



2023

ANNUAL REPORT

The Parochial Council
of the Ecclesiastical
Parish of Chester,
Christ Church





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Statement of Parochial Church Council's Responsibilities

We are required under the Charities Act 2011 to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the PCC and its surplus or deficit for that period. In preparing those financial statements we are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently;
- make reasonable and prudent judgements and estimates;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the PCC will continue.

We are also responsible for:

- keeping proper accounting records;
- safeguarding the PCC's assets;
- taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud.

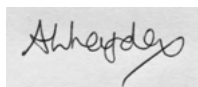
Public Benefit

The PCC are aware of the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit in "The advancement of religion for the Public Benefit" and have had regard to it in their administration of the church.

The PCC believes that by promoting the Christian faith it provides a benefit to the public by:

- Providing facilities for public worship, pastoral care and spiritual development, both for existing church members and for anyone who wishes to benefit from what the church offers.
- Promoting Christian values, and service by members of the church in and to their communities, to the benefit of individuals and society as a whole.

Signed on behalf of the PCC:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Anna Leyden".

Anna Leyden (Chair) 8th April 2024



Annual Report

Background of the PCC

Christ Church Parochial Church Council has the responsibility of co-operating with the incumbent and other clergy in promoting the whole mission of the church: pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. It also has the maintenance responsibilities of our church building and Mission House.

Membership of PCC

Membership of the PCC is ex-officio, co-opted or elected by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) in accordance with Church Representation Rules. The following people served for all or part of 2023:

Vicar	Rev'd Anna Leyden
Associate Minister	Rev'd Glyn Jones
Vice Chair of the PCC	David Chirgwin
Churchwardens	David Jones (from 16/6/23) Wendy Peto (until 16/6/23) Andrew Wigglesworth
Deanery Synod Representatives	Susan Ibrahim Wendy Peto (from 23/5/23)
Elected PCC Members	Carys Addison (from 23/5/23) Jonathan Aragon-Escobosa (from 23/5/23) David Chirgwin Thomas Cobb Hannah Giddings (until 23/5/23) Laura Hale Teresa Irwin (until 14/4/23) Veronica Johnston Pauline Jones Rosie Jones (until 23/5/23) Edward Newman Janet Thorp
Secretary	Wendy Peto
Electoral Roll Officer	Janet Thorp
Treasurer	Laura Hale
Parish Safeguarding Officer	Pauline Jones

Standing Committee

Standing Committee has the power to transact the business of the PCC between its meetings (subject to directions given by the Council) and consists of Vicar/Chairperson, two Churchwardens, the Treasurer, and one other PCC member

elected by the PCC (currently Susan Ibrahim). Standing Committee has met on an 'ad hoc' basis to consider Generosity Fund applications and carry out essential PCC business, with the approval of the PCC, between meetings.

Church Attendance

Following a reduction in weekly attendance numbers after Covid and during the vacancy, it was good to see congregation numbers at the 10.30am service gradually increasing during 2023. 9.00am congregation numbers have remained fairly consistent. Numbers continue to vary significantly from week-to-week and the congregation remains quite transient with a number of members having moved on due to relocation, change in circumstances or local church moves (including some who decided to leave the Church of England). However, those moving on were outnumbered by new attendees in 2023 – including a significant number of babies born to congregation members. The numbers below are *not* averages for 2023: they show attendance in October, which are figures required by the Church of England.

Average October	2023		2022		2021	
	Children	Adults	Children	Adults	Children	Adults
9am	0	23	0	25	1	29
10:30am	14	70	18	53	17*	59*
6pm	0	17	-	-	-	-
Total Attendance	14	93	18	78	18	88

Total attendance figures do not include the 6pm service because they only happen once a month.

The figures for 2022 above do not include Sunday 2 October where the pattern of services was different due to the Induction of Rev Anna Leyden.

Special Services	2023		2022		2021	
	Children	Adults	Children	Adults	Children	Adults
Easter	15	96	25	105	25*	99*
Confirmation	-	-	7	84	-	-
Induction of Vicar	-	-	15	106	-	-
Community Carols	21	105	28	106	35	122
Candlelight Carols	15	104	7	91	3	88
Christmas Eve 4pm	27	63	25	45	19	39
Midnight	1	44	0	35	1	37
Christmas Day	11	67	13	67	17*	45*

* These services were both streamed online and held in person. The figures here record only the numbers of those attending in person.

Church Membership

Membership of the electoral roll stood at 118 in May 2023 (of which 12% live inside the parish). The PCC met every month during 2023 except for April, August and December.

Overview of the year

2023 was an exciting year in the life of Christ Church as we embarked on a process of discerning together God's vision for the future of the church.

To this end, May was set aside as a 'month of prayer' with weekly Morning Prayer, and also evening prayer meetings led by Connect Groups. On Saturday 13th May we gathered for a 12 hour 'Day of Prayer' with various interactive prayer stations helping us to engage in prayer for ourselves, the church, our local area and the wider world. The day was interspersed with Morning Prayer, Holy Communion and a time of informal sung worship and extempore prayer in the evening – along with lunch, cake and chips!



On Sunday 9th July, Peter Froggatt, the Director of Outreach for Chester Diocese, led us through a wonderful 'Vision Morning' where the whole church was invited to pray, worship and discuss together our hopes and dreams for the future of Christ Church. A team condensed the material from the day into a new vision statement which was agreed by PCC and presented to the congregation in September. The following was agreed as our new statement of vision and values, which will inform our priorities over the coming months and years:



We are Christ Church Chester. As our name suggests, we long for Jesus Christ to be at the heart of who we are and what we do. He is the “cornerstone” of the church. We are:

Learning to **Live for Christ; Unite in Christ; Love like Christ**

As we grow into this vision, we seek to:

- **Make the Bible, prayer and worship central to our lives as we follow Jesus**
- **Be guided by the Holy Spirit as we grow in the knowledge of God's love and truth**
- **Be a warm, welcoming and encouraging community, made up of all ages, backgrounds and stages of faith**
- **Share God's love through support and in practical ways**
- **See lives transformed by Jesus**

We are inspired by the words of Ephesians 2.19-22: “You are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.”

