

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 2024

and Agenda for Annual Meetings 11 May 2025

Rector: The Reverend Dr Stefan Collier



Church: St James

St James' Church, Pepper Street, Christleton, CH3 7AG

Bankers: Santander

Charity Registration Number: 1133992



(Draft 7.1)

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AGENDA FOR ANNUAL MEETINGS 11 MAY 2025

Meeting of the Parishioners (Vestry Meeting): (10)

To: Elect Churchwardens

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING (APCM) (Total = 67 mins)

Opening Prayers (3)

1. Apologies (1)

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting – 2024 (Available in the Annual Report) (5)

3. Matters Arising (10)

4. Reports (30)

- **Rector's Report (5)**
- **Churchwardens' Report (5)**
- **Treasurer's Report (10)**
- **Deanery Synod Report (2)**
- **PCC Report (3)**
- **Electoral Roll Report (5)**

5. Elections and Appointments (10)

- **Deanery Synod**
- **PCC – including Secretary & Treasurer**
- **Auditor**

6. Any Other Business (5)

7. Closing Prayers (3)

Jocelyn Platel, PCC Secretary

The above meeting(s) to be followed by a short PCC Meeting to appoint:

Vice Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, Standing Committee, ER Officer & confirm date of PCC Meeting

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 May 2024 the following have served as members of the PCC:

Rector (ex-officio)	Revd Dr Stefan Collier
Assistant Curates (ex-officio)	Revd Tina Lightfoot
Churchwardens (ex-officio) Elected annually at Meeting of the Parishioners.	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 Jan Bowden 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, with a maximum of two consecutive terms (ie: 6 years) # Member will have completed 3 years at the 2025 APCM.	Pat Bull (nee Powell) (elected: 2022) # John Norbury (elected: 2022) # Joce Platel (elected: 2023) Alastair Holland (elected: 2023) Lesley Morgan (elected: 2023) Elizabeth McClure (elected: 2023) Ann White (elected: 2023) John Eccles (elected 2024) Chris Platel (elected 2024) Jan Bowden (elected 2024) Two PCC positions are vacant (prior to the 2025 APCM)
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
Parish Safeguarding Officer (appointed annually)	Ann White

Licenced Lay Workers	
Pastoral Worker	Lesley Morgan

Parish Appointments	
Employed Director of Music	Bob Jones
Parish Administrator	Marj Keech

MINUTES OF 2024 ANNUAL MEETINGS HELD AT 12.00 PM ON 5TH MAY 2024

14 people attended the meetings.

MEETING OF THE PARISHIONERS (Vestry Meeting)

Nominations had been received for Bettie Gilliatt (Proposed by Liz McClure and seconded by Sheena Cumiskey) and Mike Lightfoot (Proposed by Janet Milton and seconded by Joy Verrier). 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 not only for their welcoming presence in church, but also for looking after the fabric of the building and the maintenance of the churchyard. Gill Hibbert commented that visiting so many other parishes had increased her awareness of the responsibility and the enormous amount of work the job entailed. 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: Brian and Elizabeth Inall, Carl and Sheena Cumiskey, Tina and Mike Lightfoot, Martin and Hazel Thompson, John and June Pearson, Tim and Suzanne Little.

2: Minutes of the Annual Meetings held on 23rd April 2023. These were approved as a true record to be signed by Stefan.

3: Matters Arising: There were none.

4: Reports:

- **Rector's Report** – Stefan gave the following report:

"I won't read to you my report, rather draw attention to how thankful I am for our desire to go on becoming a community of welcome, witness, and worship; that is be formed into the likeness of God who is a God of welcome, witness, and worship.

This is so very important. As is what I hope we are about to embark on this coming year. The development of St James Church. After almost 6 years we will finally hear whether we are to receive permission or not in about the next 6 months. If we do receive this permission, we need to raise of order an eye-watering 600K to make this dream a reality.

It sounds and feels impossible. But this is surely how Joseph felt left in a pit to die by his brothers. Surely how Elizabeth felt when told she was to bear a child at advanced age. How Jesus felt as he knelt down to pray in the garden of Gethsemane. How Paul and his companions felt on his missionary journeys in Asia. Their life's impossible. Indeed, they were. But not with God. With God, time and time again, the impossible is made possible. And so I believe it will be for us. God will make possible the impossible for this church community.

For sure, it will be so very hard and challenging. But I am confident because we are not committed to ourselves, because we are blessed with many people with many gifts. Because, when all is said and done, we desire to run, or walk purposively, the race of faith set before us. To hand on a community of welcome, witness, and worship to those who follow after us. The impossible will be made possible. Thank you for this confidence.

Finally. Thank you to the leaders of our PCC, and those on the margins of our community; critical as they are. Thank you to our excellent ministry team of Tina, Elizabeth, Gill, and Lesley. Thank you to Nikki and Ian and the bellringers collective, Maria, John, Marj, and Bob for their especial ministries among us without which our common life would suffer greatly. Thank you for the gift of what is coming. No less, than the Kingdom of God on earth as in heaven."

Gill Hibbert questioned Stefan as to whether he believed the church development was God's will. Stefan shared how, prior to Christleton, he did not feel called to lead a major building project, so was surprised and frustrated (with God) when the PCC and others begun to discern this direction a few months post his arrival. He, but more importantly we, are confident this is a direction we are being asked to take for the future of the church and communities it serves. David Cummings reiterated that we need to make sure the church will serve the needs of future generations. Jan agreed that we need a space which will allow more creative things to take place like concerts and art exhibitions. Historically churches were used for those sorts of events. Although St James is a Butterfield church, the only one in Cheshire, the pews are not an essential feature, whereas, e.g., the polychromatic stonework is. Gill felt we need to sell this vision through our enthusiasm and positivity.

- **Churchwardens' Report – BG** commented that £3,500 has been spent on repairs to the church roof: there were missing slates, ridge tiles and valleys needed to be cleared. She thanked the churchyard working party, especially Sarah Bromage and Joe Dilworth for their unfailing support. The work of the Payback team is much appreciated and they value the positive feedback they are given. There is a wide range of wildlife and No Mow May should help to increase that. Jan B suggested that laminated signs explaining the concept and reasoning may help to offset any criticism. David offered to produce signs to this effect.

