

PARISH OF ST JAMES, CHRISTLETON



ANNUAL REPORT & FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

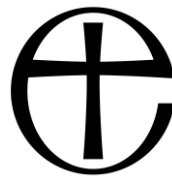
of the

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

For the Parish of Christleton

for the year ended 31 December 2023

Rector: The Reverend Dr Stefan Collier



Church: St James

Parish Office: St James, Pepper Street, Christleton, CH3 7AG
Bankers: Santander

Charity Registration Number: 1133992



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ROLES AND MEMBERSHIP OF THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL:

St James Parochial Church Council (PCC) has the responsibility of working with the Rector in promoting in the parish the whole mission of the Church: pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. It also has financial and maintenance responsibilities for St James.

Members of the PCC are either ex-officio, elected by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) or co-opted, in accordance with the Church Representation Rules.

Since the APCM of April 2023 the following have served as members of the PCC:

Rector (ex-officio)	Revd Dr Stefan Collier
Assistant Curates (ex-officio)	Revd Tina Lightfoot Revd Rob Croft (left the parish June 2023)
Churchwardens (ex-officio) Elected annually.	Bettie Gilliatt Mike Lightfoot
Deanery Synod Members: This church may appoint up to 3 lay people as Lay Deanery Synod representatives and they become ex-officio on the PCC (if not already on PCC). They are appointed for a three year fixed term. (Current fixed term: 2023-2026)	Bettie Gilliatt Chris Platel John Norbury
Elected PCC members: This church may have 12 elected PCC members based on our current Electoral Roll size. Members are elected for a 3 year term, maximum of two consecutive terms (ie: 6 years) * Member will have completed 6 years at the 2024 APCM.	Sheena Cumiskey (elected: 2018 & 2021) * Brian Inall (elected: 2018 & 2021) * Keith Smalls (elected: 2018 & 2021) * Martin Thompson (elected: 2020) (resigned) Pat Powell (elected: 2022) John Norbury (elected: 2022) Jan Bowden (elected: 2023) (resigned) Joce Platel (elected: 2023) Alastair Holland (elected: 2023) Lesley Morgan (elected: 2023) Elizabeth McClure (elected: 2023) Ann White (elected: 2023) Two PCC positions are now vacant.
Co-opted PCC members: Co-opted by the PCC for 1 year. Maximum of 2.	None

PCC Appointments	
PCC Treasurer (appointed annually)	Elizabeth McClure
PCC Secretary (appointed annually)	Jocelyn Platel
Electoral Roll Officer (appointed annually)	Marj Keech
Safeguarding Officer (appointed annually)	Ann White

Parish Appointments	
Employed Director of Music	Bob Jones

MINUTES OF 2023 ANNUAL MEETINGS held at 12.00 pm on 23rd April 2023:

22 people attended the meetings.

MEETING OF THE PARISHIONERS (Vestry Meeting)

Nominations had been received for Bettie Gilliatt (Proposed by Mike Lightfoot and seconded by Liz McClure) and Mike Lightfoot (Proposed by Bettie Gilliatt and seconded by Sheena Cumiskey). No other nominations had been received and therefore these two Churchwardens were elected unanimously without the need for a vote. Stefan thanked Bettie and Mike for their tremendous work during the past year. He also thanked Sheena for stepping in to provide temporary cover while Bettie recovered from her recent operation. The meeting closed.

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING (APCM)

Stefan advised that Information Packs had been available containing the agenda, previous minutes, reports etc.

Stefan offered Opening Prayers.

1: Apologies: Apologies received from: John and Sue Eccles, Carl Cumiskey, David and Beryl Cummings, Elizabeth and Brian Inall, Liz McClure, Hazel and Martin Thompson, Cindy Wilcox, Ann White.

2: Minutes of the Annual Meetings held on 16th May 2021. These were approved as a true record to be signed by Stefan.

3: Matters Arising: There were none.

4: Reports:

- **Rector's Report** – SC reflected that when he wrote his report, as on previous occasions in his earlier life, he experienced the sense that moments which can feel unexceptional are frequently transformed into thankfulness and a sense that the Lord is alongside him. The Church Development Plan is now in its 4th year. Progress is slow but there is movement forward. He thanked Marj, our voluntary administrator, for her efficiency and good humour, the PCC for their continued passion and commitment, Keith Smalls and Ken Rivers on CDG for their continuing work behind the scenes. SC commended the work of the ministry team who complement each other so well and serve alongside the community. He wanted to thank those in the church community who get on with no fuss: Maria (PH), Lesley M (pastoral), John M (verger) the choir and many others.
- **Churchwardens' Report** – ML commented that the payback team are only able to come every three weeks so we may need to pay for help to maintain the churchyard, even with the help offered by members of the community. TL suggested the community could become more involved in the churchyard management which would link to the environmental report.
ShC commended the work and commitment of the churchwardens; her insight had been much increased while engaged in her temporary role.
- **Treasurer's Report** – SC offered his grateful thanks to LMC and JN for using their gifts of wise decision-making and clarity of reporting in the way they oversee the church accounts.
In the absence of LMC, JN drew attention to two notable achievements:
 - 1) the completion of the AV project, an important aspect of the CDP.
 - 2) the replacement of the boiler in the PH paid for by grants, donations and by the efforts of CA and Fundraising activities.