Some other highlights from 2023 included:

- The appointment of two new members of staff: Alan Hooson (Facilities Officer) and Kerry Wigglesworth (Administrator). Kerry replaced Carys Addison who retired after 8 years in post. We remain incredibly grateful for Carys' faithful service and friendship to many.
- After six years' service, Wendy Peto passed on the mantle of Churchwarden to David Jones. Thank you so much Wendy for the care, time and commitment you have shown in this role – we are grateful to God for you.
- The successful launch of 'Sunday Celebration: The Brunch Service' and 'Contemplative Communion' services, initially on a trial basis but then adopted more permanently. Both services have been well-attended by regular members of Christ Church and newcomers/visitors.
- Working with 'Friends of the Earth' and Newtown residents for litter-picking and community gardening on 'The Big Help Out Day' (8th May) for the King's coronation (some of the team are picture below enjoying a well-earned cup of tea!). Since then we have continued to gather once a month to help look after the local area.
- We were awarded an Eco Church Bronze Award in recognition of the care we take of God's earth in different areas of our life and work. Many thanks to David Jones who led on this.
- A 'rebranding' exercise and new logo for Christ Church to coincide with the launch of the new Vision & Values statement.



Worship Services

Coordinator: Anna Leyden

Report:

- At the start of 2023 we launched two new style services, once a month, on a trial basis: *Sunday Celebration* aka the Brunch Service (interactive, all age worship, sitting around tables, with brunch) at 10.30am; and *Contemplative Communion* (a quiet, candlelit reflective service) at 6pm. Both services were very well-received and it was decided to continue with them on a monthly basis going forward, usually on the third Sunday of the month.
- On the other Sundays our usual pattern of services remained a 9.00am more formal service (with Holy Communion each week) and a more informal 10.30am service (with Holy Communion on the first Sunday of the month).
- Over the course of the year, in addition to lectionary and seasonal readings we worked through sermon series on Jonah; 'Being Christ's Church: Lessons from Ephesians'; 'Summer Psalms'; and a series unpacking our new vision statement: 'Learning to Live for Christ; Unite in Christ; Love like Christ.'
- During Holy Week we saw a significant increase in numbers on Maundy Thursday and Good Friday compared to recent years. It was a particular joy to see the worldwide church represented around the Maundy Thursday meal table with over half the congregation originating from outside the UK.
- In May, our 'Month of Prayer', we met on once a week in the morning and evening in church to pray together. Monday Morning Prayer then continued for the rest of the year, moving into the Mission House as the temperatures dropped in winter. We shared a 'Day of Prayer' on Saturday 13th May.



- During December, it was great to work with the Salvation Army again for outdoor 'Community Carols'. Both 'Community Carols' and 'Carols by Candlelight' the following week saw significant numbers of people who don't regularly attend church so it was a wonderful opportunity to share the gospel with them. In a change from our usual Christingle service, on Christmas Eve we had lots of fun (and lots of sugar!) retelling the story of Jesus' birth through the 'Chocolate Nativity'.



9am Musical Worship

Coordinator: Tonya Chirgwin

Purpose: To lead people in worship through music, predominantly at our 9.00am congregation.

Report:

- One of my personal highlights this year was being able to return to the organ bench on Good Friday, after three months spent convalescing from the emergency surgery I'd had the previous Christmas.
- A big thank you to Ruth and Lucy, who between them provided the 9am musical worship during my absence – and are now regular and much-valued members of the team, continuing to bless the congregation with their music at one or more of the services each month. It has also been a joy to have Andrew back on the organ bench whenever his flight schedule permits.
- Christmas saw the welcome return of the Choir, ably conducted by Hannah. Not only did they sing two items themselves; they also led the congregation very successfully in singing through a new version of 'O come all ye faithful' at various points in the service, using the worship song 'O come let us adore him' as the chorus.
- The Chocolate Nativity on Christmas Eve provided one lucky musician (me this year) with the opportunity to compete for the various sweet treats mentioned in the story (who knew so many chocolate bars were mentioned in the Bible?), and I was delighted to win a Star Bar: being an organist has its perks!
- After all that excitement it was good to share the playing at the Midnight Service with Stella, and to be reminded just how blessed I am to be part of a team of musicians who are so willing to use their gifts in the service of God and the church community.

10.30am Worship Ministry

Coordinator: Hannah Thompson

Purpose: To lead people in Spirit-led worship through music, predominantly at our 2nd morning service.

Report:

- 2023 brought new musicians to the worship team who have been a big asset on Sundays. A particular praise point has been the increase in worship leaders and backing vocalists serving at the 10:30am services. There are still some spaces for more instrumentalists for the next year, particularly bassists and drummers. Your continued prayers that God would be enriching the worship life of our church, including raising up more musicians, would be appreciated.
- In 2023 we launched worship team meetings for musicians currently serving, or interested in serving, in the 10:30am worship team at church. In total there were two of these, one in February and one in September. These evenings consisted of reflecting on the 10:30am worship at present, offering new ideas for the future, and spending time in musical worship together, particularly thinking about new songs we hoped to introduce at church. These evenings worked well and we hope to make them more regular next year and encourage more people to attend.
- The 10:30am team collaborated with the 9am worship ministry team on several occasions including at Easter, Remembrance Day and Christmas. Several team members also got involved in the Christmas choir which was led by the 10:30am coordinator, Hannah.
- This year the 10:30am team continued supporting the Brunch Services by choosing family-friendly songs including action songs to involve the whole congregation. We are grateful to all those who helped with actions as well as delivering the upbeat music!
- The month of May at Christ Church had a focus on prayer leading to a day of prayer on 13th May in which members of the team were able to lead an hour of prayer to conclude the day and lift up all of the prayers in praise and thanksgiving.
- This year has brought some technical challenges with the keyboard and an amplifier both needing repairs. In 2024 we hope to take inventory of all the equipment and instruments at Christ Church to see what is still working well and make note of any new resources that may be useful. As we look at the potential financial need in replacing broken or missing equipment (microphone stands/music stands, possibly drum cage etc.), we would appreciate your prayers for God to guide any plans for spending.



