



The Parish of St John the Evangelist, Whittle-le-Woods
with Clayton Brook Community Church

Annual Report 2023
Charity Number 1134259

**The Annual Report on the proceedings of the
Parochial Church Council
and the activities of the Church
To be received by the Annual Parish Meeting on 22nd April 2024**

Received and adopted by the PCC on the 11 March 2024

Rev Philip Venables, Chairman

Bryn Williams & Les Jones, Churchwardens

Legal and Administrative Information

The full name of the church is St. John the Evangelist, Whittle-le-Woods.

We are a Church in the diocese of Blackburn of the Church of England, with two worship centres, the Parish Church (St. John's) and Clayton Brook Community Church. Each worship centre has a group of ministry co-ordinators who are responsible to the Parochial Church Council, which keeps one set of accounts. This Annual Report covers the activities of the Parish during the year 2023, referring to the parish as a whole with its two congregations and including the parish accounts.

Incumbent: Revd Philip Venables
The Vicarage
Preston Road
Whittle-le-Woods
Chorley PR6 7PS

Correspondence Address: Mr Lyndon Wright
42 Clover Field
Clayton le Woods
Chorley PR6 7RR

Parish Church Location: Preston Road
Whittle-le-Woods
PR6 7PS

As a church in the Diocese of Blackburn, we are a charity excepted from registration with the Charity Commissioners. Charity number 1134259

Bankers: TSB Bank plc
Chorley Branch
PO Box 373
LS14 9CG

The Royal Bank of Scotland Plc
56 Market Street
Chorley
PR7 2SD

The Parish of St John the Evangelist PCC Report

The vision of the Church is as follows:

We Seek Revival through: -

Speak Out

Reach Out

Gather in for Christ .

During the year 2023 the following served as members of the PCC:

Rev Philip Venables	Vicar & Chair
Bryn Williams	Churchwarden StJ
Les Jones	Reader & Churchwarden CB
Kathy Bigio	Reader
Deborah Green	Deputy Churchwarden SJ
Gill Menhennet	Deputy Churchwarden CB
Ed Lillie	Secretary, non-PCC member
Chris Woolham	Treasurer
Gill Lancaster	Reader & Diocesan Synod Rep
Alison Wynne	Diocesan Synod Representative
Chris Wynne	Deanery Synod Representative
Lyndon Wright	Deanery Synod Representative
Nick Brake	Deanery Synod Representative (from October 2023)
Irene Flack	Deanery Synod Representative (until September 2023)
Stuart Cross	
Chris Dawson	
Jamie Dixon	- from April 2023
Anne Harris	- until November 2023
Paul Haslem	
Susan Parkinson	
Gaynor Simons	- until April 2023
Julie Summers	

Throughout 2023 the PCC met six times in person. A co-ordinator report from each church was given at the meetings and a report from the various PCC teams as applicable. The Standing Committee met four times.

Electoral Roll report 2023

The total number of people on the 2023 electoral roll was 168
138 resident in the parish and 30 non-resident
136 from St John's and 32 from Clayton Brook

Vicar's Report for 2023

After the struggles of the pandemic and the destructive effects of repeated lockdowns, Jesus' promise, "I will build my church", felt like just the verse for 2023, as did preaching through the book of Nehemiah in January and February. It proved harder than I thought. In particular, post-pandemic weariness has been more widespread and more prolonged than I anticipated. In addition, we had a few church members leave our fellowship early in the year, and that is always hard. 2023 was also challenging financially.

However—and these are significant 'however's'—in God's goodness there were some real triumphs and joys through the year.

I was particularly thrilled that we had two excellent events that were the first we had been able to do since 2019. The first was the Clayton Brook Festival in July. In terms of attendance, happy atmosphere and good conversations, I think it may have been the best since I arrived here. It was good to have the help of Steve Haskett and a team from the diocese, too. The second event was the church day out to Chipping. We had superb teaching from Mark Simpson, excellent catering from a new company, and a lovely time of coming together in faith and fellowship. I had no hesitation in booking the hall again for 2024, straight away.

In November we hosted Christmas Adventure again. Interestingly, even though it was slightly scaled down for a shortage of volunteers, that made for a slower pace and better mingling and conversations. It was good to have hundreds through our door again and spend a couple of hours with them.

The Warm Welcome initiative at Clayton Brook, started when the fuel price crisis hit, has continued and morphed into a lovely time of friendship over lunch. The team of volunteers is at full stretch, but providing a great service.

It is very normal for youth work in churches to go up and down over the years. 2023 was an 'up year', with a thriving CY (Christian Youth or 'see why'—take your pick) at Clayton Brook, led by a committed team of volunteers, and a new intake for Pathfinders at St John's, which has grown both on Sundays and Tuesdays and gelled into a great group.

And then there is the sheer number of people serving in all sorts of ways—churchwardens, PCC, musicians, ministry team, cleaners, children's leaders, and all those I've failed to mention. It is a wonderful thing. We are not a perfect church and I'm sure we can all find some faults, but I continue to be so grateful for the measure of faith, unity and mutual support which we enjoy.