Treasurer's Report – SC thanked Liz and John for all their hard work managing the church finances. Liz wished to highlight certain points:

- 1) Accounts are now on a different (accrual) system which may be needed if dealing with larger amounts of money.
- 2) The regular income does not cover the full Parish Share of 1.25. Without generous donations we cannot pay the full amount. This year we are £12k a month short of the income needed so are paying 1.05 a month.
- 3) The main capital expenditure over the last year has been the AV installation, architects' fees and the repair of churchyard paths.
- 4) The Stewardship Group was tasked with increasing digital giving which is now at £4k per year. QR codes are now on pew sheets and on a new Friends' leaflet.
- 5) John has done a fantastic job with the Friends; he believes in the importance of a personal approach. The contribution of Mike Stuart to the Friends' achievements was highlighted and tributes paid to him.
- 6) On a positive note, Liz acknowledged the warmth, enthusiasm and support of the church community and the Friends. Anyone who would be willing to be a deputy treasurer would be warmly welcomed!

Lesley felt we needed to make the wider congregation aware of the financial situation. There followed discussion of the whole issue of Communications which we are aware needs to improve in this fast-changing world but is a hard issue to solve. Gill H raised the use of the A41 but this does cost and, as it reaches beyond this parish, may raise objections from other churches. SC suggested that if we focus on the worship, welcome and witness (that is in the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ) then money will follow in response to our encountering Jesus. Dwelling too much on finances could paralyse us.

There was unanimous acceptance of the accounts (proposed by David C, seconded by Jan B).

- **Deanery Synod – BG** was concerned at the impact the move to carbon zero approved by General Synod could have on the poorest workers who have no protection from unscrupulous leaders. She finds it interesting to find out what is going on in the rest of the deanery.
- **PCC Report – SC** thanked JP for her work as secretary.
- **Electoral Roll – The ER** now stands at 153.
- **Safeguarding – Stefan** thanked Ann for her commitment to making sure Safeguarding policies are being followed. Ann confirmed that we are compliant but there is not much guidance from the powers above. In the end safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

5: Elections and Appointments:

- **Deanery Synod:** BG will remain as a representative; Jan Bowden (proposed by Bettie Gilliatt, seconded by Jocelyn Platel) will replace Chris (who has resigned from his three year term after completing one year).

- **PCC:** Sheena Cumiskey and Brian Inall and Keith Smalls have completed their terms of office. Stefan thanked them all for the gifts that they have given and reiterated his thanks to Martin Thompson who resigned earlier this year.

JP (proposed by Liz McClure, seconded by Pat Powell) was duly nominated as secretary.

LMC (proposed by Jocelyn Platel, seconded by Lesley Morgan) was duly nominated as treasurer.

There were two nominations for new members: John Eccles (proposed by Mike Lightfoot, seconded by Bettie Gilliatt); Chris Platel (proposed by Liz McClure, seconded by Bettie Gilliatt). Both were elected unanimously. As an elected member of Deanery Synod Jan Bowden becomes an ex-officio member of the PCC.

- **Appointment of Auditor:** It was unanimously agreed (proposed by Chris Platel seconded by David Cummings) that Meacher-Jones should continue as our Auditor for 2024 so LMC to contact them.

JP to write a formal letter of thanks on behalf of the PCC.

6: Any Other Business: David Cummings thanked Stefan for his spiritual leadership and guidance and for his love and commitment to the parish. Gill wanted to give grateful thanks to Tina and Elizabeth for all that they do including their preaching.

The meeting closed with prayers led by Stefan at 1.30pm.

REPORTS FOR THE CALENDAR YEAR 2024

RECTOR'S REPORT 2024:

Dear friends,

As ever, something of the joys and challenges of our blessed common life are reflected in the reports herein. Reports which witness to the loving service of so many dedicated volunteers who give of their time and talents for the flourishing of our parish communities. We give thanks for all of them and for the privilege of sharing life with the parish communities we serve.

We give thanks too, this year, for the work we have done in clarifying our parish vision, the seeds of which were recognisable almost 7 years ago, planted and are beginning to show signs of growth. A vision to be a community of worship, welcome, and witness as discovered and energised through our Holy Scriptures, as detailed for our meditation and guiding on page 3.

A corollary of our parish vision was turning all of our physical resources to its end, and as many people are aware, this led to us embarking on a church development project some 7 years ago. We're pleased to share that after all these years, October 2024 saw us finally receive the necessary secular and church permissions for our church development project. This project will ensure we will continue to grow as a community of welcome, worship, and witness not just now but in the decades ahead.

The project has a story, and here it is after one of our grant applications. The story of providing inclusive, accessible, hospitable, and sustainable space and facilities to St James' Church for up to 200 people in order to advance the Christian faith and participate more fully in God's mission as described in the 5 marks of mission.

In the beginning, around 7 years ago, we asked the question what are we here for? We understood we are here to participate in God's mission. We understood this mission concerned being and becoming a healthy church. However, a church health audit, analysis of attendance, worship and national census data, and financial analysis revealed the community was in poor health. It lacked an outward community focus, did not relate to around 80% of the demographic of the parish communities, and was in a weak, vulnerable financial position. Moreover, the church building was difficult to access and uncomfortable to use and did not have the facilities to better advance the Christian faith and further the Kingdom of God. We understood we were not being or becoming a healthy church community, with the building advancing the faith and Kingdom of God. We understood this needed to change and set priorities to be a learning, outward facing community whose building facilitated our participation in the five marks of mission.

The next 1.5 years, self-funded, saw us undertake a feasibility study with Donald Insall Associates, pray, and reflect in order to better understand how we might improve our facilities for use by the church and its work in the communities it serves. The following 3 years, albeit it with the interruption of the pandemic, we entered into discussions with key stakeholders, including the church and local communities, English Heritage, Cheshire West and Chester Council, The Victorian Society, The Church Buildings Council, and the Diocesan Advisory Committee to shape the submission of a faculty, again self-funded, for permission to develop the building to provide facilities and space for the whole community.