Children's Ministry Overview

Coordinator: Hannah Giddings (until Summer 2023); Anna Leyden

Purpose: To facilitate an environment where children can grow in their relationship with God, predominately through Sunday morning groups during the 10.30am service.

Crèche: under 2s

Report:

- We have an unsupervised creche for under 2s in the vestry. It has a livestream of the service and provides a space for parents to sit with young children during service if they'd like to. There are also sofas at the side of church for parents (and others) to sit more comfortably if they prefer.
- This year saw some new signage created for the crèche area to help promote it to parents.



Kids Group: 2-11s

Coordinator: Kerry Wigglesworth

Report:

- A few months into 2023, we were facing a significant lack of leaders and helpers for our main children's group. We were down to two leaders and a handful of helpers after different members of the team had stepped down or moved on over the course of the previous year.
- Therefore, action was taken! We held a Children's Ministry Celebration after church on a Sunday in early September. The gathering was open to anyone who cared about children's ministry at Christ Church, including parents, current leaders/helpers, and those interested in serving, praying or supporting children's ministry in another way. There was an encouraging turnout and the Mission House was bursting at the seams! Updates were shared, we prayed and there was the chance for people to sign up for 'taster sessions' where they could try out being a helper for a week to see how they found it.
- Off the back of this, we gained several new regular helpers and a wonderful new leader for our children's group. Praise God for how he has provided!
- During 2023, some of the topics covered on Sunday mornings have included: Genesis and the story of creation, key moments in the life of Jesus, a series focusing on our new vision and values as a church and an Advent series on the key female figures in the lead up to the incarnation.





Crypt Youth Group: 11+yrs

Coordinator: Michael Leyden

Report:

- Crypt met for games, Bible study and fellowship every other week during the 10.30am service in 2023.
- 2023 was a big change for Crypt as 4 new leaders joined the team (Mike, Claire, Sarah and Andrew), after the previous leaders stepped down unexpectedly.
- To manage the capacity of the leaders, the schedule was changed to meet twice per month with the youth staying in the service during the Brunch Service and one 'normal' morning service. This has worked on the whole but bringing in some more new leaders would be great in allowing us to meet more regularly.
- Throughout the year we've gone through a variety of courses and topics such as our identity in Christ, Youth Alpha and looking through the new vision statement of Christ Church and what it means for them as part of that body.
- It has been a year of getting to know one another better, playing lots of board games (One Night Werewolf proving particularly popular) but also going deeper with important questions and topics being discussed. Particularly popular are the pancakes and pondering sessions, where difficult topics and questions can be discussed while indulging in tasty toppings!



Tots+Tinies: 0-5s

Coordinator: Anna Leyden

Purpose: To provide a welcoming and nurturing space where young children and their parents/carers can be cared for, make new friends, and be introduced to the Christian faith. Tots+Tinies serves both the church congregation and wider local community.

Report:

- Tots+Tinies continued to meet on Thursday mornings during term time for friendship, tea and toast, play, craft, a Bible story, songs, and the 'prayer parachute'.

- The T+T family grew in 2023, with many new faces coming along, including lots of new babies. We said goodbye to a number of families with children moving onto school (although several came back for Messy Church) or parents returning to work after parental leave. On average, we had around 20 children per week, plus parents/carers.
- The Tots+Tinies team grew over the course of 2023, making week-to-week running much more manageable and allowing more time to spend with families but we continued to struggle to find people to cover the Bible story/prayer/song slot when Anna was unavailable.



Messy Church

Coordinator: Jodie Spencer & Anna Leyden

Purpose: To encourage the discipleship of children and families (both those who already attend church and those who do not) through creative and fun ways of exploring the Bible and Christian faith.

Report:

- Four successful Messy Church sessions took place in 2023. The numbers of families consistently attending has been encouraging and it has been great to see some new families joining us too.
- Our Messy Church sessions have attracted both children and families of primary school aged children and also younger children and their families. A range of activities are planned that are appropriate and engaging for this wide age range.
- A highlight of the year was our Christmas Messy Church celebration which included Christmas crafts, Christingles, singing and delicious party food!
- Thank you to everyone who has helped with preparing and delivering these sessions and to everyone who attended.



Student Work

Coordinator: James Thompson

Purpose: To invest in the next generation of Christians through welcoming, pastoring, equipping, and sending out our university students.

Report:

- 2023 has been a challenging year for student ministry at Christ Church. We went into the year with a good number of students regularly attending Sunday services.