SOCIAL AND OUTREACH TEAM

SOT met four times in 2023. Our main business was planning the church day out at Chipping, the women's and men's garden parties, Christmas Adventure and the 2024 deanery mission. We always discuss a number of other possibilities, but many of these remain on the cutting table or are put aside as future possibilities.

Philip

St John's Churchwarden Report 2023

In Romans 12:12, we learn to “Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer.”

At St John's we have much to rejoice; we continue to enjoy a weekly Sunday Service, with a well-attended Junior Church and Pathfinders, as well as a weekly, Wednesday morning Holy Communion Service.

In January, we rejoiced in the unblocking of the drains – a celebration and answer to our prayers. There was a strange pleasure in hearing a sudden and loud gurgling noise coming from 9 feet below the ground.

The church building continued to create its tribulations throughout the year: a wasp nest, inside a difficult to reach ventilation brick; a faulty ballcock, causing the toilet to flood; a slate slipping; the sound system going on the blink; the gate falling from its rusty bracket. We rejoice in the support we received in helping to resolve many of these problems.

In January, we were blessed with the visit of Bishop Philip and his wonderful teaching of ‘Nehemiah the Superhero’. In serving God, Nehemiah was supported by many ordinary people to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. Here at St John's, we are blessed with many ‘ordinary’ people, who together, serve God by helping to keep the church wheels oiled and in motion. For all the wonderful work Philip does in his ministry, he is also supported throughout the year by many from our church family. It is a team effort; we give thanks to God for all who provide their time and support in the day to day running of St John's.

In addition to the ‘usual’ Easter Services, 2023 was the first year of Easter Praise, with choir singing and readings – it was a wonderful event and a forerunner for our future annual Easter services.

April was the month when Lyndon, after many years of serving as Churchwarden, decided to hand over the keys. We thank God for the service Lyndon gave to St John's, as churchwarden and continue to give thanks for his continued support.

On May 6th, the day of the Coronation of King Charles, the bellringers at St John's were part of the national ‘Ring for the King’, when our bells rang out to celebrate the Coronation. Two of our younger members were trained for the occasion and proudly joined the regular bell ringers in celebration.

Talking of bells, I was struck by the comments of Lee Proudlove from Open Doors, who, during his visit in November, talked about hearing our bells ringing out, as he approached the church. He reflected on the freedoms we enjoy in comparison with many Christians around the world who, in fear of persecution, worship in secret.

Throughout the year, we have also had the privilege to welcome other guest preachers and speakers. In March, we welcomed David Dean from the Barnabas Fund, and Jonathan Hands, from Compassion UK, visited in July. They both gave us an insight into the work carried out by their Christian charities and how the money we provide, through our charitable giving, is spent.

It was also lovely to welcome Archdeacon Mark Ireland in August. Unfortunately, this was a day when the sound system chose to ‘play-up’ but, undeterred and with a humorous anecdote, he was able to complete his teaching and liberally distribute chocolates to the congregation.

In September, we joined with Clayton Brook to enjoy a great day away in Chipping. We were blessed to have Mark Simpson as our speaker and the support of Doug and Helen Neville, all are from Wellfield, in Leyland, a church we are pleased to provide mission support.

In November we held our Remembrance Day Communion Service. It was also the day our shoeboxes were collected, with another wonderful response to the Christmas Child appeal.

November ended with another excellent and well-attended Christmas Adventure. It really is a joyful event and much appreciated by members of our local community – some of whom set foot in St John's for the first time.

Along with the Carol Service, Nativity and the Christmas Day service, there was plenty for us to thank the Lord for and to rejoice at the end of 2023.

We continue to pray for the St John's church family and the tribulations we face. We also continue to pray for the reordering of the church building.

Bryn Williams
Churchwarden

Clayton Brook Churchwarden Report 2023

This year 2023 the church building is 40 years old. We give thanks and praise for His amazing provision throughout this time. The annual festival celebrated our 40th year and we witnessed the best attendance ever. Again we say thank you all who volunteered.

The building is in very good shape and the Car Park and Grounds are well maintained. Inside the building the rooms are cleaned every week and we have an annual tidy and cleaning day.

The building is used each day, either by Church Groups or by User groups who hire the rooms.

Church Users are Warm Welcome on Mondays 11-2.00 pm...Growth group Tuesdays 1-2 pm . CY groups Tuesday evening 4-6pm. Friday morning is worship group music practice as well as Ukraine Prayers. Other church users are our coordinators group and the PCC who meet as planned. The Maundy Thursday meal was well attended. The Street Pastors meet before going out into the Clayton Brook areas. We gather to pray with them and have a cuppa and cake, The Street pastors also use the building for their special meetings during the year.

We have maintained our contacts with the local school, who have used the hall for teaching on matters of faith.

We use the hall when we have prayer breakfasts and visiting speakers during the year. Firing November we again opened the building for the Operation Christmas Child appeal. This year we were a collection point and 105 shoeboxes from the parish were added to those collected and taken to a distribution site near Coventry.

Christmas time brought lots of activity, with carol services-and practice, meals & celebrations.