This faculty describes the delivery of an open and flexible space throughout the nave with the replacement of the pews with chairs, an extension with toilets (including disabled access), kitchens and storage facilities, and a screen for the Lady Chapel to provide a church and community prayer and meeting place. Together, these building improvements create an accessible space for a large variety of worship, educational, and community events and activities for groups up to 200 persons - which the existing space does not have and creates significant barriers for use to participate in God's mission. These changes allow us to offer more flexible and engaging worship, use the space for community exhibitions, events and activities which strengthen community partnerships, host faith nurture courses and other Christian learning programmes for the advancement of the Christian faith, and hospitality events, including a cafe, after the hospitality of Christ. Of the 21 needs already identified, each aligned with a mark of mission, 2/3 relate to worship, while the remaining third relate to worship and community purposes. Of these needs 70% are or have been undertaken, with 30% yet to be implemented. Of these 70% tried, 40% are considered non-viable on account of space limitations and 90% are of restricted viability for the same reason.

Our faculty was granted in Q4 of 2024, along with all relevant building permissions. The Chancellor's judgement notes '[m]y own judgement on the material [faculty] s that the future flourishing of mission in the church and parish is likely to depend on it' - this in good part why we dare to change our faith story. We also dare to change our faith story in response to our vocation to be God's people in this place. The architect, and appointed project manager Tony Barton of Donald Insall Associates, estimates construction will take one year once all the funding is available, c. £600K. Funds will be raised in 2025 with matched community and grant support, £300K each. We aspire to deliver the project in 2026.

Looking back on 2024, our worshipping community grew around 3% in 2024 (when accounting for an 8% reduction due to death this growth is likely to be of order 10%) . Our pastoral offices, of funerals, baptisms, and marriages, serve over 2000 people, and through the year around 10000 people attended all services. At the same time, we fed around 500 people through our community lunches, collected around 1500 kg of food for our local food bank, and enjoy supportive, active partnerships with other local churches and schools. We have doubled our number of faith small groups, and regularly offer multiple Christian educational opportunities through the year, with the Rector giving lectures on science and religion at the Cathedral and other churches.

We are slowly becoming a healthy church community, but without improvements to our building we are at risk of perishing. We aspire to be a church which serves all in our communities, and whose building is at the heart of our communities, available to all people without distinction, and facilitates their flourishing. We aspire to increase the social and Christian value of St James, and our sharing in God's mission will grow through adding direct economic value, the provision of community services, an increase in volunteer economic value and wellbeing, an increase in wellbeing to those who benefit from the community services provided, and additional wellbeing through advancement in the faith of people attending church services, learning programmes, and events. This increase in value facilitates our being and becoming a healthy - sustainable church community, and will be further protected through the use of a range of quantitative and qualitative data to measure the impact of the building improvements and, where required, make necessary changes to the partnerships further developed and activities offered.

This then is our story of late. The story that you the reader are part of. We now, together with God in Christ and through the power of his Holy Spirit, have especial responsibility for the future flourishing of God's mission here in this place by finishing our story from which other stories of love will emerge. We now ask for your sacrificial financial support. We ask for God's blessing that our story will glorify God and serve the common good now and in the decades to come.

With my love and prayers, Stefan, Rector, Christleton.

CHURCHWARDENS' REPORT:

The quinquennial inspection has been carried out by the church architects Donald Insall and the Church was commended as being in good condition overall. A recommendation was made that we ensure that the ground in proximity to the lower walls is kept weed-free. This is carried out regularly.

All the services, alarm, fire extinguishers, boilers have been carried out and the roof has been checked twice due to very wet weather and some high winds. Ridge tiles have been re-bedded, valleys cleared of debris and several slipped slates have been re-bedded.

It should be noted that the cost of checking the roof is quite substantial but is essential to ensure that it is in sound condition. During the inspection, the contractor noted that the wooden shingles on the tower looked very dry. The louvres on the windows (also wooden) were noted as possibly requiring attention in the near future.

The Church boilers are approaching ten years old and have caused a couple of problems over the year. Thought must be given to their possible replacement in a few years.

All portable electric appliances and cables were tested by the electrical contractor.

The lightning conductor underwent a regular inspection. As usual it was noted that the readings do not conform to the usual standard due to the substrata on which the Church is built. This is not possible to alter but the conductor is intact.

Martin Thompson has taken on the checking of the movement monitors in the Church (reminder that the monitor on the north wall of the chancel has been positioned upside down).

Recently it was noted that a small amount of mortar has fallen from the ceiling of the choir vestry (below the ringing chamber). This remains to be investigated.

Unfortunately, after eight years, the Community Payback team was unable to continue to help with the churchyard maintenance and the gap has been filled by the dedication of a band of volunteers who have regularly turned up on a Saturday morning (and often during the week) to keep the grounds in good order. However, in February we were informed that the Payback team would resume on a weekly basis. The monthly working parties of volunteers will continue.

Some damage was caused during the storms in January with one acer in a line of these trees coming down and causing some damage to a headstone in the northern section. The tree was sawn up and removed. Another small tree along the east boundary wall fell down and was despatched.

Measurements were also noted along the west boundary wall where the roots of some large mature yew trees are exposed, one in particular. They overlook a public footpath. The Payback team trimmed a large dead branch of a tree in the grounds of Christleton House – this hung over the footpath and onto a grave. The Tree Officer, Ruth Tothill and the owner of Christleton House were informed in case there might be any comeback.

Some trees in the copse, close to private properties, were regarded as too tall and unsafe and were felled but left on the ground to act as wildlife habitats.

Blackwells (monumental masons) conducted the regular (every four years) inspection of all the headstones in the churchyard and found only one which was found to be loose. This was repaired at no cost to the parish.

We would like to say a huge thank you to the worshipping and local community for all the help in grass cutting, strimming, and leaf clearing during the year. Without you life would be so much more difficult and expensive!

The Churchwardens conducted an inspection of all the goods and ornaments. All items were accounted for with the exception of a wooden "alms bowl" of uncertain date which one of the churchwardens remembered from some years back but which has been missing. It has not been on the list in the Terrier.

The Churchwardens would like to extend their grateful thanks to the volunteers who perform the readings at services, perform sidespersons' duties, meeting and greeting worshippers to the services and acting as stewards.

Mike Lightfoot & Bettie Gilliatt, Churchwardens

PARISH HALL:

Many thanks to Maria Norbury for looking after the smooth administration of the hall.