- We have persevered with roughly monthly student lunches and these generally see 10-20 people coming along. However, we did not welcome as many new students in September 2023 as we hoped, despite having a number of new students come and visit Christ Church.
- Our student community is increasingly diverse. We have less undergraduate students than previously at Christ Church, therefore in total we have far more postgraduate students than undergrads. We have seen several new students studying Master's degrees, however as these last only one year normally, we have also seen a fair bit of turnover in the last couple of years.
- Consequently, our student community encompasses quite a wide age range. We have also welcomed a number of international students to Christ Church.
- A number of students have become more involved with serving at church on different teams, which has been great to see and is a real answer to prayer.
- We are continuing in supporting a couple of sixth formers from Christ Church who have recently left home for university.
- Our relationship with the Christian Union at Chester University has been more challenging this year with less of our students involved in CU. Our involvement still includes occasional visits from some of our team to speak at their weekly meetings, and we encourage our students to be part of CU when they can.
- We also have a link to the University chaplaincy through Michael Mills, who helps out there in the week and several students have come to Christ Church off the back of this.
- We have been blessed with a wonderful student team at Christ Church, consisting of both old and new faces. Thanks to everyone for their hard work in looking after and cooking for the students.
- Particular thanks to Helen and Clyde, who were wonderful servants of the student team for many many years at Christ Church. They were incredibly gifted at welcoming students and literally decades of students in Chester were impacted by their care and kindness. They have moved to a local church in North Wales, and we miss them very much, and wish them all the best.
- The latter months of 2023 were more challenging as we were short of helpers and struggled to organise our lunches. Please pray that we can find more helpers, and get better at including new helpers as part of the student team.
- Looking forward, we would like to improve at welcoming new students into the wider church community. Please pray that we can welcome more students, especially undergraduates, into Christ Church. We are also still thinking about providing teaching to help students navigate their time at university. Please pray for us as we discern how to do this well.

Connect Groups

Coordinator: Anna Leyden

Purpose: To provide regular gatherings of small groups, outside of a Sunday service context, where members of Christ Church can connect with God, connect with other church members and connect with their wider communities.

Report:

- Connect Groups remain an important part of life at Christ Church. They provide opportunity for Bible study, prayer support and friendship.
- Four Connect Groups met throughout 2023: in homes in Newtown, Saltney and Helsby and one group in the Mission House. Each Connect Group followed a different syllabus, according to the group's interest.
- During the Month of Prayer, each Connect Group took responsibility for an evening prayer meeting, offering their creative gifts to lead the rest of the church community in prayer for Christ Church and the local community.
- In August, Connect Group leaders met together to share best practice; to encourage one another; and to think collectively about the purpose of Connect Groups. Following this meeting, Kerry Wigglesworth agreed to take on the administration of Connect Groups (e.g. assigning new members to a group).



Drop In

Coordinator: Sue Ibrahim

Purpose: To open up our church space to provide a warm and welcoming environment on a Sunday afternoon for any homeless and/or vulnerable people.

Report:

- Drop In has seen an increasing number of vulnerable and homeless people attending, even seeing families and younger adults aged 17 coming along. As times get harder we anticipate the number to increase from 35-40 people per week to 40-45.
- Christmas dinner saw a massive increase in guests attending, with 69 people (84 including volunteers) enjoying Christmas dinner with all the trimmings and each guest receiving a gift containing chocolate and toiletries.
- Drop In has been able to facilitate the increase of guests due to the commitment and dedication of volunteers who give their time to serve each and every week. In 2023, we welcomed new volunteers Meriel, Casey, Liz, and Steve to the wonderful team. A new soup rota has allowed flexibility to for volunteers to try new things.

- We continue to run on a very tight budget, and feel the effects of the cost-of-living crisis. Generous grants from local businesses and employers have helped us continue the service.
- We will continue to serve our guests each Sunday afternoon and with special events such as breakfasts, BBQs and Christmas Dinners. We are looking to bring in other services to help with housing, benefits and other day-to-day services.
- We are the only service provider to the community serving food and drinks on a Sunday, but the kindness, good conversation and warmth experienced by guests is perhaps even more valuable.



Warm Welcome Space

Coordinator: Anna Leyden

Purpose: To share the love of Jesus in a practical way by providing a warm and welcoming space for the whole community during the winter months.

Report:

- Our Warm Welcome Space which launched in November 2022 continued until the end of February 2023, and then began again in November 2023 as the weather worsened. At the start of the year, we opened from 10am-2pm but when we re-launched in November we did so with new opening times of 12-3pm in response to visitor numbers and volunteer availability.
- Numbers were generally small but those who came along greatly valued the warmth, hospitality and friendship. Church members also appreciated the opportunity to make new friends and strengthen relationships.
- Everyone who attended was offered drinks, toast and biscuits. Daily newspapers and activities such as board games and jigsaws were on offer, as well as opportunity to chat or work.



Visiting Ministry

Coordinator: Veronica Johnston

Purpose: To enfold within the family of Christ Church the sick and housebound, through regular visits and the opportunity to share Holy Communion at home or in hospital.

Report:

- Visiting continued throughout the year to members of Christ Church at home, in care homes and hospital, including to a 97-year-old lady, recovering well and with a smile after her heart attack on Christmas Day.
- It was with sadness that we said farewell to members of our community who passed away in 2023: Bernard Evans, a former member of one of our connect groups, whose family still live in Gloucester Street; and Sheila Douglas, who had been sharing communion with us in Grosvenor Manor Care Home, after she became too frail to attend church. We miss Sheila's lovely voice in the Christmas Choir.

Maintenance

Coordinators: Andrew Wigglesworth & Rob Peto

Purpose: To look after the physical maintenance of the church building and Mission House, ensuring that they are safe, work according to the needs of the church and meet the standards they are required to by law.

Report:

- After another year at Christ Church, the building is still standing! It has been a quiet year in the life of the fabric of the church with no major issues cropping up within the church building needing to be attended to.
- We held the usual two Maintenance Days, one in early spring and the other in late Autumn, where church members were encouraged to come along and assist with a number of necessary jobs including clearing gutters of leaves, cleaning the inside of the church, fixing floor blocks and many other small jobs.
- It was encouraging to see that we had an increase in volunteer numbers this year compared to the previous one which meant we got round to many of the jobs we might not otherwise have had time to do, perhaps encouraged by the bacon butties made by some lovely church members!
- Thanks must go to the Fabric Team who are at the heart of what goes on in maintaining Christ Church. Their willingness to give up their time to see to the small issues which crop up is greatly appreciated and we would be much worse off without them!