JN drew attention to the fact that we are struggling to pay the Parish Share at 1.25% on our current level of income and can really only sustain paying at 1.05% though we did pay back last year's deficit. ML suggested we can only keep digging into reserves for about another two years. We really need to increase regular income, largely through Standing Orders. Richard K asked about the consequences of not paying the full PS. One would be not having a full-time rector if SC leaves. Also the consequences impact elsewhere in poorer parishes; the current system aims to redistribute wealth. BG commented that giving in Birkenhead is higher than in Christleton-linking to gospel accounts of the generosity of the poor, acknowledging the generosity of God's love

to us. The link between payment and our need for support from the diocese for our Development Plan was mentioned. TL pointed out that we do receive help from diocese eg Safeguarding training, churchwarden training. It is incumbent upon us to do our best and make wise choices about our spending but these are challenging times. CP pointed out that with our CA appeal we are asking people to give more and it is largely the same section of the parish community. PP raised the issue of using collection plates on the occasion of baptisms etc. There was general support for this.

- **Deanery Synod** – TL felt there should be more opportunity for vision from parish level upwards.
- **PCC Report** – SC commented that apart from the spiritual input afforded by PCC there is much to be grateful for in the practical contributions of groups such as the bellringers and the Friends whose contribution to maintenance is much appreciated.
- **Electoral Roll** – there is a 6% increase since the last APCM . This reflects some new members of the church community. At the same time contact has been lost with some, especially those who are housebound. SC stated that the ER should reflect the worshipping community. CP pointed out that eligibility for those outside the parish is different from those who reside inside it. There are misunderstandings which are best clarified through conversations. SC emphasised it is all about relationship and conversation. Jan B suggested this could be explained on one of the information sheets produced by Communications Group. It was generally welcomed as a good idea.

5: Elections and Appointments:

- **Deanery Synod:** BG will remain as a representative; CP will replace JP who has completed a six year term; JN offered to become another representative.
- **PCC:** Christine Abrams and Chris Platel have completed their terms of office. Stefan thanked them both for the gifts that they have given.
JP (proposed by Marj Keech, seconded by Pat Powell) was duly nominated as secretary.
LMC (proposed by Keith Smalls, seconded by Ken Rivers) was duly nominated as treasurer.

There were three nominations for new members: Alistair Holland (proposed by Chris Platel, seconded by David Bull); Jan Bowden (proposed by Mike Lightfoot, seconded by Chris Platel); Lesley Morgan (proposed by Mike Lightfoot, seconded by Jan Bowden). All three were elected unanimously.
- **Appointment of Auditor:** It was unanimously agreed (proposed by ML seconded by RC) that Meacher-Jones should continue as our Auditor for 2023 so LMC to contact them.
There was unanimous acceptance of the accounts (proposed by CP, seconded by ShC).

6: Any Other Business: TL thanked SC for his spiritual leadership and encouragement and guidance to the church community. These gifts were endorsed by all those present.

John Milton spoke of his love of the role of vergers on a voluntary basis and thanked the churchwardens and others for their help in supporting him.

ShC raised the issue of the CDP and how we can move forward with this to assure the future life of our church. SC acknowledged it was difficult to find the time for all the administrative documents. The removal of pews is the contentious issue. A resubmission with more evidence will be made. Maria N asked why, when there is precedence elsewhere, is it so difficult to obtain agreement here. Response: we are a Butterfield church, though there are other Butterfield churches where pews have been removed.

TL offered thanks to AW for her leadership on Safeguarding. We have a high threshold on Safeguarding in this parish. The meeting closed with prayers led by Stefan at 1.35pm.

REPORTS FOR THE CALENDAR YEAR 2023

RECTOR'S REPORT 2024:

The church spends most of its time in so called ordinary time. Of which there are two periods¹. First, a short time between the Presentation of Christ in the Temple (29 Jan) and Ash Wednesday (22 Feb) which marks the beginning of Lent. Second, a longer time after Pentecost (28 May) until, say, Advent (3 Dec). On the one hand, nothing especial is happening. On the other hand, the formation of a faith community through the ordinariness of its worship sees the creation of thin spaces for God to burst through the ordinary and go on transforming his creation of which we are all a part and invited to share.

Perhaps this captures something of our shared journey this last year. An ordinary journey of love, recalling a snippet of one of U.A. Fanthorpe's love poems to her partner Rosie Bailey, 'Atlas'.

'There is a kind of love called maintenance
.....;which upholds
The permanently rickety elaborate
Structures of living, which is Atlas²'.

Our structures of living, which is Jesus.

On the one hand, nothing especial has happened. On the other hand, we have witnessed with the community raising funds for Christian Aid's Empowering Left Behind communities as you will wonderfully read elsewhere in this report. We have paid attention to our worship as a means of being formed into the likeness of Christ. We have welcomed Christ in the other as we celebrated together the King's coronation. The ordinary has been the ether of the extraordinary goodness of God.

And I am thankful, as always, for both the ordinariness and extraordinariness of our common life this last year; for the leaders of St James, its many volunteers, members, partners across the communities we serve, and those who live among us and regularly reveal to us the ordinary and extraordinary face of Christ. Thank you.