During the year some groups have used What's app. to communicate with one another, for example Warm Welcome, Growth group and the Ukraine prayer group. Parish wide, the Prayer chain uses What's app to communicate prayers from many church members.

We give thanks for new people who have come into the services throughout the year. Our Cafe Style church service has been well loved during the year. Once again we give thanks for the many people who volunteer throughout the weeks in various ways. Again we are always looking for others to come and help in all areas of our ministry together.

So we thank our God for his provision and grace through the year..

Leslie Jones, Church Warden, Gill Menhennett, Assistant Church Warden.

Warm Welcome 2023

The Warm Welcome group met every Monday during 2023, apart from Bank Holidays. It started in November 2022 in response to spiraling energy costs. We offer a warm space with a free meal, a listening ear and fellowship. We initially expected the group to finish once the warm weather arrived. God had other plans! We now have a well established group who enjoy meeting up each week. Some of our group are now coming regularly to our Sunday Service. We've hosted some special events starting with a Harvest meal then a 1st Anniversary lunch in November. We finished the year with a traditional Christmas meal. Our volunteers have worked hard to serve God in our community. We've been blessed financially too. We have received two grants which have helped with our own energy costs! We look forward to welcoming more people in 2024.

- The Warm Welcome Team

St John's Junior Church Report 2023

We are so grateful to God for giving us a large team of leaders and helpers and for bringing in all the children and young people who attend our groups.

Each **Sunday** the youngest children (**Bubbles** 2-6) descend to the basement for bible-based activities focusing on an interactive bible story. Prayer, singing and craft are used to reinforce the teaching and to help the children understand the story chosen from the Bible. We pray that God is growing faith in each of these little ones.

The older children (**Splash** 6-8 and **Searchlight** 8-10) meet in the school hall. The (same) bible story is taught as engagingly as possible with the children often participating in reading different parts or taking part in a drama. The message is consolidated with questions, prayer and a related activity.

A lively group of **Pathfinders** (10-15) meets in the Vicarage sitting room 3 Sundays a month to study and discuss the same passage. It is exciting and encouraging to see them engaging with God's word and asking searching questions.

Other young people in their teens also stay in church to help with AV or help out with Bubbles. We are thrilled to see the different ways in which they serve the Lord.

Pathfinders also meet on Mondays and Tuesdays at the Vicarage. On Mondays we welcome the older pathfinders who enjoy ‘chilling’, listening to music, playing games and engaging with God’s word. We finish with a shared meal.

On Mondays, years 6 and 7 join us after school. The format is the same as above. We have particularly enjoyed some good discussions over tea when they enjoy asking Philip related or other questions.

It has been such a privilege getting to know the young people in these groups and we give thanks to God for providing the adults whose service enables these groups to thrive. Please continue to pray that these children/young people carry on growing in faith and love of Jesus.

- Caroline Venables

Clayton Brook Community Church - Under 18's Report

Another year gone as we seek to introduce children to God, and to disciple them in the faith. As always, we have experienced both joys and sadnesses, but in all we want to thank God for the opportunity of working with a special group of young people.

Kings Kids has continued with a committed group of leaders / teachers, concentrating on the Old Testament through the lives of Abraham, Joseph and Moses. We also learned about the life of Hudson Taylor, the missionary to China. Our support of Justine in Ghana continues through Compassion.

Sadly the CY group for teenagers had to stop at the end of the 2022 year, but we look back on a time of fun, friendships and faithbuilding. We enjoyed outings to Cuerden in the rain, trampolining, and great games too. Each child was gifted a Bible for their own use during the year.

To our great joy, we saw both Cody and Jasmine baptised in July. Then in October, 4 of our young people completed a Communion Preparation course and are now receiving Communion along with the adult congregation.

We took part in 2 Connect meetings with young people from other Chorley churches, hosting the second of these events.

Towards the end of the year, we upgraded our TVs to more modern smart TVs with internet access, which is a great help in our teaching.

We engaged with Clayton Brook Primary School in November to do some work with specific classes, and had a Christmas service in December.

We concluded a busy year with a Christmas Party (joined by St Johns children), and in conclusion, thank all for their support and prayers.

Stuart Cross

Worship group St John's 2023

The Worship Team meet every Wednesday to go through the songs for each Sunday. We have been blessed with extra singers offering to help this year which has been greatly appreciated. We led the Easter Praise Service again which took the same format as the Carol Service at Christmas. The Worship team led the music along with Carolyn conducting the choir. It was a wonderful time of Praise and Worship to our Risen King. We ended the year with the Christmas Carol Service which again was a great success and really well supported by a full congregation. Carolyn conducted the choir again and Stewart accompanied Peter on the Organ with the trumpet which was a great sound. After the service, mulled wine and mince pies were served. We praise God for His faithfulness to us this year and pray for His continued blessing as we seek to serve Him in music and song. - Christine Whiteside

Worship group Clayton Brook 2023

Singing is one aspect by which we worship God publicly proclaiming His glory and holiness, expressing our gratitude to Him for who He is and for the gift of His son Jesus who brings us salvation.