Safeguarding

Coordinator: Pauline Jones

Purpose: To ensure measures are in place at Christ Church to protect everyone, but particularly children, young people and vulnerable adults, and to promote their health and wellbeing.

Report:

- At Christ Church we seek to promote a safe environment, culture and activities in order to include a wide range of children, young people and adults. Everyone at Christ Church shares this responsibility, but not everyone is responsible for everything! We believe safeguarding is about how we treat each other and the quality of our relationships but we also seek to fulfil our responsibilities as laid down by the Church of England and Chester Diocese Safeguarding team. We believe and trust that safeguarding supports ministry and outreach rather than preventing or constraining it.
- I can confirm that Christ Church Chester PCC has complied with the duty to have 'due regard' to the House of Bishops' Safeguarding Policy and Practice Guidance'. As Parish Safeguarding Officer, I have regularly reported on safeguarding in the parish and safeguarding has been a standing agenda item at each PCC meeting.
- The following is Christ Church PCC's statement, which reports on progress as required:
 - Regular safeguarding meetings with Rev. Anna Leyden and myself were held.
 - The safeguarding action plan was approved by PCC in June 2022 and progress against the plan was reported at subsequent PCC meetings
 - Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks were completed for nine individuals. We piloted use of a Basic check for our Facilities Officer
 - A Christ Church Safeguarding video was produced and shown at the two services on Sunday 12 March 2023
 - A note re PCC safeguarding requirements and responsibilities was produced and circulated to PCC members
 - Clarification was ultimately received from *Thirtyone:eight* and the Diocese re DBS requirements for Tots+Tinies team members. We now comply with the requirements
 - The Tots+Tinies team discussed safeguarding responsibilities at their team meeting
 - The Christ Church hire agreement document now covers safeguarding as specified by the Church of England
 - Person Specifications and Role Descriptions were drawn up for 15 Volunteer roles and approved as part of a light touch safer recruitment process at the March 2023 PCC meeting
 - An overview process (linked to the role descriptions and person specifications) for recruiting new volunteers was approved by PCC at the October meeting
 - Documentation for the Children and Young People's ministry was refreshed
 - We are again grateful to the Chester Diocesan safeguarding team who provided advice and guidance on a number of safeguarding incidents / concerns and general enquiries. These were duly recorded.

Independent Examiners Report to the Trustees

I report on the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 December 2023 which are set out on pages 24 to 33.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 (the Charities Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

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

Basis of independent examiner's 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 charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seeking explanations from 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 accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; and
 - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities 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.


 A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "L M Howson".

L M Howson MAAT
Independent Examiner

Dated: 8th April 2024

Finansure Limited, 2 Sheppard Street, Brymbo, Wrexham, LL11 5FF

Financial Review of the year

The finance team consisted of eight members of the congregation, managing donations, book-keeping, payroll, general banking and treasury tasks. The team aims to provide transparency of figures for both PCC and the congregation, an efficient and simple giving programme and accurate budgeting information to the PCC to enable them to make decisions.

Related Party Transactions

Glyn Jones is a director of The Light College and Collective (formerly The Light Project), a Christian charity based in Chester. During the year, the PCC made payments to The Light College and Collective totalling £200. All relevant payments are discussed and authorised without input from the related parties concerned.

New Restricted Funds

No new restricted funds were created in 2023.

Designated Funds

New designated funds below were created to manage specific grants received by Christ Church to support community activities.

Tots And Tinies (Designated) Fund - Total Incoming resources of £1,850 were allocated from a successful grant application, very little has been spent against this fund to date, however there are plans for 2024.

Warm space - Warm Space (Designated) Fund - Total Incoming resources of £949 were allocated to this activity from a successful Council led grant. This will support this activity for 2-3 years.

Sunday Celebration - Sunday Celebration (Designated) Fund – this activity is funded by specific donations from the congregation. All resources are spent solely on Sunday Celebration services.

Income excluding new Designated Fund

During 2023, income was generated from individual giving, church fees, grants and rental of rooms. Net giving from the congregation during the year was £78,361 a 7% increase on 2022 (£73,350) and a positive increase, however this has not yet reached pre Covid income levels (£84,415).

The Gift Aid reclaimable on giving in 2023 was £16,937 (£14,097 in 2022), which includes the Gift Aid Small Donations Scheme.

Grants were received from the following bodies in 2023 (see Note 1 in 'Notes to the Accounts') and are hereby gratefully acknowledged:

- MBNA Drop In & Community Work Grant
- Warm Spaces Community Grant
- Robert Oldfield Charity - Children's work
- MBNA Tots and Tinies Grant



Expenditure

Expenditure was £119,862 (£109,053 in 2022). The largest item of expense was the Parish Share, which was £64,923 (£63,032 in 2023).

Other than running costs, the further main areas of expenditure were on employee costs, insurance and maintenance for our buildings.

Outward Giving

In 2023, £3,350 (£4,392 in 2022) was set aside for Outward Giving and donated to several recipient charities. The following were all recipients in 2023. One payment was delayed and will show in 2024 (Ukraine).

- Teach Beyond
- The Salvation Army
- The Light College and Collective
- West Cheshire Foodbank
- Night Church Chester
- Congo Churches Association
- Vineyard 53 (Street Angels)

This Outward Giving is intended to bless what God is doing beyond our ministries, but in line with our values and goals. This money has supported several projects and individuals during the year.

The budget for 2024 has been set by the PCC and agreed at the February 2024 meeting.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Laura Hale'.

Laura Hale (Treasurer) 8th April 2024

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anna Leyden'.

Anna Leyden (Chair) 8th April 2024

Accounting Policies

Financial Statements

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Church Accounting regulations 2006 together with applicable accounting standards and SORP (effective January 2019).

