunteers to participate from their own homes, so for those shielding they can still contribute. Discussion about how the PCC can more visibly demonstrate its leadership has taken place.
- Engaging children – Praise and Play was able to resume in early October during school terms. This is increasingly popular both with pre-school children and their parents. The Vicar spends time each week in St Matthew's School and the close links between Church and School continue to grow. Visits to Grappenhall Heys County Primary School, a little further away but where increasing numbers of local children do and will attend, are also continuing. Whilst there is not the interest currently for a Sunday School, a popular pre-COVID activity were the Family Extravaganzas held quarterly on a Sunday afternoon. Planning for the first Extravaganza to take place in January 2022 is well underway.
- Nurturing Discipleship – The need to develop faith and understanding through small group working is a key action. Work has commenced on planning the "Pastoral Principles for Living Well Together" with an external facilitator. This five-week course was felt to be a good place to start.

### The Kitchen completion

The long-awaited completion of the kitchen has been an overwhelming success. The picture below shows the space beforehand following the removal of pews in 2020.



A sensitive and aesthetically pleasing design incorporated pew frontals to form the base of the kitchen, ensuring that it blended perfectly with the adjacent structures. It has



allowed us to provide refreshments, once permitted, after each service and during meetings. Bishop Sam was our first “customer” to drop in for a drink when he visited.

## Strengthening Governance

This piece of work had two main components – ensuring that the Church was compliant with legislative requirements; that it implemented good practice; ensured the safety of all who worked or visited the Church and could evidence this, as well as training the PCC in their risk management responsibilities. Whilst it is recognised that this is not necessarily the most interesting part of a PCC agenda, the consequences of failure to act can be severe. Whilst improving the governance structure and processes, it has been important that PCC approval of new and updated policies/guidelines has been received and regular governance items discussed.

## Building Community outside the Church Walls

This objective will continue to be an important part of our Strategy. Whilst opportunities to meet in person have been curtailed, a considerable following of our streamed services has occurred. It has been very successful, with our audience even extending to Dorset! Weekly reflections on Facebook on a Wednesday evening undertaken by our Lay Reader have also continued and been very much appreciated.

The Community Payback Scheme members had to stop due to restrictions for several months but restarted in September and have made an amazing difference to our Churchyard. Relatives of those interred have commented on how well kept the graveyard is, and with their enthusiastic pruning, the men have ensured the shrubs and pathways are clear and safer for everyone. A strong, mutually beneficial partnership has developed with feedback stating that the men enjoy the work and the Scheme now operates on both days of the weekend.

The Community Coffee Morning was able to restart each week, and a steady stream of “regulars” are building up. It is most enjoyable when dog-walkers and passers-by pop in for free refreshments so that they can view the inside of the Church without feeling too conspicuous. A warm welcome as well as specialty coffees and biscuits/cake greets everyone.

## Activities and Performance

### Special Events

Fortunately, the restrictions on special events were less challenging for the majority of 2021. In the latter half of the year, numbers able to attend these services were lifted centrally but presented their own challenges in ensuring a COVID-secure environment.

Funerals continued to take place all year and eighteen services were held in total. Following the funerals, several burials in the churchyard took place, as well as interment of cremated remains.

Weddings are always a joyous occasion and this year we were delighted to be able to host five weddings from June. Most of the couples had previously had to cancel their ceremonies due to pandemic restrictions, so they were very pleased that these could now take place.

Welcoming children into the Church through Christening has been a casualty of the pandemic. However, from July, we were able to start an almost weekly Christening service with twelve taking place in the latter part of the year. Whilst most parents wanted an individual, private service, one child was christened in our Sunday Morning service to the delight of our congregation.

### Church Activities

Several of our Church activities were unable to resume in 2021 due to concerns over meeting. However, the weekly Community Coffee Morning commenced in September along with the monthly Church Fellowship.

Church Fellowship is a group of ladies from across the Benefice who meet “to grow in understanding of Church membership, to play a full part in the life and mission of the Church and to share in the fellowship which it offers”. Each meeting has a different theme and activity, starting in September with afternoon tea at a local Garden Centre. As part of the Church’s Strategy, our Lay Reader led the October meeting with a mini-reflection and a discussion on how the group might help in the rebuilding of the Church post-pandemic.

November saw the Fellowship fulfilling one of its charitable aims in supporting Operation Christmas Child. The generosity and enthusiasm of members in filling twenty-one shoeboxes with goodies for all age-groups and genders was staggering. Fellowship funds paid the £5 postage donation per box which were then all taken to a local distribution centre during the National Collection week.