At Clayton Brook we have a team of dedicated musicians and singers who help lead us in sung worship. We try to maintain a good balance of classic hymns, contemporary songs and all age worship songs from a variety of sources. We continue to meet faithfully each week to practise together the songs chosen which complement the theme of the service.

This year the team were involved in celebrating a couple of Baptisms where each of the candidates chose their favourite song. The return of the festival saw us once again singing God's praises outside in the church car park joined by our church family from St John's. We have continued to make good use of the Worship Lyric Video resource and occasionally update the catalogue with new songs. This year we've introduced 7 new songs to the congregation.

As a team, we pray that our ministry will help to create a space for the congregation to engage with the Lord and be drawn closer and deeper in Him. Amen.

St John's – Prayer Report 2023

During the year intercessions were offered during each Sunday service for people in church and those watching on line. Thank you to everyone who does this important ministry. In April 2023 the prayer chain moved to WhatsApp and remains faithfully active for urgent or emergency prayers. An increasing number of prayers, over 100, have been requested throughout the year. Thank you to every member who prays so fervently. Tuesday evening parish prayer meetings were held once a month in the Vicarage. Small prayer groups continued to meet regularly, in person or by zoom. The church prayer diary continued to be produced monthly, which contained prayer suggestions for both churches for people involved in services, groups, meetings, activities, events, training courses, missions we support, the re-ordering of StJohns church, sick & bereaved, care homes and housebound, clergy, churchwardens, ALMs, our bishops and the Diocesan Vision prayer. This ensures everything and everyone is covered in prayer. The prayer diary was emailed out to our congregations, with a few printed copies sent to the housebound, and was also available in church.

Clayton Brook Church – Prayer Report 2023

Both at St John's and Clayton Brook we believe in prayer. During the Clayton Brook morning service we take a time for prayer for all the congregation to join in with "Lord in your mercy hear our prayer". When we do the all-age services we encourage our young folks to say prayers. It is important for them to start to take part in all parts of the service. Every Sunday at the end of the service there is a place where any of the congregation can join with someone to get prayers for themselves or someone else. We are a praying church and extend our prayers to the people of Ukraine, which we have been doing since the war started. We meet on a Friday morning and we thank God that we can do this.

We have always had a prayer chain going around St Johns and Clayton Brook caring for people who are sick or need help. It went around by telephone. Unfortunately it was not all that successful as people would be out and not get a message. Last year Gill Wright came up with the idea to go on to WhatsApp. This has proved very successful. People can come on any time of the day and night. We can hear straight away what is wrong and we can bring them before the Lord and pray for them. God is near all those who need help straight away. Thank you Lord for all those who have been cared for may we continue to bring those who need Gods help to our Prayer Chain. Thank you God. Amen.

- June Summers

Mission Team Report 2023

The Mission Team works on behalf of the PCC to make decisions about how the 10% tithe of church income should be distributed. This amounts on average to ~£10k per year. The 10 ministries that we regularly support are Barnabas Fund, Churches Ministry among Jewish People, Church Missionary Society (CMS – Alf and Hilary Cooper in Chile), Crosslinks (Alex and Kate Phillips in East Asia), Compassion (through individual sponsorship), Open Doors, Street Pastors, Tearfund, The Salvation Army, Wellfield Church in Leyland. These were selected on the basis that they are well-established, work alongside local churches worldwide, and we have advocates within our churches willing to speak out on their behalf. Intercessors are asked to pray for our mission partners regularly, and there are dedicated noticeboards in each church outlining the work of the supported ministries.

A prayer breakfast was held in February with Colin Mottershead from the Salvation Army speaking about the work that they do to combat human trafficking. In March David Dean gave a talk on the work of Barnabas Fund in the 9:30am and 11am services, and a few people attended an evening service at Wellfield Church with Philip to show our support. An evening event was held in March at Clayton Brook with speakers Tiana Morel and Tracy Berry on the work of Operation Christmas Child (OCC) in the Seychelles. In July Jonathan Hands gave a talk on the work of Compassion UK in the 9:30am and 11am services. This year monetary harvest donations were directed to the Bishop's Harvest Appeal supporting CRESS UK (South Sudan Diocese of Liwolo), and food donations were taken to Living Waters food bank. In October/November we took part in Operation Christmas Child supplying 106 shoeboxes (including those online) to children in Moldova and Africa, and Clayton Brook was used as a drop-off centre for OCC for one week with volunteers helping from both churches. In November we held services dedicated to World Mission with Kathy Bigio preaching at both churches, and to the Suffering Church with Lee Proudlove from Open Doors preaching at both churches. During the services this year we held focus spots on the work of the mission team and mission fund (Gill/Kathy), Street Pastors (Hetti) and Anti-slavery featuring a clip of Tim Ballard on whom the Sound of Freedom film is based and a

focus on the C. of E. Clewer initiative (Kathy). We also showed video clips on the work of Open Doors, Crosslinks (Kate and Alex), Salvation Army, Bishop's Harvest Appeal and OCC.