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention except for the valuation of investment assets which are shown at market value. The financial statements include all transactions, assets and liabilities, to which the PCC is responsible by law. They do not include the accounts of church groups that owe their affiliation to another body or those that are informal gatherings of Church members.

Funds

Endowment funds are funds, the capital of which must be maintained; only income arising from the investment of the endowment may be used either as restricted or unrestricted funds depending upon the purpose for which the endowment was established.

Restricted funds represent (a) Income from trusts or endowments which may be expended only on those restricted objects provided in the terms of the trust or bequest, and (b) donations or grants received for a specific object. The funds may be expended on the specific object for which they are given. Any balances remaining unspent at the end of the year must be carried forward as a balance of that fund.

Designated funds represent income which has been set aside for use for a specific purpose but are not legally restricted to be used for that purpose. Amounts identified as designated funds which are held in the general current account at the year-end were:

Vicarage Fund	£1,305
Renewed Space 3 Seed Funding (for Capital Building Projects)	£40,514
Cost of Living	£2,500
Sunday Celebration	£(405)
Tots and Tinies	£1482
Warm Welcome Space	£782
Alpha	£63

Unrestricted funds are general funds that can be used for PCC ordinary purposes.

Incoming Reserves

Planned giving collections and donations are recognised when received. Tax refunds are recognised on an accruals basis at the end of the financial year and the appropriate amount is subsequently reclaimed from HM Revenue & Customs.



Resources Expended

Grants and donations are accounted for when paid over, or when awarded, if that award creates a binding or constructive obligation on the PCC. The Diocesan Parish Share is accounted for when due. Amounts received specifically for mission are dealt with as restricted funds. All other expenditure is generally recognised when it is incurred and is accounted for gross.

Fixed Assets

Consecrated and benefice property is not included in the accounts in accordance with s.96 (2) (a) of the Charities Act 2011.

Movable church furnishings held by the vicar and church wardens on special trust for the PCC and which require a faculty for disposal are inalienable property, listed in the church inventory, which can be inspected (at any reasonable time). For anything acquired prior to 2000 there is insufficient cost information available and therefore such assets are not valued in the financial statements. Subsequently no individual item has cost more than £1,500 so all such expenditure has been written off when incurred.

No cost information is available for the Vicar's house as it is deemed the property of the diocese.

All investments are valued at market value at 31st December 2021.

Reserves Policy

The PCC have agreed on a reserves policy that is reviewed annually.

The reserves policy at the end of 2022 was set as follows:

- It is the policy of the church to hold in reserves the equivalent of three months' basic running costs which includes any salaries and contractual payments to staff.
- It is also our policy to hold £5000 in reserves as a contingency against unexpected building-related expenses for the Mission House and the church building.



Statement of Financial Activities For the year ending 31st December 2023

**The Parochial Church Council Of The Ecclesiastical Parish Of Chester,
Christ Church**

Statement of Financial Activities For the year ending 31st December 2023		Unrestricted	Restrict ed	TOTAL	TOTAL
	Note	Funds £	Funds £	2023 £	2022 £
INCOMING RESOURCES					
<i>Incoming resources from generated funds</i>					
Voluntary income	1	98,205	5,146	103,351	88,675
Investment income	2	2,093	162	2,255	1,396
Incoming resources from charitable activities	3	5,591	0	5,591	4,824
Other incoming resources		1,971	0	1,971	0
TOTAL INCOMING RESOURCES		107,860	5,308	113,168	94,895
RESOURCES EXPENDED					
Parish Share	4	(64,923)	0	(64,923)	(63,032)
Church Activities	5	(48,764)	(2,825)	(51,589)	(41,629)
Grants payable	6	(3,350)	0	(3,350)	(4,392)
TOTAL RESOURCES EXPENDED		(117,037)	(2,825)	(119,862)	(109,053)
Transfers between funds		(67)	67	0	0
NET INCOME/OUTGOINGS BEFORE OTHER RECOGNISED GAINS / (LOSSES)		(9,244)	2,550	(6,694)	(14,158)
Gains/(losses) on Investment Assets		2,371	0	2,371	(3,251)
NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS		(6,873)	2,550	(4,323)	(17,409)
BALANCES B/FWD 1st JANUARY	11	89,094	5,180	94,274	111,683
BALANCES C/FWD 31st DECEMBER		82,221	7,730	89,951	94,274

Balance sheet at 31st December 2023



The Parochial Church Council Of The Ecclesiastical Parish Of Chester, Christ Church

Balance Sheet at 31st December 2023	Note	General Fund £	Restricted Funds £	TOTAL 2023 £	TOTAL 2022 £
FIXED ASSETS					
Investments	8	27,964		27,964	24,842
		<u>27,964</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>27,964</u>	<u>24,842</u>
CURRENT ASSETS					
Debtors	9	17,591		17,591	20,836
Cash at bank and in hand		39,159	7,730	46,889	53,132
		<u>56,750</u>	<u>7,730</u>	<u>64,480</u>	<u>73,968</u>
LIABILITIES					
Creditors - Amounts falling due in one year	10	(2,493)		(2,493)	(4,536)
NET CURRENT ASSETS		<u>54,257</u>	<u>7,730</u>	<u>61,987</u>	<u>69,432</u>
NET ASSETS		<u>82,221</u>	<u>7,730</u>	<u>89,951</u>	<u>94,274</u>
PARISH FUNDS					
Unrestricted					
General Fund (Bank accounts etc.)	12	11,138		11,138	20,920
General Fund (CCLA Investment Shares)	12	24,842		24,842	24,842
Designated Cost of Living Fund	12	2,500		2,500	2,500
Designated Warm Space Fund	12	782		782	0
Designated RS3 Seed Fund	12	40,514		40,514	39,527
Designated Alpha Fund	12	63		63	
Designated Sunday Celebration Fund	12	-405		-405	
Designated Tots & Tinies Fund	12	1,482		1,482	
Designated Vicarage Fund	12	1,305		1,305	1,305
Restricted					
Congo Fund	13		50	50	50
Generosity Fund	13		67	67	0
Music and Worship Fund	13		337	337	553
Community Work Fund	13		140	140	0
Drop In Fund	13		2,397	2,397	0
Renovation Fund	13		4,739	4,739	4,577
		<u>82,221</u>	<u>7,730</u>	<u>89,951</u>	<u>94,274</u>