Christmas celebrations came early in the first week of December for Fellowship members, in the form of a Christmas afternoon tea thoroughly enjoyed by all. It has been wonderful to see the numbers of members increase so rapidly, and for the obvious enjoyment received by all who attend.

Praise and Play, as previously mentioned, recommenced in October for our pre-school children. It is a great opportunity not just for the children to familiarise themselves with the Church, but also to play and undertake some wonderful craft activities. For accompanying parents, they have the chance to meet other parents and socialise. Several newcomers to the area have attended and reported that they have found it most welcoming and supportive.

October also saw the return of our popular monthly Quiz night. Hosted by a local hostelry and run by our Lay Reader, teams battle it out to try and beat the Vicar!!! It is a great opportunity for those in the pub to see that Church people are human too! Whilst played in small teams, all are welcome and individuals attending on their own get to know new people as they join a team.

Once again, we were unable to hold our Autumn Fair, which has been a good fundraiser for the Church in the past. This has put continuing pressure on the budget as we are still unable to pass a collection plate during services due to COVID restrictions. Whilst there are options for giving – a contactless card machine; envelopes on entry; a centralised collection plate as well as publicised website opportunities, the reality is that these generate much less income than the collection plate in the pew, especially at larger services.

The Christmas Tree Festival was able to take place this year, although in a slightly restricted manner. It is held over two weekends at the end of November and beginning of December. Local businesses decorate a small tree, and these are displayed around the Church on windowsills and tables. When lit, the Church looks amazing - full of light. Donations this year were in aid of our local hospice, St Rocco's and the grand total achieved, despite our restrictions, was £969.32.

During Advent, the weekly reflection took place in Church for half an hour. This short opportunity to spend in peaceful reflection at such a busy time of year was much appreciated.

The Outdoor Carol Service was repeated this year, but we were not so fortunate with the weather which was very wet and blustery. However, a small number of hardy souls braved the elements and sang their hearts out.



The indoor Carol Service on the 19<sup>th</sup> of December was well attended and enjoyed by all participants. Along with the Crib Service on Christmas Eve, it sets the scene for Christmas, and we were delighted that so many people attended.

To encourage exercise, a Walk to Jerusalem was started on Christmas Day 2020. This is a virtual walk where participants record the length of their daily walking on the World Walking App. The distance from our Lychgate to Jerusalem is 6077km and the plan was to arrive in time for Easter. This became so popular that not only did we get to Jerusalem ahead of schedule by 26 days, but also walked back!! To make it even more interesting, the route home was via a walk in Israel, followed by another in Jordan. Having arrived home in Warrington, we virtually embarked upon a walk around the coast of Britain, starting in the South-West corner of Scotland and by the end of the year we were walking along the south coast of England. Regular updates are given to the congregation with encouragement to join in.

### Fabric

As with many Churches, there is the need for a continual programme of repairs and maintenance. Externally, the Churchwarden has worked closely with the Community Payback Supervisor to work through several smaller painting and repair jobs, alongside their maintenance of the grounds. This has been very helpful. Volunteers continue to assist in painting doors and railings as part of an ongoing programme. A comprehensive Topple Test was also undertaken with all graves requiring attention signed and catalogued.

Legacy funding has enabled the purchase of tables to enable safe serving of refreshments, which was greatly appreciated.

A container adjacent to the Church Hall, which had been used by the Link Club, was left after their insolvency. Whilst it needed some repairs, undertaken by volunteers, it has proven a useful storage asset.

The Church has many trees within its curtilage and following specialist reports, a faculty was submitted to address the tree survey recommendations. The Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC) “resolved to recommend the works” on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of October. We are awaiting the grant of the faculty before this work is undertaken.

### Charitable Giving

This has continued to be difficult this year as some of our charitable giving opportunities

have diminished. Regular donations to Warrington Foodbank continued and this was supplemented by a food collection being taken at Harvest Festival. A large amount of food from both the joint Church and School collections was very gratefully received. We were also able to deliver small gifts to frail and elderly members of the Church.

Collections for Christian Aid and The Children's Society were advertised as well as a collection point within Church. Unfortunately, due to smaller congregations, these did not generate large amounts of donations.

There are however many examples of individuals giving of their personal time and resources to assist both the Church and other members of the Community. Whilst shunning the limelight, these unsung volunteers are showing practically their Christianity in action.