The mission team met twice during the year. In January we updated our Diary of Mission Team events (held between 2015-2023 – available upon request) overviewing all activities over the past 9 years. In March's gazette Stuart Cross wrote an article on the child that Kings Kids sponsor at Clayton Brook through Compassion UK. Gill Lancaster wrote Gazette articles to highlight our church statistics on child sponsorship following Jonathan's visit in August, and the launch and results of OCC in October and December, respectively, and gave her annual demo on how to pack a shoebox. In September Anne Harris wrote an article about her prison fellowship work. Throughout the year Cath Orr (editor) regularly highlighted the needs of Living Waters foodbank in the Gazette and published newsletters from our CMS and Crosslinks overseas partners. David Barlow continued writing articles each month highlighting the plight of persecuted Christians worldwide.

During the year we had one application to the Mission Fund, giving £250 to Tearfund's Turkey-Syria Earthquake Appeal. We also made year end donations of £1070 (£300 to CAP at Wellfield Church, £300 to St Michael's Zambia trip, £470 Chorley Street Pastors). Sue Lillie continued to regularly rotate mission information on the noticeboard at Clayton Brook.

We would like to thank everyone who has supported Mission within our two churches over the past year, and encourage everyone to get involved. Please see our mission leaflet for more information.

Mission Team: Gillian Lancaster (chair), Kathy Bigio, Stuart Cross, Hetti Johnson, Philip Venables

Beehive Report 2023

The Beehive has had another successful year with numbers fluctuating between 20 – 30 children with their Parents/Grandparents/Childminders each week. We have a very hardworking Committee and 2 of our members stayed on after September even though their children had started school.

The highlights of the year were:-

April - Easter Party with Easter egg hunt and various crafts.

May - Charlotte started to do her monthly moving to music which the children loved.

We had an amazing visit from Little Zoo to you who brought various small animals and insects for the children to see and feel. Needless to say this was a big hit with the children.

June - We had a wonderful day at Windmill Farm which was thoroughly enjoyed by everyone.

July - Leavers Party when we said Goodbye to those who were starting school.

Oct. - Harvest Party Lunch.

Dec. - We had our Nativity Play and all the children really enjoyed taking part.

We ended the year with our Christmas Party when Father Christmas handed out a book for each child.

God has truly blessed us again this year, TO HIM BE THE GLORY.

- Christine Whiteside

Parish Gazette 2023

The gazette continues to maintain its content and quality and produces 14 or more A4 pages per issue. It is a good source of communication and information for the parish and contains two advertisements for local businesses. The gazette was emailed out to over 120 people each month. These copies have been produced in colour and are greatly appreciated by many. Several large print copies are produced each month for church members who prefer larger print. For those who are not on email copies are distributed either by post or by hand. Thank you to Susan Parkinson for helping with this task. The Parish Gazette is also available on the church website. Thank you to everyone who has contributed articles throughout the year.

Safeguarding Report 2023

The Safeguarding Team which oversees safeguarding policy and practice within the parish met May 2023

The team consisted of the Vicar, two Safeguarding Children's Champions, the Disclosure and Barring Service Administrator and the Parish Safeguarding Officer.

The team's terms of reference remain as follows:

- Completing the Parish Safeguarding Self Audit at least once a year,
- Reviewing the safeguarding needs within the parish, at least annually,
- Reviewing the Parish Safeguarding Policy and Procedures at least annually,
- To consider safeguarding training requirements within the parish on an ongoing basis, with particular regard to Diocesan recommendations,
- Ensuring that appropriate records are kept in a safe place,
- Signing off the Annual Safeguarding report to the PCC and Annual Parochial Church

In May the Safeguarding Team revised the safeguarding self-audit.

1. Safeguarding Policy

It was agreed that as there were no changes to the Diocesan Safeguarding Policy the PCC will continue with the current Parish policy for a further 12 months.

2. Risk Assessments

Risk assessments for activities in both worship centres will be reviewed and authorised by PCC. Work continues to centralise documents in SharePoint.

3. Electronic communications/Internet policy

Ongoing.

Safeguarding Officer attended September PCC. Promoting completion of safeguarding training for PCC members, confirming no changes to safeguarding policy for another year.

St John's and Clayton Brook are registered for the Diocese of Blackburn Safeguarding Dashboard and Hub. This is a central register helping to manage safer recruitment and people management for all our training requirements. Parish Safeguarding Officer has completed online training for the HUB, when this is completed in full it will replace the Self Audit process.

Access to HUB is restricted to Vicar, Parish Safeguarding Officer and Barring Service Administrator

There were no safeguarding incidents during the year.

Treasurer's Report

Thank you to all those who have contributed financially over the past year, especially in light of the cost-of-living crisis that we currently face. The PCC is especially grateful to those

people giving regularly either via the Parish Giving Scheme, by Standing Order or by envelope, with a substantial number also gift aiding their donation.

Your giving has enabled us to continue to serve our Parish across Whittle-le-Woods, Clayton-le-Woods and Clayton Brook, supporting 158 regular services throughout the year, as well as 6 additional services over Christmas and Easter. Your support has also enabled us to reach out into our community with events such as Christmas ADVENTure, and the Clayton Brook Festival, as well as enabling other social and outreach events, such as the women's summer garden party, the men's beer and pies event, the outreach meal at Halfway House, and our annual church family away day at Chipping.