The coming year, which of course, we are deep into at the time of writing this report will bring more of the same – yes: We will welcome. We will worship. We will witness. The extraordinary mystery, goodness, and saving love of Jesus will continue to shine in the darkness. We will hear the words of Jesus and do our best to act on them, be like the wise woman who built her house on rock. "The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on rock" (Matthew 7.24-25).

With my love and prayers,
Stefan

¹ Note the date change annually.

² <https://www.best-poems.net/u-a-fanthorpe/atlas.html>

CHURCHWARDENS' REPORT:

Bettie and Mike were re-elected Wardens at the Meeting of the Parishioners in April 2023. They would like to thank everyone who stood in for them in times of absence during that period.

CHURCHYARD MAINTENANCE:

The churchyard remains in good order. Our re-wilding scheme is now in its fifth year. The areas covered are to the west of the tower and the north side of the church. The national church has endorsed this policy of maintaining God's acre. Last year's Chelsea flower show also endorsed re-wilding.

Overall maintenance is undertaken by a Community Payback team who generally come once a week, sometimes twice a month. They trim and cut grass and maintain paths in the wilder areas. We are truly grateful for this. A working party takes place once a month which is supported by members of the church and the wider community. When the weather allows we occasionally hold a barbecue for the workers.

We encourage the local community to come and walk, chat and sit in the churchyard. Dog walkers are most welcome: water is usually available for thirsty pets by the porch door. We look forward to another year maintaining and caring for our wonderful environment.

FABRIC AND MAINTENANCE REPORT FOR 2023:

Some time ago it was noted that the clerestory windows were showing signs of rust but it was not possible to address the issue as the pews do not allow access to them. That may change in the future.

The AV system has proved a very useful tool and is now generally well-received by all.

The repairs carried out two years ago to the lych gate are holding up well and especially in the recent very wet summer and winter; the new guttering on the south side has been of great benefit.

Paul Forrest, an invaluable member of the maintenance team, sadly died during the year. He had begun the task of painstakingly cleaning the stained glass windows which has had to be put on hold for now, awaiting the attention of another dedicated volunteer! The new Millennium window protection which was discussed has not been proceeded with as yet.

The annual inspection of the Church roof was carried out in September. Valleys and gutters were cleaned and slipped slates re-bedded. Due to frequent bad weather more work will have to be done this coming year.

GOODS AND ORNAMENTS: The Church Property Register is up to date. The goods and ornaments belonging to the Church were accounted for. The next audit is due in March.

RISK ASSESSMENTS: Risk assessments are prepared for events operated by the Church both in the Church and the Parish Hall.

All portable electrical appliances in the Church including cables used to connect appliances, were checked by our designated electrical firm. This is done annually.

The security alarm system has occasionally malfunctioned, sensors being “triggered” but returning to “normal” again. The system is undoubtedly old and outdated but it is thought that to leave it until other work is done is the best option.

The gas boilers, which occasionally struggle to maintain a workable temperature in the coldest of weather, have been serviced. In accordance with Historic England guidance for listed buildings, we try to maintain the ambient temperature between 8 and 12 degrees Celsius.

QUINQUENNIAL INSPECTION: The inspection took place on 21st April 2023 by Tony Barton of Donald Insall Associates (Architects).

SUMMARY: “Christleton St. James is extremely well-cared for by the Church community who display obvious care for a wonderful Church, Butterfield’s only Cheshire church.

The only real advice here is to keep up the good work and to maintain the annual regime of gutter cleaning clearance and pay a bit of attention to the external stonework especially low-level masonry”.

The detailed report is in the vestry and an electronic version available on application to a Churchwarden.

A list of works completed 2017-2023 is also available.

PARISH HALL: The complete heating system recently installed is a great improvement even if energy costs have risen steeply. The hot water system in the kitchen is much more efficient.

All Church volunteers providing food for events now have Food Hygiene qualifications.

A section of guttering on the Pepper Street side is broken. The roofing company has been asked to provide an estimate to replace – awaiting this.

The men's toilets still await a decision on upgrading/repairing the urinals and wall plaster.

Bettie Gilliatt and Mike Lightfoot

ST JAMES' CHRISTLETON END OF YEAR FINANCIAL STATEMENTS YEAR ENDING 31 DEC 2023

INTRODUCTION:

These accounts are prepared on a Receipts and Payments basis, although next year we will move to accounting including accruals. This is relevant to our income and expenditure both at present and projected.