## Looking Forward to 2022

The task ahead of the Church in the coming year cannot be underestimated. Despite the excellent work undertaken by the Treasurer in constantly reviewing and helping the PCC manage expenditure, income loss has been significant. Our congregation has reduced because of the pandemic, and as a natural consequence of an older population, and so growing the Church is a key objective. However, within the context of inflation and job insecurities, there is no guarantee that increasing the congregation will proportionately increase income.

The PCC is determined that their financial recovery plan for 2022 will be robust and allow the Church to make headway with the strategy and deliver growth across a range of areas. Whilst the financial situation is of concern, there are shoots of opportunity about which to be positive. Increasingly, several young families amongst others, are beginning to participate in Church activities, which is both welcome and to be encouraged, as they are our future.

## Financial Review

### Income

#### Voluntary Giving

The total receipts on general unrestricted funds received were £55,282 and are detailed in the Financial Statements. Planned Giving through Standing Orders and Weekly Giving Envelopes decreased by 8%. Although the Church remained open during 2021, the necessary Covid 19 restrictions on services meant that the number of people attending services was reduced as was the number of services held. One legacy was received during the year.

#### Other Income

Due to the Covid 19 restrictions we were only able to open our Church Hall to educational groups for part of the year. At the beginning of the year, one regular hirer went into administration and so the Church Hall income from educational providers reduced. As restrictions lifted, the Hall has managed to increase the number of other hirers to negate this loss.

#### Restricted Income

The PCC continued to make the Big Welcome Project a priority and was grateful to receive donations and grants towards this totalling £10,167.

### Expenditure

#### Parish Share

The largest item of expenditure was the Parish Share of £75,269, paid to the Diocese. We are grateful for the support given by the Diocese in reducing the payments for the first 3 months of the year to the 2020 level. The contribution from St Matthew's increased by 1% from last year. The Parish Share is a contribution to the Diocese towards the cost of the provision and support of mission and ministry. This includes housing, support, stipend and pension costs of the clergy of this parish, training of new ordinands, a contribution to national church funds and shared costs of the diocese, including assistance towards the upkeep of churches less able to manage than ourselves.

### Staff costs

The PCC pays for a Parish Secretary, Church Hall and office cleaner, Director of Music and a Verger for wedding and funerals. Details of our staff costs are included in the Financial Statements.

### Trustee payments and expenses

The PCC also supported the clergy by paying Council Tax, Water and environmental charges for the Vicarage amounting to £3,343 as well as other costs such as travel, telephone, and broadband. There were no payments to persons related to, or connected to, the Trustees.

### Other charitable giving

During the year the Church was able to undertake its Christmas Tree Festival, on a reduced scale, donating the funds raised to St Rocco's. It has continued its donations to the Warrington Foodbank.

### Repairs

Routine maintenance and repairs were undertaken during the year to ensure the PCC met its responsibility for health and safety. An electrical survey was undertaken as well as a survey of the drains to investigate the flooding in the basement. Repairs were made to the boiler.

### Re-ordering

During the year we were able to continue the Big Welcome Project. Using funds raised specifically for the project, the kitchen was installed facilitating increased use of the area at the back of Church. The total amount spent during the year was £36,653.

### Reserves

The PCC has a good reserves position, thanks to generous legacies given in the past. It is the policy of the PCC to keep two months general running costs as a general reserve, and an additional amount to cover committed contract costs and minor repairs. Major building works, including those identified under the Quinquennial Inspection, will only be undertaken once additional funding has been secured. The reserve requirement under this policy is £32,000. Our current free reserves more than meet this policy and enable the PCC to use the remaining reserves to support its cash flow during 2022, and to continue its mission.

On 31 December 2021 unrestricted reserves were £76,779. In support of the Big Welcome Project and other mission projects £10,677 is held as designated reserves, leaving £66,102 free reserves to support the general running of the church.

The PCC also had £36,780 in restricted reserves. These include £314 for the Big Welcome Project and £17,545 for the Church Hall. There is also a reserve for £13,215 which the PCC hope to spend putting AV equipment into the Church to enhance our worship and outreach to the community. The balance is made up of smaller funds belonging to groups within the Church.

Our investments are accumulation shares held with CCLA in The Church of England Investment Fund. These create capital growth rather than income. Despite the pandemic they continue to increase in value.

### Looking Forward

The deficit for the year is a concern. The PCC has looked to reduce costs wherever possible and will continue to do so in 2022. The need to increase regular giving to meet regular commitments remains but with the general relaxation of restrictions in 2022 the opportunity for this to happen is increased. The PCC is aware of its current dependence on a limited number of donors and one regular Church Hall hirer. The completion of the kitchen area under the Big Welcome Project provides an opportunity to open the Church to the community.