A major and expensive repair to the cooker was necessary due to damage of the glass top rendering it unsafe to use. It should be noted that the cooker top is for cooking and not for use as an extra shelf even though space is limited in the kitchen.

Some remedial work on the exterior boiler door was necessary (so far, no cost), although the boiler was fitted with a new expansion vessel (at less than three years old this is regarded as most unusual).

Following a complaint about one of the fire doors (found to be in working order) it was decided to check the fire doors monthly at the same time as the emergency lighting. May have to do a little remedial work on the main hall fire door.

The outside paintwork is scheduled to be done around the end of May (and weather permitting).

Ridge tiles were re-bedded and a slipped slate replaced during the Church roof inspection. Also a part of the guttering on the northside was repaired.

A new acoustics system is to be installed, provided by a private donation. This should address the problem of noise and particularly to anyone hard of hearing.

ADDENDUM. It should be noted that within the next few years the boilers will have to be replaced to comply with zero carbon. Other options will need to be considered e.g. solar panels (not necessarily on the building), small wind turbine, heat pumps, and possibly new systems not yet available. Planning for the future without fossil fuels will have to be addressed.

Grants are available for churches and religious buildings to help to reduce emissions.

Mike Lightfoot & Bettie Gilliatt, Churchwardens.

PARISH HALL BOOKINGS:

2024 has been a steady year in terms of maintaining the number of hours hired out to regular and occasional hirers. We have regular hirers each morning Tuesday to Saturday and each evening Monday to Thursday. We could do with more regular hirer hours during the daytime, but we do not receive many enquiries for regular hire slots. The feedback from hirers is that they like using our hall.

Maria Norbury, Bookings Secretary.

ELECTORAL ROLL:

Since the last Annual Report the overall number of names on the Electoral Roll (ER) has reduced from 182 to 151. The reduction of the numbers represents 6 people who have died and several names which were removed following the

annual revision of the Roll last spring which saw those who had moved away from the parish or who did not attend services, removed from it. There have been 13 additions to the ER.

This year there has been a complete renewal of the Electoral Roll which we are obliged to do every 6 years. All members are removed from the Roll and are invited to re-apply.

Applications will have been accepted from the 9th March to the 13th April. At the time of writing the new Roll number is not known, but this will be available on the 14th April. Any members of our community who missed the deadline may still apply following the APCM. Those wishing to enrol should contact the Electoral Roll Officer or the Rector who will be happy to provide the information required. Application forms can be found at the back of church.

Marj Keech – Electoral Roll Officer.

ST JAMES' CHURCH - END OF YEAR FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

YEAR ENDING 31 DEC 2024

Statement of Financial Activities

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds	Total funds	Prior year total funds
Income and endowments from:					
Donations and legacies	17,316.50	-	-	17,316.50	3,034.08
Income from charitable activities	147,838.14	9,026.75	-	156,864.89	136,247.09
Other trading activities	12,690.00	-	-	12,690.00	12,286.00
Investments	3,062.50	-	-	3,062.50	3,238.95
Other income	3,078.83	628.20	-	3,707.03	4,428.30
Total income	183,985.97	9,654.95	-	193,640.92	159,234.42
Expenditure on:					
Raising funds	1,416.71	-	-	1,416.71	898.25
Expenditure on charitable activities	142,247.39	5,054.97	-	147,302.36	154,920.24
Other expenditure	9,955.58	490.00	-	10,445.58	21,811.27
Total expenditure	153,619.68	5,544.97	-	159,164.65	177,629.76
Net income / (expenditure) resources before transfer	30,366.29	4,109.98	-	34,476.27	(18,395.34)
Transfers					
Gross transfers between funds - in	138.20	-	-	138.20	8,957.31
Gross transfers between funds - out	-	(138.20)	-	(138.20)	(8,957.31)
Other recognised gains / losses					
Gains/losses on investment assets	-	-	-	-	-
Gains on revaluation, fixed assets, charity's own use	-	-	-	-	-
Net movement in funds	30,504.49	3,971.78	-	34,476.27	(18,395.34)

Total funds brought forward	57,538.16	13,941.81	-	71,479.97	89,875.31
Total funds carried forward	88,042.65	17,913.59	-	105,956.24	71,479.97
Represented by					
Unrestricted					
General fund	22,120.84	-	-	22,120.84	25,264.55
Designated					
Audio-Visual project	-	-	-	-	-
car park land trust	-	-	-	-	-
choir	581.30	-	-	581.30	581.30
hymnbooks	-	-	-	-	-
legacy/church development	65,577.50	-	-	65,577.50	31,427.50
parish hall refurbishment	(1,613.99)	-	-	(1,613.99)	(1,112.19)
rectory decorating	-	-	-	-	-
window protection	1,377.00	-	-	1,377.00	1,377.00
Restricted					
Agency collection	-	-	-	-	-
bellringers	-	1,744.22	-	1,744.22	1,744.22
car park	-	-	-	-	-
chancel	-	3,000.00	-	3,000.00	3,000.00
charitable	-	96.70	-	96.70	96.70
churchyard	-	(487.32)	-	(487.32)	667.65
Egerton	-	-	-	-	-
Friends of St James	-	5,601.95	-	5,601.95	475.20
heating/boiler	-	-	-	-	-
legacy / church development restricted	-	-	-	-	-
parish hall refurbishment	-	-	-	-	-
PH refurb restricted	-	-	-	-	-
rector D prof	-	-	-	-	-
restoration	-	5,363.53	-	5,363.53	5,363.53
sunday school/messy church	-	2,594.51	-	2,594.51	2,594.51
Total funds	88,042.65	17,913.59	-	105,956.24	71,479.97

Balance Sheet detailed

Class and code	Description	As at 31/12/2024	As at 31/12/2023
Current assets			
CA1	current account	11,122.31	12,598.36
CA2	savings account	-	-
CA3	CBF investment account	84,594.75	51,659.69
CA4	petty cash	-	-
Z05	Accounts Receivable	12,450.83	7,412.70
	Total Current assets	108,167.89	71,670.75
Liabilities			
6699	Agency collections	-	(2,012.82)
Z04	Accounts Payable	2,211.65	2,203.60
	Total Liabilities	2,211.65	190.78
	Net Asset surplus (deficit)	105,956.24	71,479.97
Reserves			
	Excess/(deficit) to date	34,476.27	29,593.81
Z01	Starting balances	71,479.97	41,886.16
	Total Reserves	105,956.24	71,479.97
	Represented by Funds		
	General (Unrestricted)	22,120.84	25,264.55
	Designated	65,921.81	32,273.61
	Restricted	17,913.59	13,941.81
	Total	105,956.24	71,479.97