Receipts and Payments Account

	Unrestricted funds	Designated funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds	Total funds	Prior year total funds
Income and endowments from:						
Donations and legacies	—	3,034	—	—	3,034	2,647
Income from charitable activities	122,038	1,500	7,522	—	131,061	134,041
Other trading activities	12,016	—	—	—	12,016	12,375
Investments	1,629	629	198	—	2,457	1,084
Other income	4,428	—	—	—	4,428	3,960
Total income and endowments from:	140,112	5,163	7,720	—	152,997	154,109
Expenditure on:						
Raising funds	898	—	—	—	898	—
Expenditure on charitable activities	129,228	3,522	20,660	—	153,411	151,392
Other expenditure	8,571	13,721	—	—	22,292	27,667
Total expenditure on:	138,697	17,243	20,660	—	176,601	179,059
Net income / (expenditure)	1,414	(12,079)	(12,939)	—	(23,604)	(24,950)
Transfers						
Gross transfers between funds - in	8,762	—	195	—	8,957	1,799
Gross transfers between funds - out	(195)	(8,762)	—	—	(8,957)	(1,799)
Net income / (expenditure)	9,981	(20,841)	(12,744)	—	(23,604)	(24,950)
Other recognised gains / losses						
Gains / losses on investment assets	—	—	—	—	—	—
Gains on revaluation, fixed assets, charity's own use	—	—	—	—	—	—
Net movement in funds	9,981	(20,841)	(12,744)	—	(23,604)	(24,950)
Total funds brought forward	10,448	53,114	26,311	—	89,875	114,826
Total funds carried forward	20,430	32,273	13,566	—	66,270	89,875
Represented by						
Unrestricted						
General fund	20,430	—	—	—	20,430	10,448
Designated						
Audio-Visual project	—	—	—	—	—	12,284
car park land trust	—	—	—	—	—	—
choir	—	581	—	—	581	581
hymnbooks	—	—	—	—	—	—
legacy/church development	—	31,427	—	—	31,427	39,763
parish hall refurbishment	—	(1,112)	—	—	(1,112)	(891)
rectory decorating	—	—	—	—	—	—

window protection	—	1,377	—	—	1,377	1,377
Restricted						
Egerton	—	—	—	—	—	—
Friends of St James	—	—	100	—	100	12,540
bellringers	—	—	1,744	—	1,744	2,082
car park	—	—	—	—	—	—
chancel	—	—	3,000	—	3,000	3,000
charitable	—	—	96	—	96	96
churchyard	—	—	667	—	667	634
heating/boiler	—	—	—	—	—	—
parish hall refurbishment	—	—	—	—	—	—
rector D prof	—	—	—	—	—	—
restoration	—	—	5,363	—	5,363	5,363
sunday school/messy church	—	—	2,594	—	2,594	2,594

Balance sheet

Class and code	Description	This year	Last year
Current assets			
CA1	current account	12,598	12,681
CA2	savings account	—	—
CA3	CBF investment account	51,659	75,202
CA4	petty cash	—	—
	Total Current assets	64,258	87,883
Liabilities			
6699	Agency collections	(2,012)	(1,991)
Z04	Accounts Payable	—	—
	Total Liabilities	(2,012)	(1,991)
	Net Asset surplus(deficit)	66,270	89,875
Reserves			
	Excess / (deficit) to date	(23,604)	(24,950)
Z01	Starting balances	89,875	114,826
	Total Reserves	66,270	89,875
	Represented by funds		
	Unrestricted	20,430	10,448
	Designated	32,273	53,114
	Restricted	13,566	26,311
	Endowment	—	—
	Total	66,270	89,875

Statement of assets and liabilities

	This year	Last year
Cash at bank and in hand		
current account		
Friends of St James (Restricted) -	100	5,472
bellringers (Restricted) -	1,744	2,081
charitable (Restricted) -	96	96
churchyard (Restricted) -	667	37
legacy/church development (Designated) -	2,034	1,497
parish hall refurbishment (Designated) -	(1,112)	(891)
window protection (Designated) -	1,377	1,377
General fund (Unrestricted) -	9,703	5,001
Agency collection (Restricted) -	(2,012)	(1,991)
	12,598	12,681
Total for Cash at bank and in hand	12,598	12,681

Investments

CBF investment account

Audio-Visual project (Designated) -	—	12,284
Friends of St James (Restricted) -	—	7,068
bellringers (Restricted) -	0	0
chancel (Restricted) -	3,000	3,000
choir (Designated) -	581	581
churchyard (Restricted) -	—	597
legacy/church development (Designated) -	29,393	38,265
restoration (Restricted) -	5,363	5,363
sunday school/messy church (Restricted) -	2,594	2,594
General fund (Unrestricted) -	10,726	5,446
	51,659	75,202

Total for Investments **51,659** **75,202**

Agency accounts**Agency collections**

Agency collection (Restricted) -	2,012	1,991
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Total for Agency accounts **2,012** **1,991**

Grand total **66,270** **89,875**

Fund movement by type

	Opening	Incoming	Outgoing	Transfers	Gains/losses	Journals	Closing
AVP - Audio-Visual project							
Designated	12,284	—	3,522	(8,762)	—	—	—
Sub-total for AVP	12,284	—	3,522	(8,762)	—	—	—
EG - Egerton							
Restricted	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Sub-total for EG	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
FRIENDS - Friends of St James							
Restricted	12,540	7,559	20,000	—	—	—	100
Sub-total for FRIENDS	12,540	7,559	20,000	—	—	—	100
HB - hymnbooks							
Designated	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Sub-total for HB	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
LCD - legacy/church develo							
Designated	39,763	3,663	12,000	—	—	—	31,427
Sub-total for LCD	39,763	3,663	12,000	—	—	—	31,427
PHRest - parish hall refurbis							
Designated	(891)	1,500	1,721	—	—	—	(1,112)
Restricted	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Sub-total for PHRest	(891)	1,500	1,721	—	—	—	(1,112)
RDProf - rector D prof							
Restricted	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Sub-total for RDProf	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
bells - bellringers							
Restricted	2,082	—	337	—	—	—	1,744
Sub-total for bells	2,082	—	337	—	—	—	1,744
carpark - car park land trust							
Designated	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Sub-total for carpark	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
carparkres - car park							
Restricted	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Sub-total for carparkres	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
chancel - chancel							
Restricted	3,000	—	—	—	—	—	3,000
Sub-total for chancel	3,000	—	—	—	—	—	3,000
charit - charitable							
Restricted	96	—	—	—	—	—	96