Approved by the Parochial Church Council on 8th April 2024

and signed on behalf by:

Anna Leyden (Chair)



Notes for the Financial Statements for the Year ending 31st December 2023

The Parochial Church Council Of The Ecclesiastical Parish Of Chester, Christ Church

NOTE 1 - VOLUNTARY INCOME

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	TOTAL 2023 £	TOTAL 2022 £
Voluntary Income				
Individual Giving	77,861	500	78,361	73,350
Tax Recoverable	16,937		16,937	14,097
Other Sundry Donations	500		500	30
Grants				
Drop In & Community Work		4,646	4,646	0
Chester DBF - Energy grant			0	1,090
Warm Spaces	949		949	0
Robert Oldfield Charity - Children's work	108		108	108
MBNA grant	1,850		1,850	108
	<u>98,205</u>	<u>5,146</u>	<u>103,351</u>	<u>88,783</u>

NOTE 2 - INVESTMENT INCOME

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	TOTAL 2023 £	TOTAL 2022 £
Bank interest receivable	1,342	162	1,504	670
Dividends from CCLA Investment Share Fund	751		751	726
	<u>2,093</u>	<u>162</u>	<u>2,255</u>	<u>1,396</u>

NOTE 3 - INCOMING RESOURCES FROM CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	TOTAL 2023 £	TOTAL 2022 £
Church Fees	943		943	1,853
Resource Sales	152		152	0
Mission House Room Hire	4,496		4,496	2,971
	<u>5,591</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>5,591</u>	<u>4,824</u>



The Parochial Church Council Of The Ecclesiastical Parish Of Chester, Christ Church

NOTE 4 - Parish Share Paid

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	TOTAL 2023	TOTAL 2022
	£	£	£	£
Parish Share	64,923		64,923	63,032
	<u>64,923</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>64,923</u>	<u>64,923</u>

NOTE 5 - CHURCH ACTIVITIES

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	TOTAL 2023	TOTAL 2022
	£	£	£	£
- Utilities	10,218		10,218	6,578
- Repairs & Maintenance	2,991		2,991	1,355
- Insurance (also covers MH)	4,816		4,816	4,340
- Altar & Service Resources	388		388	578
- Music including organ costs	1,339	216	1,555	1,591
- Clergy Expenses	236		236	424
- Sunday Refreshments	658		658	756
- Children / Youth / Student Work	261		261	594
- Training and conferences	28		28	671
- Warm Space expenses	145		145	0
- Fees Payable	877		877	536
- Miscellaneous Costs (see note 7)	4,867		4,867	2,902
Administration				
- Administration Wages	6,929		6,929	8,695
- Software / Web	1,398		1,398	1,505
- Bank charges	440		440	374
- Administration Sundries	943		943	376
- Telephone & Internet	587		587	425
- Independent Examiner's Fee (current year)	750		750	750
- Independent Examiner's Fee (prior year)			0	725
Vicarage				
- Council Tax	2,755		2,755	-64
- Utilities	645		645	24
- Maintenance			0	1,757
Curate				
- Housing Allowance	1,648		1,648	3,646
Mission House				
- Utilities	2,796		2,796	1,227
- Repairs & Maintenance			0	20
- Wages	2,290		2,290	221
Community Work				
- Drop-In expenses	383	2,499	2,882	1,256
- Tots & Tinies	376		376	0
- Other Community Work expenses		110	110	294
Parochial Work				
- Student work expenses			0	73
Total Church Activities	<u>48,764</u>	<u>2,825</u>	<u>51,589</u>	<u>41,629</u>



The Parochial Church Council Of The Ecclesiastical Parish Of Chester, Christ Church

NOTE 6 - GRANTS PAYABLE

Christ Church has an Outward Giving policy to bless what God is doing beyond our ministries by donating to projects in line with our values and goals. This includes the "Generosity Fund" which helps individuals with a specific need.

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	TOTAL 2023 £	TOTAL 2022 £
Grants to other charities:				
Donations to the Congo	600		600	600
Donations to Ukraine			0	600
Teach Beyond	1200		1,200	600
Vineyard 53	200		200	0
The Light College	200		200	0
Spider Project CIC Chester			0	200
The Light Project			0	200
Chester University CU			0	200
West Cheshire Foodbank	200		200	200
Salvation Army	200		200	200
Night Church	200		200	200
Leyland Methodist Church			0	50
Grants to individuals:				
Generosity Fund gifts	550		550	0
Other small confidential donations made			0	1,342
	<u>3,350</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>3,350</u>	<u>4,392</u>

NOTE 7 - MISCELLANEOUS EXPENDITURE

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	TOTAL 2023 £	TOTAL 2022 £
Books and Resources	641		641	96
Publicity	459		459	1,241
Special Events (e.g. Alpha, Sunday Celebration)	1,334		1,334	0
Subscriptions (e.g. Link Up, Churches Together, Deanery Synod)			0	250
Cleaning supplies, gifts and sundries			0	130
Equipment (e.g. for Office, Kitchen)	2,057		2,057	338
Other expenses	376		376	847
	<u>4,867</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>4,867</u>	<u>2,902</u>



NOTE 8 - INVESTMENTS

Unrestricted

CCLA Investment Share Fund

2023 £	2022 £
27,964	24,842
27,964	24,842

NOTE 9 - DEBTORS

Unrestricted

Gift Aid receivable

Prepayments

2023 £	2022 £
12,577	14,097
5,014	6,739
17,591	20,836

NOTE 10 - CREDITORS

Unrestricted

Utility accruals

Independent Examiner fee accrual

Other accruals

2023 £	2022 £
1,743	2,586
750	750
0	1,200
2,493	4,536

NOTE 11 - OPENING BALANCES ON FUNDS

Unrestricted

General Fund (Bank accounts etc.)