We really couldn't continue this ministry without your generous financial support, so thank you so much, and thanks be to God for His generous and faithful provision.

"Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift" 2 Corinthians 9:15

Unrestricted income

Total unrestricted **income** for the year was **£101,933**, of which £82,313 was from congregational giving, £15,708 was from gift aid and £3,660 was in respect of fees retained by the PCC for weddings and funerals. As in previous years, almost all of our income (96%) comes from our congregation in the form of regular giving, donations and gift aid.

Income was down by some 13.5% compared to 2022 (£117,894), due to a reduction in planned and other giving likely due to the financial challenges faced by many households in the current economic climate.

Unrestricted Expenditure

Total unrestricted **expenditure** for the year was **£108,863** (2022: £114,693). The largest areas of expense were:

- Our Parish Share to the Diocese of £75,564 (2022: £71,834). The Parish Share paid for Philip, together with support for ministry in many of the more deprived areas of the Diocese.
- Utilities and services were £11,096 (2022: £18,023) covering electricity, gas, oil, water, Council Tax, and insurance. This was helped somewhat by the support received towards our heating costs from the Energy Cost Support Grant which was distributed to all parishes by the Blackburn Diocesan Board of Finance from the national Church (see below).
- Ministry and outreach spend was £4,781 (2022: £3,770).
- Finally, even in these challenging times, the PCC remains committed to tithing 10% of our unrestricted income to charity which amounted to £9,720 (2022 £11,600).

Unrestricted reserves

Whilst the PCC had budgeted a deficit of almost £12,000 in 2023, thanks to careful management of expenditure and a generous response to the gift day, we ended the year with a much-reduced **deficit** of **£6,930**. This leaves us with **unrestricted reserves** of **£22,984** at 31 December 2023. It is the PCC's policy to try to maintain a balance on unrestricted reserves which equates to approximately 3 months unrestricted expenditure (c£28,000).

The PCC have agreed a **deficit** budget for 2024 of some **£16,600** which would leave **unrestricted reserves** of around **£6,400** at 31 December 2024. Clearly this will present a significant challenge for the PCC in 2025 and beyond, if this is borne out. **However, we worship a generous and faithful God, and trust in Him that we will be able to meet our needs, as He has always enabled us to do so in the past.**

Restricted Funds

The funds of the PCC also include restricted funds in relation to grants or donations received towards a specific purpose. Total **restricted funds** at 31 December 2023 was **£436,223**, of which the majority is in respect of the St John's Refurbishment Fund (£426,612).

In late 2022, the PCC received £3,249 in relation to the Energy Cost Support Grant which was distributed to all parishes by the Blackburn Diocesan Board of Finance from the national Church. This helped to significantly reduce the energy costs paid out of unrestricted funds over 2023.

The PCC also received a number of other grants over the year. In particular, grants totalling £2,400 were received towards the Warm Welcome space at Clayton Brook which has been running regularly on a Monday lunchtime throughout the year, as well as grants totalling £1,200 towards the Christmas ADVENTure event at St John's held at the end of November.

Auditors Report 2023

St John the Evangelist P C C, Whittle le Woods
Statement of Financial Activities for the Year Ended 31 December 2023

	Note	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Total £	2022 Total £
Income from:					
Planned Giving	2	62,893	0	62,893	72,585
Other Giving		19,420	7,073	26,494	26,198
Legacies Received		0	0	0	0
Grants Received	3	0	3,600	3,600	4,499
Tax recovered through Gift Aid		15,708	0	15,708	20,604
		<u>98,021</u>	<u>10,673</u>	<u>108,695</u>	<u>123,885</u>
Income from fundraising activities		0	0	0	0
Fees retained by PCC for weddings and funerals etc		3,660	2,579	6,239	3,751
Magazine and rental income	4	0	3,007	3,007	2,647
		<u>3,660</u>	<u>5,586</u>	<u>9,246</u>	<u>6,398</u>
Investment Income	5	252	13,105	13,357	5,325
Other Income	6	0	0	0	1,324
TOTAL Income		<u>101,933</u>	<u>29,365</u>	<u>131,298</u>	<u>136,932</u>
Expenditure on:					
Raising Funds		0	0	0	0
Charitable Giving	7	9,720	122	9,842	11,928
Church Activities					
Parish Share and Assigned Fees paid to Diocese	8	75,564	2,754	78,318	73,267
Salaries and honoraria		0	456	456	5,339
Parish Clergy Costs	9	4,029	0	4,029	7,281
Ministry costs	10	4,781	4,473	9,254	7,182
Regular church running expenses	11	12,362	2,116	14,478	20,021
Church heating and lighting costs		2,331	4,165	6,496	7,148
		<u>99,068</u>	<u>13,964</u>	<u>113,032</u>	<u>120,238</u>
Governance costs		75	0	75	50
TOTAL Revenue Expenditure		<u>108,863</u>	<u>14,086</u>	<u>122,949</u>	<u>132,216</u>
Major Capital Expenditure					
Major repairs to church	12	0	0	0	4,553
New Building work		0	0	0	0
		<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>4,553</u>
TOTAL Expenditure		<u>108,863</u>	<u>14,086</u>	<u>122,949</u>	<u>136,769</u>
Loss (Gain) on investment assets		0	0	0	0
NET outgoing resources and movement in funds		-6,930	15,279	8,349	163
Reconciliation of Funds					
Transfer between Funds		0	0	0	0
Total Funds brought forward		29,913	420,945	450,859	450,696
Total Funds carried forward		<u>22,984</u>	<u>436,224</u>	<u>459,208</u>	<u>450,859</u>