Sub-total for charit	96	—	—	—	—	—	96
choir - choir							
Designated	581	—	—	—	—	—	581
Sub-total for choir	581	—	—	—	—	—	581
churchyd - churchyard							
Restricted	634	161	323	195	—	—	667
Sub-total for churchyd	634	161	323	195	—	—	667
heating - heating/boiler							
Restricted	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Sub-total for heating	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
rectdec - rectory decorating							
Designated	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Sub-total for rectdec	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
rest - restoration							
Restricted	5,363	—	—	—	—	—	5,363
Sub-total for rest	5,363	—	—	—	—	—	5,363
ssmessy - sunday school/messy							
Restricted	2,594	—	—	—	—	—	2,594
Sub-total for ssmessy	2,594	—	—	—	—	—	2,594
windprot - window protection							
Designated	1,377	—	—	—	—	—	1,377
Sub-total for windprot	1,377	—	—	—	—	—	1,377
General - General fund							
Unrestricted	10,448	140,112	138,697	8,567	—	—	20,430
Sub-total for General	10,448	140,112	138,697	8,567	—	—	20,430
Grand total	89,875	152,997	176,601	—	—	—	66,270

Analysis of receipts and payments

					Total	
	Unrestricted	Designated	Restricted	Endowment	This year	Last year

INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS

Donations and legacies

IN10 - legacy	—	3,034	—	—	3,034	2,647
IN16 - mistaken entry	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total	—	3,034	—	—	3,034	2,647

Income from charitable activities

IN01 - collections	—	—	—	—	—	—
IN02 - envelope scheme	3,467	—	—	—	3,467	5,221
IN03 - gift aid env	1,598	—	—	—	1,598	2,230
IN04 - funerals and weddings	19,267	—	—	—	19,267	23,742
IN06 - parish magazine	—	—	—	—	—	—
IN07 - standing orders	50,607	—	4,065	—	54,672	48,953
IN08 - HMRC	20,392	—	1,650	—	22,043	18,041
IN14 - donations	26,706	1,500	1,807	—	30,013	35,845
IN17 - clergy fee reimbursement	—	—	—	—	—	7
IN20 - general exp reimbursement	—	—	—	—	—	—
IN23 - CH ELEC REIMB	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total	122,038	1,500	7,522	—	131,061	134,041

Other trading activities

IN05 - parish hall	11,746	—	—	—	11,746	11,742
IN19 - land rent	270	—	—	—	270	585
IN22 - PH ELEC REIMB	—	—	—	—	—	—
IN24 - REIMB PH GAS	—	—	—	—	—	48

Total	12,016	—	—	—	12,016	12,375
Investments						
IN09 - investment acct interest	1,629	629	198	—	2,457	1,084
Total	1,629	629	198	—	2,457	1,084
Other income						
IN11 - fundraising	4,382	—	—	—	4,382	3,960
IN12 - insurance repayment	—	—	—	—	—	—
IN13 - BT way payment	45	—	—	—	45	—
IN15 - rectory exp reimb	—	—	—	—	—	—
IN18 - church gas reimb	—	—	—	—	—	—
IN21 - VAT RECLAIM	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total	4,428	—	—	—	4,428	3,960
INCOME TOTAL	140,112	5,163	7,720	—	152,997	154,109

EXPENDITURE

Raising funds

EX11 - parish magazine	—	—	—	—	—	—
EX26 - f/r exp	898	—	—	—	898	—
Total	898	—	—	—	898	—

Expenditure on charitable activities

EX01 - Church gas	2,944	—	—	—	2,944	2,607
EX02 - Church electricity	1,331	—	—	—	1,331	1,560
EX03 - Church salaries	4,361	—	—	—	4,361	3,980
EX04 - church insurance	4,381	—	—	—	4,381	4,006
EX05 - church building maintenance	680	—	—	—	680	—
EX06 - churchyard maintenance	2,743	—	20,323	—	23,066	6,619
EX07 - clergy expenses	3,042	—	—	—	3,042	3,154
EX08 - weddings/funerals	7,885	—	—	—	7,885	10,356
EX12 - messy church	—	—	—	—	—	33
EX14 - parish share	85,424	—	—	—	85,424	84,020
EX15 - rectory expenses	4,368	—	—	—	4,368	4,135
EX19 - church water	54	—	—	—	54	46
EX20 - church gen expenses	12,009	—	—	—	12,009	12,613
EX21 - church fabric maintenance	—	—	337	—	337	—
EX22 - choir expenses	—	—	—	—	—	—
EX25 - AVproject	—	3,522	—	—	3,522	18,257
Total	129,228	3,522	20,660	—	153,411	151,392