## Administration

Principal Address: St Matthew's Church  
Stretton Road  
Warrington  
Cheshire  
WA4 4NT

Independent Examiner: Voisey & Co  
Chartered Accountants  
8 Winmarleigh Street  
Warrington  
Cheshire  
WA1 1JW

Bankers: HSBC  
11 Bridge Street  
Warrington  
WA1 2EY  
  
CCLA Investment Management Ltd  
Senator House  
85 Queen Victoria Street  
London  
EC4V 4ET

Architect: Mark Pearce BA(Hons), BArch, MA, AADiplCons, RIBA, AABC  
Kepczyk Pearce and Sanderson  
Architects, Surveyors & Historical Building Consultants  
75 Wilmslow Road  
Handforth  
Cheshire  
SK9 3EN

**FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**of the**  
**PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL**  
**PARISH OF STRETTON – ST MATTHEW’S**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER 2021**

## **INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT**

I report on the accounts of the PCC for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021 which are set out on pages 2 to 5.

### **Respective responsibilities of Trustees and Examiner**

As the members of the PCC you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts; you consider that the audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act
- to follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act); and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

### **Basis of Independent Examiner's Report**

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 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**

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

1. Which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:
  - to keep proper accounting records are kept in accordance with Section 130 of the 2011 Act; and
  - to prepare accounts are prepared which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act have not been met; or
2. To which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Lee Warburton BA FCA  
Voisey & Co  
Chartered Accountants  
8 Winmarleigh Street  
Warrington  
Cheshire  
WA1 1JW

Date 05.05.2022



**PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL of the ECCLESIASTICAL  
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*Financial Statements for year ended  
31<sup>st</sup> December 2021*

**RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER 2021**

—	Notes	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2021 £	Total 2020 £
<b>RECEIPTS</b>					
<b>Voluntary Receipts</b>					
Planned giving		35,174	-	35,174	38,233
Collection at services		3,302	-	3,302	2,165
All other giving/voluntary receipts	4	7,542	9,661	17,203	14,427
Gift Aid Tax recovered		<u>9,264</u>	<u>506</u>	<u>9,770</u>	<u>10,116</u>
		55,282	10,167	65,449	64,941
<b>Activities for generating funds</b>		676	862	1,538	3,429
<b>Investment Income</b>	5	-	25	25	139
<b>Church Activities</b>	6	14,567	-	14,567	11,705
<b>Other Income</b>	7	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>		<u>16,454</u>
<b>Total receipts</b>		<u>70,525</u>	<u>11,054</u>	<u>81,579</u>	<u>96,668</u>
<b>PAYMENTS</b>					
<b>Church activities</b>					
Diocesan parish contribution		75,269	-	75,269	74,709
Clergy and staff costs	8	13,717	-	13,717	14,072
Church running costs	9	19,563	139	19,702	18,961
Hall running costs		5,469		5,469	4,854
Charitable donations	10	<u>1,149</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,149</u>	<u>334</u>
		115,167	139	115,306	112,930
<b>Costs of generating funds</b>		-	345	345	340
<b>Other Costs – major works</b>	11	<u>20,918</u>	<u>15,735</u>	<u>36,653</u>	<u>39,427</u>
<b>Total payments</b>		<u>136,085</u>	<u>16,219</u>	<u>152,304</u>	<u>152,697</u>
<b>Excess of receipts over payments</b>		(65,560)	(5,165)	(70,725)	(56,029)
<b>Proceeds from sale of shares</b>		40,000	-	40,000	50,000
<b>Reclassification of funds</b>		10,101	(10,101)	-	-
<b>Transfer to St Cross</b>		<u>-</u>	<u>(2,373)</u>	<u>(2,373)</u>	
					-
		(15,459)	(17,639)	(33,098)	(6029)
<b>Cash at bank and in hand at 1 January</b>		44,153	42,641	86,794	92,823
<b>Cash at bank and in hand at 31 December</b>		<u>28,694</u>	<u>25,002</u>	<u>53,696</u>	<u>86,794</u>

**PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL of the ECCLESIASTICAL  
PARISH OF STRETTON - ST MATTHEWS**  
*Financial Statements for year ended  
31<sup>st</sup> December 2021*

**STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES**

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2021 £	Total 2020 £
<b>Cash Funds</b>					
Bank Current Account & Cash		20,755	-	20,755	22,019
Deposit Funds		<u>7,939</u>	<u>25,002</u>	<u>32,941</u>	<u>64,775</u>
		<u>28,694</u>	<u>25,002</u>	<u>53,696</u>	<u>86,794</u>
<b>Investment Assets</b>					
Investment Fund shares at market value		<u>48,085</u>	<u>11,778</u>	<u>59,863</u>	<u>87,729</u>
<b>Assets retained for church use</b>		<u>38,000</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>38,000</u>	<u>38,000</u>
<b>Liabilities</b>					
Due to Diocese		533	-	533	257
Other liabilities		<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,896</u>
		<u>533</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>533</u>	<u>2,153</u>

Approved by the Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Stretton – St Matthews on 05.05.2022  
and signed on its behalf by:

Revd Alan Jewell

**PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL of the ECCLESIASTICAL  
PARISH OF STRETTON - ST MATTHEWS**  
*Financial Statements for year ended  
31<sup>st</sup> December 2021*

**Notes to the accounts**

1. The financial statements of the PCC have been prepared in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations 2006, using the Receipts and Payments basis.
2. The fixed asset retained for the church use is the church hall at historical cost.
3. The PCC has considered its reserves in accordance with the policy set out in their report. The reserve requirement based on these accounts is £32,000 which is more than met by the PCC's free reserves.

	<b>Unrestricted Funds £</b>	<b>Restricted Funds £</b>	<b>Total 2021 £</b>	<b>Total 2020 £</b>
<b>4. All other giving/voluntary receipts</b>				
Legacies and Grants	1,180	4,593	5,773	7,824
Donations	3,594	5,068	8,662	4,797
Other Income	<u>2,768</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>2,768</u>	<u>1,806</u>
	<u>7,542</u>	<u>9,661</u>	<u>17,203</u>	<u>14,427</u>
<b>5. Income from investments</b>				
Bank interest	<u>-</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>139</u>
<b>6. Church Activities</b>				
Fees for weddings and funerals	7,839	-	7,839	3,206
Church hall hire	6,728	-	6,728	7,271
Magazine Sales	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,228</u>
	<u>14,567</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>14,567</u>	<u>11,705</u>
<b>7. Other Income</b>				
Insurance Claim – wall and Lychgate	-	-	-	13,802
Job Retention Scheme	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>2,652</u>
	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>16,454</u>
<b>8. Clergy and staff costs</b>				
Clergy costs	3,749	-	3,749	3,347
Salaries	8,554	-	8,554	9,395
Parish Office costs	<u>1,414</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,414</u>	<u>1,330</u>
	<u>13,717</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>13,717</u>	<u>14,072</u>
<b>9. Church running expenses</b>				
Organist and Choir Fees	940	-	940	2,002
Bellringers	256	-	256	-
Church flowers	379	-	379	115
Church service costs	631	139	770	798
Youth work	-	-	-	262
Insurance	5,299	-	5,299	5,295
Light and heat	3,720	-	3,720	3,102
Repairs and maintenance	7,255	-	7,255	5,180
Magazine costs	-	-	-	639
Sundries	211	-	211	470
Professional fees	392	-	392	618
Accountancy	<u>480</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>480</u>	<u>480</u>
	<u>19,563</u>	<u>139</u>	<u>19,702</u>	<u>18,961</u>

**PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL of the ECCLESIASTICAL  
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	<b>Unrestricted Funds £</b>	<b>Restricted Funds £</b>	<b>Total 2021 £</b>	<b>Total 2020 £</b>
<b>10. Charitable donations</b>				
Christian organisations	210	-	210	134
Secular organisations	<u>939</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>939</u>	<u>200</u>
	<u><u>1,149</u></u>	<u><u>-</u></u>	<u><u>1,149</u></u>	<u><u>334</u></u>
 <b>11. Other Costs – major works</b>				
Repair to the wall and Lychgate	-	-	-	13,977
Purchase of chairs	-	-	-	4,529
Re-ordering	<u>20,918</u>	<u>15,735</u>	<u>36,653</u>	<u>20,921</u>
	<u><u>20,918</u></u>	<u><u>15,735</u></u>	<u><u>36,653</u></u>	<u><u>39,427</u></u>

**12. Staff Costs**

The PCC pays for the services of parish secretary, director of music, vergers, and a church hall cleaner and these costs are included under the heading Clergy and Staff Costs.

There were no employee benefits to key management personnel in the previous or current years.

**13. Transactions with Trustees**

The Director of Music ceased to be a Trustee in May 2021 and received a salary and organists fees totalling £2,537 for the year to December 2021.

The incumbent was reimbursed for expenses incurred on behalf of the Church, totalling £771, for the period from August 2020.