St John the Evangelist P C C, Whittle le Woods
Balance Sheet at 31 December 2023

	Note	£	2022 £
Investments	13	0	0
Current Assets:			
Deposit with CCLA		422,018	408,913
Cash at Bank and in Hand		37,190	41,946
Total Net Assets		<u>459,208</u>	<u>450,859</u>
The Funds of the charity:			
Unrestricted funds		22,984	29,913
Restricted Funds	14	436,224	420,945
Total Charity Funds		<u>459,208</u>	<u>450,859</u>

Approved by the PCC on 11 March 2024

Philip Venables 11/3/2024
 Rev. Philip Venables
 P C C Chair

St John the Evangelist P C C, Whittle le Woods
Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2023

Basis of accounting

The financial statements are prepared under the historical cost convention on the receipts and payments basis, with the exception of investments which are included at market value. The financial statements are prepared in accordance with the Charities Act 2011 Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice for charities applying the Financial Reporting Standard 102 (January 2015) and applicable accounting standards.

Donations and legacies

Donations are accounted for in full in the accounts in the year in which they are received. Income from legacies is accounted for when received in view of the uncertainty up to the point the amounts are received.

Investment income

Incoming resources from investments, including interest received, is included when received.

Resources expended

Expenditure is included in the statement of financial activities when paid, inclusive of VAT which cannot be recovered, other than on certain repairs to the Parish church. Resources expended, where directly attributable, are allocated to charitable activities and governance costs. Charitable expenditure includes all expenditure incurred in the provision of charitable services, together with support costs, in pursuance of the charity's objectives.

Pensions

The charity does not have a pension scheme as there are no eligible employees.

Investments

Investments held by the CCLA on behalf of the charity are stated at their market value. All movements in values are shown in the statement of financial activities. All investments were realised in 2021 and the funds transferred to the St John's Building Fund.

Fund Accounting

The charity has various types of funds for which it is responsible and which require separate disclosure as follows:

Restricted and endowment funds:

Donations or legacies received which are earmarked by the donor for specific purposes within the overall aims of the charity. These funds may be income only (where the capital must be retained) or income and capital (where the donation and income deriving therefrom may be utilised).

The charity has no endowments

Unrestricted funds:

Funds which may be spent at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of the objects of the charity. The PCC may designate some of the unrestricted funds for particular purposes, these funds may be undesignated at the trustees discretion.

St John the Evangelist P C C, Whittle le Woods
Notes to Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2023 (continued)

2. Planned Income

	£ Unrestricted	£ Restricted	£ Total	£ 2021
Income received through Standing Orders giving	58,949	0	58,949	66,865
Income received through other regular giving	3,944	0	3,944	5,720
	<u>62,893</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>62,893</u>	<u>72,585</u>

3. Grants Received

In 2023 the PCC received grants of £500 from Whittle-le-Woods Parish Council, £500 from the Blackburn Diocesan Board of Finance, £100 from Chorley Borough Council and £100 from XYZ for the Christmas ADVENTure event, plus grants of £1,000 from People for Places and two separate grants totaling £1,400 from Chorley Borough Council towards the Warm Welcome space at Clayton Brook.

4. Magazine and rental income

Income from the Parish Gazette	0	0	0	0
Rental income from Clayton Brook	0	3,007	3,007	2,647
	<u>0</u>	<u>3,007</u>	<u>3,007</u>	<u>2,647</u>

5. Investment income

Bank interest	252	13,105	13,357	5,325
Investment income and dividends	0	0	0	0
	<u>252</u>	<u>13,105</u>	<u>13,357</u>	<u>5,325</u>

6. Other income

Other Income comprises VAT grant refund received on the repairs to St John's Building.

7. Charitable giving

Barnabas Fund	1,200	0	1,200	1,700
Bishop's Harvest Appeal	0	122	122	0
Chorley Street Pastors	1,070	0	1,070	800
Christian Ministry to the Jews	600	0	600	620
Christians Against Poverty - Leyland	300	0	300	0
Church Missionary Society	1,200	0	1,200	1,200
Crosslinks	1,200	0	1,200	1,800
International Aid Trust	0	0	0	200
LW Storehouse	0	0	0	650
Mission Direct	300	0	300	0
Open Doors	1,200	0	1,200	1,968
Salvation Army	600	0	600	600
Samaritans Purse	0	0	0	550
Tearfund	1,450	0	1,450	1,200
Uganda Mission	0	0	0	40
Wellfield Church	600	0	600	600
	<u>9,720</u>	<u>122</u>	<u>9,842</u>	<u>11,928</u>

The PCC allocate 10% of all unrestricted giving and donations for charitable giving.