Other expenditure

EX09 - parish hall salaries	—	—	—	—	—	—
EX10 - parish hall maintenance and refurbishmen	199	1,721	—	—	1,920	12,981
EX13 - car park maintenance	—	—	—	—	—	—
EX16 - parish hall gas	849	—	—	—	849	404
EX17 - parish hall electricity	800	—	—	—	800	4,797
EX18 - parish hall water	475	—	—	—	475	656
EX23 - parish hall general expenses	6,246	—	—	—	6,246	6,115
EX24 - church development	—	12,000	—	—	12,000	2,711
Total	8,571	13,721	—	—	22,292	27,667
EXPENDITURE TOTAL	138,697	17,243	20,660	—	176,601	179,059

GRAND TOTAL	1,414	(12,079)	(12,939)	—	(23,604)	(24,950)
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Note to the accounts:

For the first time our investment interest for the final 3 months of the year has not been included due to a change in the systems at CCLA.

TREASURER'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2023:

As noted initially, these accounts are produced on a Receipts and Payments basis, although 2024 accounts will move to accounting including accruals, planning for potentially increased expenditure.

The General Fund – our working fund.

Thanks to generous donations this has come in with a positive balance of £1,415, despite having paid a large top up recently to bring us to our full (1.25) parish share payment. Our regular income does not support this end result. We rely on one-off (generous) donations which are unpredictable.

Total funds position

The overall figures show a deficit of £23,604. This is mainly caused by capital project expenditure, much of which funding comes from accumulated reserves in funds created for this purpose, some from specific fundraising during the year and some from our general fund monies.

3 major projects this year:

1. The AV fund - £3,522 – adding a digital mixer
2. The Development Project - £12,000 on architect's fees.
3. The Paths Project (North Side) - £22,700.

Total Assets:

Summary of change	2021	£114,800
	2022	£89,900
	2023	£66,300

The reduction from 2022 to 2023 reflects the total Funds outcome above.

Comparisons with last year:

Looking at 2023 only, on a Receipts and Payments the figures are as follows:

1. Standing orders, £48,000 last year, are now £54,600. This is reassuring and may be partly explained by our communication this year with the electoral roll members regarding our finances.
2. Our HMRC refund this year is up by £4000, reflecting our giving.
3. The net income from Weddings and Funerals is down from £13,400 to £11,400
4. Parish Hall net income is £2,800 this year compared with a slight loss last year but we did have an anomalous electricity bill and boiler failure then. Many thanks to Maria Norbury for her work on this, including the new PA system which improves our facility for the community.
5. The general donations are down but we did have incredible individual generosity the previous year.
6. Fundraising is marginally down.
7. Income from Gift Aid envelopes and blue regular giving envelopes are down. I suspect this reflects the reduced use of cash.
8. In support of the reduced use of cash, the contactless terminal has attracted £2260 this year as opposed to £1935 in 2022.

Website (included recent QR code) on the other hand has accepted £1740 as opposed to £2260 last year.

Overall, our digital giving is stable at approx £4000 but it is hoped that the QR codes recently introduced to the pews will be helpful for visitors especially.

The Friends of St James Church Building:

This restricted fund supports our church building and grounds. Over the year income totalled £7,560 which with accumulated reserves enabled the Friends to support the Paths expenditure to the tune of £20,000. Thanks go to the

chairman John Norbury and in particular a new Friend, Mike Stuart, who funded and organised a full parish leaflet drop in October. The Annual Meeting is scheduled for June 26th.

My thanks in particular are to John Norbury and our stewardship group for their fantastic support and oversight over the year, also to Nigel Seddon who regularly meets with me and claims our Gift Aid from HMRC, let alone checking any anomalies in my figures.

Elizabeth McClure, Treasurer. 25.1.24

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT:

The Independent Examiner's letter to go in here

FOODBANK REPORT:

PCC REPORT 2024 ON WEST CHESHIRE FOODBANK:

West Cheshire Foodbank is a project founded by local churches and community groups, working together to combat hunger in our local area. It is part of a nationwide network of 2,818 food banks in the UK.

St James' Church became involved in the scheme in 2013 and has continued ever since. Donations of food are left in the box at the back of church, to which are attached details of the Bank the Food app. This is an innovative app, providing information from our local West Cheshire Food Bank about food items most urgently required.

In the current financial year, there has been a 15% increase in demand locally - this equates to 7800 referrals, covering 11,000 adults and 5,000 children. Some of the inner-city foodbanks have seen an almost doubling in demand over this winter.

Perhaps the most worrying statistic is that in this same period we have seen locally over 2000 brand new referrals from people (many in work) who have not had to use us before.

The amount of food last year donated from St James' was 1652 Kgs, - over a ton and a half of food - for which I thank you, on behalf of the Foodbank and users.

However, food donations to our local Foodbank are down by about 15% which means that currently food supplies are having to be purchased to the tune of over £5000 per month, which is clearly not sustainable. Thus, it would indeed be excellent if we, at St James Church, could make a substantial increase in the coming year, either through food or financial donations, as we hold in our hearts our fellow human beings, less fortunate and privileged than ourselves, in these very difficult times of hardship.