Statement of Assets and Liabilities (by fund)

		Balance	Previous balance
Cash At Bank And In Hand			
CA1: current account			
bellringers	Restricted	1,744.02	1,744.02
charitable	Restricted	96.70	96.70
churchyard	Restricted	(487.32)	667.65
Friends of St James	Restricted	5,251.95	100.20

legacy/church development	Designated	-	2,034.08
parish hall refurbishment	Designated	(1,613.99)	(1,112.19)
window protection	Designated	1,377.00	1,377.00
General fund	Unrestricted	4,753.95	9,703.72
Agency collection	Restricted	-	(2,012.82)
		<hr/>	<hr/>
		11,122.31	12,598.36
Cash At Bank And In Hand		<hr/>	<hr/>
		11,122.31	12,598.36
Debtors			
Z05: Accounts Receivable			
Friends of St James	Restricted	350.00	375.00
General fund	Unrestricted	12,100.83	7,037.70
		<hr/>	<hr/>
		12,450.83	7,412.70
Debtors		<hr/>	<hr/>
		12,450.83	7,412.70
Investments			
CA3: CBF investment account			
bellringers	Restricted	0.20	0.20
chancel	Restricted	3,000.00	3,000.00
choir	Designated	581.30	581.30
legacy/church development	Designated	65,577.50	29,393.42
restoration	Restricted	5,363.53	5,363.53
sunday school/messy church	Restricted	2,594.51	2,594.51
General fund	Unrestricted	7,477.71	10,726.73
		<hr/>	<hr/>
		84,594.75	51,659.69
Investments		<hr/>	<hr/>
		84,594.75	51,659.69
Agency Accounts			
6699: Agency collections			
Agency collection	Restricted	-	(2,012.82)
		<hr/>	<hr/>
		-	(2,012.82)
Agency Accounts		<hr/>	<hr/>
		-	(2,012.82)
Creditors: Amounts Falling Due In One Year			
Z04: Accounts Payable			
General fund	Unrestricted	2,211.65	2,203.60
		<hr/>	<hr/>
		2,211.65	2,203.60
Creditors: Amounts Falling Due In One Year		<hr/>	<hr/>
		2,211.65	2,203.60
Grand Total		<hr/>	<hr/>
		105,956.24	71,479.97

Fund movement summary

	Fund	Opening	Incoming	Outgoing	Transfers	Gains/Losses	Journals	Closing
bells								
	Restricted	1,744.22	-	-	-	-	-	1,744.22
	Sub-totals	1,744.22	-	-	-	-	-	1,744.22
chancel								
	Restricted	3,000.00	-	-	-	-	-	3,000.00
	Sub-totals	3,000.00	-	-	-	-	-	3,000.00
charit								
	Restricted	96.70	-	-	-	-	-	96.70
	Sub-totals	96.70	-	-	-	-	-	96.70
choir								
	Designated	581.30	-	-	-	-	-	581.30
	Sub-totals	581.30	-	-	-	-	-	581.30
churchyd								
	Restricted	667.65	110.00	1,264.97	-	-	-	(487.32)
	Sub-totals	667.65	110.00	1,264.97	-	-	-	(487.32)
FRIENDS								
	Restricted	475.20	8,916.75	3,790.00	-	-	-	5,601.95
	Sub-totals	475.20	8,916.75	3,790.00	-	-	-	5,601.95
LCD								
	Designated	31,427.50	35,000.00	850.00	-	-	-	65,577.50
	Sub-totals	31,427.50	35,000.00	850.00	-	-	-	65,577.50
PHRest								
	Designated	(1,112.19)	-	640.00	138.20	-	-	(1,613.99)
	Restricted	-	628.20	490.00	(138.20)	-	-	-
	Sub-totals	(1,112.19)	628.20	1,130.00	-	-	-	(1,613.99)
rest								
	Restricted	5,363.53	-	-	-	-	-	5,363.53
	Sub-totals	5,363.53	-	-	-	-	-	5,363.53

ssmessy

Restricted	2,594.51	-	-	-	-	-	2,594.51
Sub-totals	2,594.51	-	-	-	-	-	2,594.51

windprot

Designated	1,377.00	-	-	-	-	-	1,377.00
Sub-totals	1,377.00	-	-	-	-	-	1,377.00

General

Unrestricted	25,264.55	148,985.97	152,129.68	-	-	-	22,120.84
Sub-totals	25,264.55	148,985.97	152,129.68	-	-	-	22,120.84

Totals	71,479.97	193,640.92	159,164.65	-	-	-	105,956.24
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Analysis of income and expenditure

					Total	
	Unrestricted	Designated	Restricted	Endowment	This year	Last year

INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM:**Donations and legacies**

IN10 - legacy	-	14,000.00	-	-	14,000.00	3,034.08
IN16 - mistaken entry	-	-	-	-	-	-
IN25 - luncheon club donations PH	3,316.50	-	-	-	3,316.50	-
Donations and legacies Totals	3,316.50	14,000.00	-	-	17,316.50	3,034.08

Income from charitable activities

IN01 - collections	-	-	-	-	-	-
IN02 - envelope scheme	3,165.62	-	-	-	3,165.62	3,467.11
IN03 - gift aid env	1,510.30	-	-	-	1,510.30	1,598.40
IN04 - funerals and weddings	22,957.00	-	-	-	22,957.00	19,267.00
IN07 - standing orders	54,272.00	-	5,175.00	-	59,447.00	54,672.00
IN08 - HMRC	25,434.33	-	1,514.00	-	26,948.33	27,229.03
IN14 - donations	19,498.89	21,000.00	2,337.75	-	42,836.64	30,013.55
IN20 - general exp reimbursement	-	-	-	-	-	-
Income from charitable activities Totals	126,838.14	21,000.00	9,026.75	-	156,864.89	136,247.09