8. Parish Share paid to Diocese

The Parish Share paid to the Diocese of Blackburn covers the cost of the Vicar's stipend (salary), Clergy housing and training. In addition the Parish Share also contributes to the cost of running the Diocese and a contribution to the costs of running the National Church.

St John the Evangelist P C C, Whittle le Woods
Notes to Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2023 (continued)

9. Parish clergy costs

	2022
Clergy Expenses	568
Council Tax	3,075
Water Rates	386
	<u>4,029</u>
	<u>7,281</u>

	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total	2022
	£	£	£	£
10. Ministry Costs				
Books	0	0	0	0
Candles, Communion wine etc	99	0	99	325
Children's Work	861	71	932	399
Clayton Brook Festival	0	782	782	80
COVID 19	0	0	0	0
Lay Ministry costs	324	0	324	126
Licences etc	808	239	1,048	866
Love Fund	0	660	660	2,075
Outreach	514	2,721	3,234	1,924
Safeguarding	66	0	66	66
Other	2,109	0	2,109	1,321
	<u>4,781</u>	<u>4,473</u>	<u>9,254</u>	<u>7,182</u>

11. Regular church running expenses

Administration Costs	1,112	14	1,126	768
Broadband Clayton Brook	0	124	124	0
Broadband St John's	423	0	423	353
Clayton Brook Landscaping costs	1,395	0	1,395	1,245
Cleaning - Clayton Brook	1,600	0	1,600	1,600
Insurance Clayton Brook	815	0	815	754
Insurance St John's	4,489	0	4,489	4,293
Minor Repairs	240	1,069	1,309	1,718
Parish Gazette Costs	40	0	40	88
Portaloo	365	0	365	454
Professional Fees	1,750	0	1,750	930
Quinquennial inspections	0	0	0	2,454
St Johns Repairs	0	416	416	4,841
Other Costs	133	493	627	525
	<u>12,362</u>	<u>2,116</u>	<u>14,478</u>	<u>20,021</u>

11. Major repairs to St Johns church	0	0	0	4,553
	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>4,553</u>

12. Trustees

None of the trustees (or any persons connected with them) received any remuneration during the year; two were reimbursed with a total of £624 mainly travelling expenses (2022: three were reimbursed £1,497).

13. Investments

The Investments were held with the Diocese of Blackburn in a number of their central funds which produced a better rate of return than if the Church invested separately. They were the result of small legacies left over the years where the capital was to remain in order to produce income to help maintain the church. The investments were realised in 2021 and transferred to the St Johns Refurbishment Fund.

St John the Evangelist P C C, Whittle le Woods
Notes to Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2023 (continued)

14. Restricted Funds

The funds of the charity include restricted funds comprising the following unexpended balances of donations held on trust for specific purposes

	Balance at 1 January 2022 £	Movement in Funds Incoming Resources £	Resources Expended £	Transfer between Funds £	Balance at 31 December 2023 £
Assigned Fees paid to Diocese	254	2,579	2,754		79
Bell Tower Fund	500	0	0		500
Bishops Harvest Appeal	0	122	122		0
Café Life	459	0	126		333
Childrens Gifts	71	0	71		0
Chipping Away Day	0	658	534		125
Christmas ADVENTure	266	1,200	1,466		0
Church Suite	14	0	14		0
Clayton Brook Fabric Fund	1,069	3,007	1,009		3,067
Clayton Brook Festival	782	0	782		0
Clayton Brook Luncheon Club	38	0	38		0
Clayton Brook Worship	0	156	156		0
Energy Cost Support Grant	3,249	0	3,249		0
Flower Fund	0	92	0		92
Love Fund	2,793	223	660		2,356
Pathfinders	73	0	0		73
Prayer Breakfast	0	45	45		0
St John's Refurbishment Fund	408,982	18,105	476		426,612
Vicars PA	2,394	0	456		1,938
Warm Welcome	0	3,177	2,129		1,049
	<u>420,944</u>	<u>29,365</u>	<u>14,086</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>436,223</u>

Independent Examiner's Report to the Parochial Church Council of St John the Evangelist, Whittle le Woods, for the year ended 31 December 2023.

This report is made solely to the Charity's Trustees, as a body, in accordance with Section 145 of the Charities Act 2011. My examination has been undertaken so that I might state to the Trustees those matters I am required to state to them in an Independent Examiner's Report and for no other purpose.

Respective responsibilities of trustee and examiner

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

It is my responsibility to:

1. examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act;
2. to follow the procedures laid down in the general directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145 (5) (b) of the 2011 Act; and
3. to state whether particular matters have come to my attention of a material nature.

Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners under S145(5) (b) of the Act. That examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the Charity and a comparison of the accounts with those records. It also includes considering 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 I do not express an audit opinion on the view given by the accounts.

Independent Examiner's Statement

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


(a) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:

1. to keep accounting records in accordance with Section 130 of the 2011 Act, and
2. to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act;

have not been met; or

(b) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed:



Print name:

Gill Taylor

Dated:

4/3/24