General Fund (CCLA Investment Shares)

Designated Cost of living support fund

Designated RS3 Seed Fund

Designated Vicarage Fund

Restricted

Generosity Fund

Congo Fund

Music and Worship Fund

Renovation Fund

Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Endowment Funds £	TOTAL 01/01/2022 £
20,920			20,920
24,842			24,842
2,500			2,500
39,527			39,527
1,305			1,305
	0		0
	50		50
	553		553
	4,577		4,577
89,094	5,180	0	94,274



The Parochial Church Council Of The Ecclesiastical Parish Of Chester, Christ Church

NOTE 12 - MOVEMENT ON UNRESTRICTED FUNDS

General Fund Bank Accounts etc.

	2023 £	2022 £
Balance brought Forward	20,920	37,107
Money paid in during the year (incl. interest)	107,100	91,930
Money taken out during the year	(113,501)	(109,187)
Transfers (to)/from other funds		1,070
Balance at 31st December	14,519	20,920

General Fund CCLA Investment Shares

Balance at 1st January	24,842	27,367
Increase/(decrease) in value of total Shares		(2,525)
Balance at 31st December	24,842	24,842

Designated Alpha Fund

Balance at 1st January	0	0
Money paid in during the year	63	
Money taken out during the year		
Transfers (to)/from other funds		
Balance at 31st December	63	0

Designated Cost of living support Fund

Balance at 1st January	2,500	0
Money paid in during the year		2,500
Money taken out during the year		0
Transfers (to)/from other funds		0
Balance at 31st December	2,500	2,500

Designated RS3 Seed Fund

Balance at 1st January	39,527	39,127
Money paid in during the year		400
Money taken out during the year		0
Receipt - Interest received during the year.	987	0
Balance at 31st December	40,514	39,527



Designated Sunday Celebration Fund

Balance at 1st January	0	0
Money paid in during the year	760	
Money taken out during the year	(1,165)	
Receipt - Interest received during the year.		
Balance at 31st December	(405)	0

Designated Tots & Tinies Fund

Balance at 1st January	0	0
Money paid in during the year	1,850	
Money taken out during the year	(368)	
Receipt - Interest received during the year.		
Balance at 31st December	1,482	0

Designated Vicarage Fund (created 2019)

Balance at 1st January (as created)	1,305	3,061
Money paid in during the year		0
Money taken out during the year		(1,756)
Transfers from general funds		
Balance at 31st December	1,305	1,305

Designated Warm Space Fund

Balance at 1st January (as created)	0	0
Money paid in during the year	949	
Money taken out during the year	(167)	
Transfers from general funds		
Balance at 31st December	782	0

Total Unrestricted Funds

85,602	89,094
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The Parochial Church Council Of The Ecclesiastical Parish Of Chester, Christ Church

NOTE 13 - MOVEMENT ON RESTRICTED FUNDS

Renovation Fund

Balance at 1st January	4,577	4,512
Voluntary income received		65
Gift Aid received		0
Receipt - Interest received during the year.	162	0
Expenditure		
- Repairs and Renovation etc.		0
Balance at 31st December	4,739	4,577
Plus : Debtor Tax recoverable on gift aided donations		0
Balance at 31st December	4,739	4,577

Community Work Fund

Balance at 1st January	0	0
Voluntary income received		0
Grants received	250	0
Expenditure		
- Expenses for Drop-In food etc.		(976)
- Other community work exps	(110)	(294)
Plus : Transfer from General Fund		1,270
Balance at 31st December	140	0
Plus : Debtor Tax recoverable on gift aided donations		0
Balance at 31st December	140	0

Student Work Fund

Balance at 1st January	0	0
Voluntary income received		0
Expenditure		
- Expenses (e.g. Student BBQ, weekend away)		(73)
Plus : Transfer from General Fund		73
Balance at 31st December	0	0
Plus : Debtor Tax recoverable on gift aided donations		0
Balance at 31st December	0	0



Music and Worship Fund

Balance at 1st January	
Voluntary income received	
Less: Expenditure	
Balance at 31st December	
Plus : Debtor Tax recoverable on gift aided donations	
Balance at 31st December	

2023	2022
£	£
553	553
0	0
(216)	0
337	553
0	0
337	553

NOTE 14 - MOVEMENT ON RESTRICTED FUNDS (contd.)

Generosity Fund

Balance at 1st January	
Voluntary income received	
Less : Outward Giving	
Plus : Transfer from general fund	
Balance at 31st December	
Plus : Debtor Tax recoverable on gift aided donations	
Balance at 31st December	

2023	2022
£	£
0	1,159
0	0
0	(1,342)
67	183
67	0
0	0
67	0

Congo Fund

Balance at 1st January	
Voluntary income received	
Less : Outward Giving	
Balance at 31st December	
Plus : Debtor Tax recoverable on gift aided donations	
Balance at 31st December	

2023	2022
£	£
50	50
0	0
50	50
0	0
50	50

Drop In Fund

Balance at 1st January	
Donations received	
Grants received	
Less: Expenditure	
Plus : Transfer from General Fund	
Balance at 31st December	
Plus : Debtor Tax recoverable on gift aided donations	
Balance at 31st December	

2023	2022
£	£
0	0
500	
4,396	
(2,499)	
2,397	0
0	0
2,397	0

Total Restricted Funds

2023	2022
£	£
7,730	5,180