Other trading activities

IN05 - parish hall	12,420.00	-	-	-	12,420.00	12,016.00
IN06 - parish magazine	-	-	-	-	-	-

IN19 - land rent	270.00	-	-	-	270.00	270.00
Other trading activities Totals	12,690.00	-	-	-	12,690.00	12,286.00
Investments						
IN09 - investment acct interest	3,062.50	-	-	-	3,062.50	3,238.95
Investments Totals	3,062.50	-	-	-	3,062.50	3,238.95
Other income						
IN11 - fundraising	3,078.83	-	628.20	-	3,707.03	4,382.80
IN12 - insurance repayment	-	-	-	-	-	-
IN13 - BT way payment	-	-	-	-	-	45.50
IN15 - rectory exp reimb	-	-	-	-	-	-
IN17 - clergy fee reimbursement	-	-	-	-	-	-
IN18 - church gas reimb	-	-	-	-	-	-
IN21 - VAT RECLAIM	-	-	-	-	-	-
IN22 - PH ELEC REIMB	-	-	-	-	-	-
IN23 - CH ELEC REIMB	-	-	-	-	-	-
IN24 - REIMB PH GAS	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other income Totals	3,078.83	-	628.20	-	3,707.03	4,428.30
Income and endowments Grand totals	148,985.97	35,000.00	9,654.95	-	193,640.92	159,234.42

EXPENDITURE ON:

Raising funds

EX11 - parish magazine	-	-	-	-	-	-
EX26 - f/r exp	1,416.71	-	-	-	1,416.71	898.25
Raising funds Totals	1,416.71	-	-	-	1,416.71	898.25

Expenditure on charitable activities

EX01 - Church gas	4,941.32	-	-	-	4,941.32	3,977.33
EX02 - Church electricity	1,963.86	-	-	-	1,963.86	1,625.69
EX03 - Church salaries	4,206.26	-	-	-	4,206.26	4,434.52
EX04 - church insurance	4,168.57	-	-	-	4,168.57	4,381.60
EX05 - church building maintenance	222.00	-	3,790.00	-	4,012.00	680.00
EX06 - churchyard maintenance	-	-	1,264.97	-	1,264.97	23,066.55
EX07 - clergy expenses	2,075.35	-	-	-	2,075.35	3,042.93
EX08 - weddings/funerals	10,563.67	-	-	-	10,563.67	7,885.60
EX12 - messy church	-	-	-	-	-	-
EX14 - parish share	89,695.68	-	-	-	89,695.68	85,424.52
EX15 - rectory expenses	10,148.04	-	-	-	10,148.04	4,368.83
EX19 - church water	72.52	-	-	-	72.52	128.43
EX20 - church gen expenses	12,581.83	-	-	-	12,581.83	12,044.46
EX21 - church fabric maintenance	-	-	-	-	-	337.78

EX22 - choir expenses	-	-	-	-	-	-
EX25 - AVproject	-	-	-	-	-	3,522.00
EX27 - luncheon club expenses	1,608.29	-	-	-	1,608.29	-
Expenditure on charitable activities Totals	142,247.39	-	5,054.97	-	147,302.36	154,920.24
Other expenditure						
EX09 - parish hall salaries	-	-	-	-	-	-
EX10 - parish hall maintenance and refurbishmen	-	640.00	490.00	-	1,130.00	1,920.99
EX13 - car park maintenance	-	-	-	-	-	-
EX16 - parish hall gas	1,289.24	-	-	-	1,289.24	1,093.61
EX17 - parish hall electricity	1,234.08	-	-	-	1,234.08	946.45
EX18 - parish hall water	548.65	-	-	-	548.65	557.35
EX23 - parish hall general expenses	5,393.61	-	-	-	5,393.61	5,292.87
EX24 - church development	-	850.00	-	-	850.00	12,000.00
Other expenditure Totals	8,465.58	1,490.00	490.00	-	10,445.58	21,811.27
Expenditure Grand totals	152,129.68	1,490.00	5,544.97	-	159,164.65	177,629.76

TREASURER'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2024:

These accounts are produced by the online version of Finance co-ordinator, Myfundaccounting, to which we have just transferred under the umbrella of the diocese in conjunction with 90 other parishes.

This is the first full year these have included accrual accounting, which is required for income over £250,000 which we hope to achieve during 2025 due to the church development.

This process apportions some income and expenditure around the year end to the relevant year and makes the accounts more exact than a pure receipts and payments account.

Overall picture, including all funds.

In this we have a surplus of £34,476.

This is a considerable improvement on last year when our expenditure on 2 capital projects and the architect's fees took us into a deficit of £23,604.

This surplus is explained by donations for the church development, individual generous donations and also the receipt of 2 legacies, this latter totalling £14,000.

These numbers can be a bit misleading as they include both income and expenditure, also capital raising hence the large swing from 2023 to 2024. Our true trading position is more clearly illustrated by concentrating on the General Fund.

The general fund

This is our working business fund.

We have paid our parish share in full which we have done every year since Covid. The sum is £89,655 which is the highest in the Chester Deanery.

We had an unexpected and exceptional debt on the account this year of approximately £6,000. This related to an error by the Council which for a number of years gave us an inappropriate single person discount on the rectory rates since Stefan took up residence.

Throughout the year we had hoped to show a small surplus. This charge took us to the wrong side of the line so we show a small deficit of £3,143 despite generous donations.

Specifically in the general fund:

The funerals and weddings net income is £12,394, an increase from £11,400. It is good that these services are offered to the people of our community.

Our standing orders are markedly increased from £54,600 to £59,300. We have 24 “friends” standing orders and 70 to the general fund. The response to our appeal this autumn to endeavour to have enough regular income to support paying the parish share has been very heartening.

Our digital giving is in fact reduced this year, sumup (our website giving) £625, £270 of which is from the pew QR codes, the contactless terminal accepting £1,730. This may be partly explained by the increase in standing orders.

PH income has increased leaving us with a surplus of £4,000, an increase from £2,800 cp last year. Many thanks are due to the hard work of Maria Norbury. Unfortunately, there are often significant expenses maintaining this property.

The Friends

They have funded the one significant capital expenditure on roof repairs for the church, £3,790. They continue to make steady progress and this year have had an income of £8,917.

Looking forward.

Our major expenditure is on the parish share.