Warmly
Chris Alderton

DEANERY SYNOD REPORT:

DEANERY SYNOD HELD AT ST. MICHAEL'S CHURCH, NEWTON May 2023:

The meeting was opened by Revd Hennie Johnston the Rural Dean.

Revd Pete Rugan introduced the meeting to the Parish which began as a sister church to All Saints Hoole. It has a Sunday School, scout groups and other clubs. Since Covid, numbers are increasing on Sundays but many are still cautious. Currently they have no youth or children's worker.

The speaker was Revd Mike Loach – his subject was Eco Church and how churches in the Diocese could get involved. General Synod approved a move towards carbon zero by 2032.

The Cathedral now has solar panels on the roof and these have been blessed by the Dean and the Bishop.

Environmentalism is one of the 5 marks of mission and the energy footprint of parishes can be completed on the Church's website.

The charity Roche has an Eco Church scheme which gives gold, silver and bronze awards to parishes.

DEANERY SYNOD HELD AT ST. PETER'S AT THE CROSS, CHESTER October 2023:

The meeting was opened by the Revd Hennie Johnston, the Rural Dean.

Revd Jonathan Phillips told the meeting about the Church which is a place of worship, a place to pray, to eat and to meet. Night Church is also run from here. Sign language is used at services, a cafe is open five days a week and run by volunteers.

The speaker was Dr Alan Downen the Lay Chair and Reader at Ashton Hayes. He gave a talk about Achieving the Vision after a report which had been facilitated by the Diocese – Together in Christ. Four themes shape a mission strategy: Growing braver, fuller faith: Blessing 1.5 million lives one at a time: Transformative loving service: Engaging locally, working together.

The meeting broke into groups to discuss the strategy. Feedback showed the Church has great experience of people with different gifts and learning from other parishes, from House Groups, Bible Study, Coffee Mornings and other group meetings.

Bettie Gilliatt

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL (PCC) REPORT:

The PCC has continued to work through its 4 designated Mission Groups. The evidence of the Stewardship's efficient management of the church's finances is shown in the accounts published in this document. Faith and Worship has brought initiatives to our spiritual growth including the experimental Morning Worship services on the first Sunday of the month. Communications has continued to produce newsletters which have been delivered to most houses in the parish. Partnerships has set up Belts and Braces for men at the 'Stute'.

However, the highlight of 2023 must be the raising of over £15,000 by the community, including the High School, for the Christian Aid Empowering Minority Communities in Bangladesh Appeal. As this sum is matched x5 by the EU it should have a real impact! A lot of hard work organising fund-raising events went on: a craft fair, garden tea party, slide shows, quiz, concerts, a BBQ, an Indian meal but it was wonderful to see so many from the local community coming together to support a good cause.

Jocelyn Platel (PCC Secretary)

PARISH HALL REPORT:

2023 has been a steady year in terms of maintaining the number of hours hired out to regular and occasional hirers. We could do with more regular hirer hours to reverse what has been a downward trend since Covid, but we do not receive many enquiries for regular hire slots. It has also been a steady year in terms of spend on general maintenance.

As a follow up to the new central heating system in 2022, the loop system was re-instated, and a wireless PA system was installed rather than re-instating the wired system with plug-in microphones. This turned out to cost more than expected because we needed a new amplifier. We have had good feedback from hirers in respect of the new central heating system, Wi-Fi, PA and loop systems and they like using our hall.

Maria Norbury

LUNCHEON CLUB REPORT:

The St James' monthly Luncheon Club has been running since January 2014 and so has completed 10 years. We offer free lunches but are grateful for donations towards costs. 2023 was begun with the traditional Burns lunch complete

with haggis and a piper, and rounded off by the usual splendid Christmas lunch in December. A lot of hard work goes into running these lunches which are well supported. Fortunately, we have many volunteers to share the load.

Our lovely diners were as generous with their donations as usual and for 2023, after expenses, we were able to give a staggering £1,727.16 back to the PCC, and also give £325 in May to Christian Aid for our highly successful Bangladesh project. The odd amount to the PCC is caused by the new St James' financial system starting in 2024 which means that Luncheon Club no longer holds a float and all expenses are now paid directly from the PCC.

Thanks to all who help and all who come. This outreach and service to the community is a key mission of St James' Church and we hope that Luncheon Club continues well into the future.

Brian Inall

ELECTORAL ROLL REPORT:

Though we have lost six members of our community from the electoral roll in the last 12 months the number registered by the end of December 2023 had risen slightly from 182 to 186. As with last year, the new registrations have come mainly from our church community.

Marj Keech

YOUTH WORK REPORT:

The Ark Play and Praise Parent and Toddler Group

The group continues to meet on Friday mornings in term time. It is a haven for parents and children alike. It is supported by several members of our worshipping community but more help would be welcome.

Lighthouse Sunday Club

Children of primary school age are invited to come along and get to know Jesus through play and bible stories. It runs concurrent to the Sunday 10.30 service and culminates with the children joining the main congregation where they share what they have learnt. The leadership is shared between a few members of the worshipping community (more offers of help welcome).