Due to a re-banding exercise by the diocese where the 2021 census has been used, our allocated share for 2025 is 1.15 rather than 1.25.

The total annual payment is £84,995, a reduction of £4,660 from 2024 figure of £89,665.

The effect of this and taking into account the generous response of the congregation, means that for the first time in several years we hope to be able to pay the full share allocated to us each month rather than scraping it together and taking money out of reserves at the end of the year.

This is an immensely reassuring position in which to find ourselves as we begin the drive to fundraise for our church development which finally this autumn was given the go ahead by the diocese.

This will be an incredible opportunity for ourselves and the community to achieve this renewal project to restore the church to the hub of the community and improve its accessibility to and hospitality for everyone in the parish. May we all rise to the challenge!

Once again, I particularly thank the stewardship group for their support, in particular John Norbury, but also Nigel Seddon for his work on the gift aid claims, so essential for our work.

Elizabeth A McClure, PCC Treasurer.

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT:

Independent Examiner's Report to the Members / Trustees of the Parochial Council of St James' Parish Church

We report on the accounts of the charity for the year ended 31 December 2024.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

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

It is our responsibility to:

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

Basis of independent examiner's report

Our 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 our examination, no matter has come to our attention:

- 1 which gives us reasonable cause to believe that, in any material respect, the requirements:
 - to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act; and
 - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Acthave not been met; or
- 2 to which, in our opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



Meacher-Jones
Chartered Accountants

6 St John's Court
Vicars Lane
Chester
CH1 9E

30 April 2025

DEANERY SYNOD REPORT:

There have been three Deanery Synod meetings in 2024.

12th February. The meeting was held at St. Mark's Church, Lache cum Saltney and introduced by Revd Hennie Johnston the vicar and Rural Dean.

St. Mark's parish now only has one church – there used to be a church in Wales (St. Matthew's which burnt down). Part of the parish is in Wales.

The parish is a mix of deprived and more affluent areas. The church has a Debt Advice Centre, a library and a doctor's surgery.

The speaker was Dr Alan Downen (lay chairman). We were asked to look into the Diocesan Vision and what it would mean for parishes. We looked at how parishes would manage if there were no clergy to run them. There are fewer stipendiary clergy now in the Diocese and this will have to be addressed in the future.

10th June. The meeting was held at St. John the Evangelist Ashton Heyes and introduced by Dr Alan Downen.

Elections for people to stand for Diocesan Synod had been disappointing from the Laity side as there had only been two nominations for the six places, while there were nine nominations for Clergy.

St John the Evangelist includes Mouldsworth and Horton-cum-Peel and underwent major redevelopment in 2020 which was curtailed due to Covid. Pews were removed and the floor taken up. Diocese permission to remove the pews took 10 years but the church is now fully refurbished with toilets and a kitchen. It can function as a cafe-style church when required and is used as a community centre due to its new layout.

Jon Pocock, the speaker for the evening looked at the four main points of Diocese Vision Strategy:

1. Looking to save the 1.5 million in our Diocese.
2. Increasing Missional Outreach.
3. Planting Missional Communities.
4. Developing Missional Leadership.

7th October. The meeting was held at St. James' Christleton.

The meeting was opened by Revd Hennie Johnston the Rural Dean. She thanked everyone for coming and The Revd Dr Stefan Collier for hosting. She mentioned that there is to be a Bishop's visit for the Churches in the Chester Deanery.

Anne Stockdale, Safeguarding Officer for St. Michael's Plas Newton warned of a scam regarding DBS's.

Revd Stefan spoke on the subject of "The most boring Deanery Synod talk you will ever hear" – the Government of the Church of England. His talk included a quiz which enabled people to join in groups from different parishes – some knew a lot and some did not! Stefan presented some slides.

All meetings closed with prayer. A service of Holy Communion was held at the conclusion of this meeting.

Bettie Gilliatt

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL (PCC) REPORT:

The PCC has continued to meet regularly throughout 2024 as the leadership group of St James. As well as the existing Mission Groups of Stewardship, Faith and Worship, Communications and Partnerships, a new Church Development Group has been formed since the permission for the Church Development plan was given the go-ahead.

The Belt and Braces Group which the Partnerships Group set up has continued to flourish, meeting fortnightly at the 'Stute' for coffee and chat. Despite fewer collectors, the Christian Aid house to house collection raised £2,600 augmented by David Cummings' talk on beautiful locations in his native Wales. The Summer Teas led by Churches Together in Christleton was well supported by the community raising just over £2000 for the Shropshire, Staffordshire and Cheshire Blood Bikes charity.

For the second year running the PCC ran a tombola stall at Christleton Village Fete thus contributing to a lively community event and raising money for village organisations. As a church we continue to explore ways of reaching out to the community.

Jocelyn Plate, PCC Secretary.

SAFEGUARDING REPORT:

In the past twelve months Safeguarding in the C of E has rarely been out of the headlines of the British Press. Unfortunately all too often not in a positive light. Evidence of past cases of abuse and victims of abuse speaking out as to how they have been treated. In addition some high profile individuals who have been 'shielded' from being exposed for the historic abuse they inflicted on vulnerable individuals. Whilst we acknowledge these past events, and the ongoing work to help those affected there are many nationwide initiatives ongoing to make our churches safer places for all.

I am reporting on Safeguarding at St James', Christleton as Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO)

BUT

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

We are closely following the advice and guidelines as laid out in the 'Safeguarding e-manual' which is found on <https://www.churchofengland.org>.

In addition within the Safeguarding section there is House of Bishops' Safeguarding Guidance and Safeguarding Code of Practice. There are now a wealth of resources and details of campaigns relating to Safeguarding on the website.

Parish records were transferred in January 2023 to a safeguarding web application. This application was designed by Rev. Dr. Stefan Collier, and the associated database contains all DBS and safeguarding records.

- DBS records and training records of the clergy who officiate at St James are managed by the Diocese.
- At present twenty-three 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 as required by The House of Bishops.
- The application gives us a central point of access and allows reports of DBS and training renewals.
- 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.
- The majority of the safeguarding training courses are delivered via the internet and are valid for three years. If an individual is still in office longer than three years their DBS and training courses need to be renewed. Once a person has taken up a role then the relevant Safeguarding courses need to be completed within 6 months. If the training is not completed within the 6 month 'window' they will be asked to step down.