We continue to struggle to attract young families to join us and are praying for growth over the coming year.

Baptisms

It was a joy and a privilege to baptise 4 children during 2003

Save the Family Unit

Our relationship with the Save the Family unit continues to deepen. In addition to attending their coffee morning weekly, the unit have made a room available to us on a monthly basis to facilitate one to one confidential, pastoral conversations with residents and staff.

We were also able to offer a Christingle service and a crib service in December, both of which were well supported and appreciated.

Primary School

Our relationship with the primary school continues to deepen. We hold regular assemblies and also offer occasional lessons as part of their timetable. In addition, certain year groups visit the church as part of their curriculum and services are held in the church for and by the school at for Harvest thanksgiving and Christmas Carol service.

Rev'd Tina Lightfoot, Assistant curate

BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT GROUP REPORT: (Nov 2022- end October 2023)

Bereavements in 2021-2022

Anniversary Cards sent; 31

Nov 2022-October 2023

Bereavements connected to St James' Church; 37

Services at St James' Church; 26

Services at another Church; 2

Services at Chester/Vale Royal Crem; 14

Burial at St James' Churchyard; 14

Burial of ashes in Churchyard; 11

The analysis is taken from All Souls Service Invitations Nov 2022 to Oct 31st 2023

Beryl & David Cummings

SAFEGUARDING REPORT:

"The care and protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults involved in church activities is the responsibility of the whole Church. Everyone who participates in the life of the Church has a role to play in promoting a Safer Church for all."

The statement above is taken from the document, 'Promoting a Safer Church', first published by the Church of England in 2017. Safeguarding is all our responsibility. We at St James' work hard to make everyone welcome, we also need to work towards making our church a safe place for all. In recent years a lot of resources, structures and training have been put in place with the aim to show us all how we can play our part in safeguarding.

We are closely following the advice and guidelines in The Parish Safeguarding Handbook – published 2018. This has now been out of print for two years and we await the updated version.

- Since the last report to the APCM all safeguarding records including all DBS certificates (Disclosure and Disbarring Service) records are no longer kept in paper format but on St James' Database. This was designed and implemented by Rev. Dr. Stefan Collier. Parish records were transferred in January 2023.
- DBS records and training records of the clergy who officiate at St James are managed by the Diocese.
- At present twenty-one lay members of St James' have DBS certificates and depending on their roles within the church community they will have completed the various training courses recommended by The House of Bishops.
- All people involved in church activities under the umbrella of St James' Church have a card stating what to do and who to contact when they feel there is a potential safeguarding issue.
- The majority of the safeguarding training courses are delivered via the internet.
- There is a link to 'Safe Spaces' – safespacesenglandandwales.org.uk. This is a website for Supporting Survivors of Church-related Abuse.
- 'Promoting a Safer Church' are posters that give information of who to contact and how, when anyone has a concern about safeguarding. Copies of the poster are displayed on church, parish hall, churchyard and car park noticeboards.
- Eleven members of the PCC have Enhanced DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) Clearance as do other members of the church community who have direct contact with members of the public. (Pastoral groups, Visiting, Youth Activities).

- Effective safeguarding training is one of the main elements to drive the ambition to make a safer and healthier Church. There is a comprehensive programme of training for all members of the clergy. There are also specific courses for the lay community and the range of roles they may cover in church activities.
- If we all are to take on board our individual responsibilities towards safeguarding and making St James' a safe place for all, we should at least complete the Basic Awareness Course. To give access to all who may be interested it is planned to make the Basic and Foundation courses open to all within the next year.
- Safeguarding will remain a standing item on the agenda of all PCC meetings.

Ann White (Parish Safeguarding Officer and DBS Lead Recruiter)

BELL RINGERS' REPORT:

TOWER CAPTAIN'S REPORT FOR THE CHRISTLETON BELL RINGERS FOR THE YEAR 2023:

The Ringer's AGM was held on 23-01-2024. The outcome of the leadership election was as follows.

Position	Elected
Tower Captain	Nikki Dromgoole
Deputy Tower Captain	Ian Braithwaite
Treasurer	Ian Braithwaite
Secretary	Mary Cowen

Ringling Development

Last year's recruitment drive meant that we gained seven new ringers and throughout 2023 there has been a programme of intensive training to progress them to a Sunday ringing standard. We have added extra sessions for the ringers that need more time to develop their skill. To minimise the impact of these sessions on our neighbours, we have implemented a noise reduction solution. The extra ringers enabled us to ring all eight bells for the King's coronation on 6th May 2023. Additionally, we can ring eight bells more regularly, on practice nights and for services.

Accounts

There has been a reduction in income due to fewer weddings and fewer visiting ringers. Whilst the accounts show a positive balance, it has been noted that individual ringers are covering costs of certain expenditure projects. The ringers need to maintain a positive balance to prepare for future capital expenditure such as replacement ropes and bell stays. The ringers are currently exploring how to generate income to make sure we can pay for necessary expense when it arises.

Nikki Dromgoole

On behalf of the PCC

**The Revd Dr Stefan Collier
(Chairman)**

**Jocelyn Platel
(Hon Secretary)**

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