- Safeguarding courses available to lay members are:
Basic Awareness
Foundation
Raising Awareness of Domestic Abuse
Safer Recruitment and People Management
Modern-day Slavery and People Trafficking
and
Leadership Pathway
- There are links to 'Safe Spaces – 'safespaces@firstlight.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) as do other members of the church community who have direct contact with members of the public. (Pastoral groups, Visiting, Youth Activities).
- At the same time, the parish has engaged with the safeguarding dashboards and is at level 3 currently.
- The safeguarding web application will be superseded by a safer recruitment web application in 2025 (same author) which will provide for the comprehensive management of volunteers in the church and their associated DBS and safeguarding records.
- Safeguarding will remain a standing item on the agenda of all PCC meetings.

Ann White, Parish Safeguarding Officer and DBS Lead Recruiter.

FOODBANK REPORT:

PCC report 2025 on West Cheshire Foodbank for the year 2024

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.

The amount of food last year donated from St James' was 1845.62 Kgs - an increase of almost 200 Kgs on the previous year - for which I thank you, on behalf of the Foodbank and users.

However, food donations to our local Foodbank are down which means that currently food supplies are having to be purchased, 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.

Chris Alderton

LUNCHEON CLUB REPORT:

I'm very tempted to say 'See the reports for the last few years', but the St James' monthly Luncheon Club has been growing and developing through 2024 (and into 2025). Started in January 2014 it meets every 3rd Monday and gets around 50 diners, and sometimes 60. The themed Christmas and January lunches are particularly busy. Not only an increase in 'guest' numbers, but we also have a growing team of helpers – about 20 in total. This means the burden of catering and running the lunches, and complying with hygiene regulations, all of which is hard work, is spread around.

We get accolades from those who come - about how they've enjoyed the fantastic food, fun and the fellowship. The meals continue to be provided free and the diners' generosity in optionally and anonymously donating money towards costs means that there is a surplus. In 2024 we made a total cash surplus of over £1,700, which the PCC retains. Card donations and gift aid reclaims make this even more.

For 2025 we look forward to the Parish Hall acoustics being improved in March which will enable easier conversations, especially for those who are a bit hard of hearing.

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 our Luncheon Club continues well into the future.

Brian Inall

YOUTH WORK REPORT:

The youth ministry team met for a morning in the library at Chester Cathedral in January '24 to review the past year and agree a way forward for our young families.

It was agreed that the provision of Sunday school running concurrent with the 10:30 service is not attracting young families, with none attending on many Sundays.

It was agreed a fresh approach was required and the following was decided:

- 1) 'big' events throughout the year. These would require significant people resource and widespread advertising, including social media. It would, however, give us the opportunity to reach out to those who wouldn't otherwise come to a more 'distinctive' church service.
The first event was an Easter Egg hunt affording the opportunity to tell the easter story. This reached out to over 40 families. A churchyard nature count, nativity village trail and crib service were planned for the remainder of the year.
These events will be repeated in '25 with the addition of a pancake party and possibly an event around harvest.
- 2) Pending the development of the church which will give more flexibility and opportunity to provide for youngsters during worship and at other times, it was agreed that the creche would be made more child friendly, reviewing/renewing books and toys this is work in progress.

Revd Tina Lightfoot, Assistant Curate.

ARK COMMUNITY BABY AND TODDLER GROUP - 2024

Ark meets every Friday morning in term time. Each week there are three leaders who set up, chat to carers, play with children, serve hot drinks and homemade cakes or biscuits to the adults, tell the story and lead the singing. The team of leaders meets during the preceding holiday to plan the whole term and decide what craft activities would be suitable. We have a team of 9 leaders who take it in turns on a rota as well as others who help with the baking and Victor and Ann who turn up every week to wash up and help with the clearing up. Kim sorts and provides the materials for each week's craft activity.

The children range in age from babes in arms to rising 4 year olds and that varies considerably each week so we're never sure whether the story and/or craft activity will be suitably age appropriate. So flexibility with our plans is essential!

As ever, if anyone would like to become involved and help with Ark then please do talk to me.

Elizabeth Inall

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

Following the constraints after the Covid 19 pandemic, and several other factors, the BSG team no longer exists in the way that things were envisaged and carried out between 1992-2020. David & Beryl now carry out administrative tasks with the support of Marj Keech & the Rector. Sympathy cards are sent out to families approximately 4 weeks after a funeral, and in September each year an invitation is sent out to the bereaved families to attend the annual All Souls Service at St James.

2023-24	There were 34 bereavements. Services at St James: 26 Services elsewhere: 8 Committal at St James: 19 Committal elsewhere: 15
2024-25	There are 9 bereavements to date. Services at St James: 9 Committal at St James: 5 Committal elsewhere: 4

Beryl & David Cummings

BELL RINGERS' REPORT:

The Ringer's AGM was held on 28-01-2025. 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

During 2024 there has been an increase in the number of ringers for Sunday services up from 7.1 to 8.9 per service. This has enabled us to ring the full eight bells more times than 2023.

Safeguarding

The Tower Captain (TC) and deputy TC attended a Safeguarding for Leaders course at Diocesan House in Daresbury in November 2024. Now St. James's tower is safeguarding compliant. Additionally, we have implemented the sign in book for every session, as recommended by the Diocesan safeguarding Officer.

Funds

For the bellringers account to remain in a positive position, the ringers have agreed on some cost cutting measures. Primarily, individuals will now pay for their own Chester Diocesan Guild of Church Bellringers membership. This is £12 per annum for each ringer. Given the number of ringers there are now, this will be a significant saving. Also, a donations box has been placed in the Ringing Chamber to encourage visiting ringers to contribute to funds.

Learning & Development

Extra teaching sessions have been scheduled during 2025. Our goal is to increase the number of methods that we can ring at Christleton and therefore remove the reliance on a few experienced ringers, to sustain the practice of bellringing at St. James. Additionally, one of our ringers has been successful in gaining a place on the Hereford Ringing course which offers a four-day intensive learning program for various methods.

Nikki Dromgoole, Tower Captain.

On behalf of the PCC

The Revd Dr Stefan Collier
(Chairman)

Jocelyn Platel
(Hon Secretary)

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