



St Michael & All Angels
Houghton-le-Spring

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING 2025

Sunday 18th May
11.15 am



Contents

1. Introduction	Page 4
2. Parochial Church Council 2024 – 25	Page 4
3. Changes in Membership of the Electoral Roll	Page 5
4. Church Report for 2024, The Year in Review	Page 6
5. Independent Examiner's Report	Page 9
6. Financial statements for Year Ending 31st Dec 2024	Page 11
6.1 Consolidated Statement of Accounts	Page 11
6.2 Church Statement and Commentary	Page 27
6.3 Space4 Project Statement and Commentary	Page 38
7. Report on Church Buildings & Fabric	Page 42
8. Report on Proceedings of Deanery Synod	Page 43
9. Safeguarding Report	Page 45
10. Reports on our Activity in the Year Ending 31 st Dec 2024	Page 46
10.1 Reports for Church Groups	Page 46
10.2 Reports from Church Affiliated Organisations	Page 52
10.3 Reports from Space4: The Community Project of St Michael & All Angels	Page 55

1. Introduction

The Church of England parish church of St Michael and All Angels in the ancient town of Houghton-le-Spring has been at the heart of our community for over a thousand years. Our magnificent church building stands as a visible symbol of Christ's presence, as do the many ways we reach out to support and serve our local community.

This report celebrates the work of the church in the last year through our church groups, including the activities of our community project 'Space4', as well as the activities of organisations with strong affiliations to St Michael's. A report of our church finances is given, together with a report on the finances of Space4 which are managed separately. A consolidated report of both sets of finances is also provided.

2. Parochial Church Council 2024-25

- The PCC is controlled by its governing document, a deed of trust, and constitutes an unincorporated charity.
- Its Registered Charity number is 1135095
- Its principal address is Church Street, Houghton le Spring, DH4 4DN

In accordance with its governing document, 'The PCC has the responsibility of co-operating with the incumbent in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish the whole mission of the church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical, as well as the maintenance and upkeep of the ancient building.

- The PCC meets monthly throughout the year and may hold extraordinary meetings as and when they are required.
- Members of the PCC are either ex-officio or elected at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) in accordance with the Church Representation Rules.
- The Standing Committee of the PCC is the only committee required by law. It has the power to transact business of the PCC between its meetings, subject to any directions given by the PCC. The Standing Committee consists of the Rector, Church Wardens, Assistant Wardens, Treasurer and Secretary.

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

Incumbent	Reverend John Barron
Church Wardens	Rita Turnbull, Alastair Bradley
Treasurer, Gift Aid Officer	Sue Bradley
Secretary	Angela Slater
Ministry Team Representative	Reverend Margaret Lee
Deanery Synod Representatives	David Hann, Dian Scott, Susan Elsey (term of office 2023 -2026)
Elected members	Term of office 2024-2027 Sheila Foster, David Turnbull Term of office 2023-2026 Malcolm Foster, Brian Scott (Assistant Church Warden), Clare Taylor, Jade Turnbull-Mason Term of office 2022-2025 Lynn Scott, Simon Hardy (Assistant Church Warden) Term of office 2024-2025 Kathleen Close
Co-opted member	George Peebles (Director of Music)

The following served as Sidespersons:

Joan Beattie	Sheila Gamble	Evelyn Garbutt
Elaine Harkness	Jean Henderson	Brian Scott
Dian Scott	Catherine Moore	David Turnbull
Rita Turnbull	John Wilde	Susan Wilde
Bob Wile.		

The Parish Safeguarding Officer is: Ali Young.

The Independent Examiner was:

TTR Barnes Limited
Chartered Accountants
3 – 5 Grange Terrace
Stockton Road
Sunderland
SR2 7DG.

3. Changes in membership of the Electoral Roll, 2024

Every six years the Electoral Roll has to be re-done with everyone who attends Church having to reapply and fill in a new Electoral Roll form. This year is six years since it was last done so everyone has had to fill in a new form.

The number on last year's Roll was 124 and the figure for this year is 77.

We have an additional five members of the church who are clergy, four of whom have 'Permission to Officiate' (PTO).

Rita Turnbull is the Electoral Roll Officer.

4. Church Report for 2024: The Year in Review

St Michael and All Angels Church continued to play a vital role in serving the local community of Houghton-le-Spring throughout the year, facilitating worship, prayer and various community events. Our weekly services included 3-4 Holy Communion services, 1-2 Services of the Word, and up to 4 Baptism services per month. Additionally, we held seasonal, civic, and special services to cater to the diverse needs of our community. Our online presence remained strong, with a weekly Facebook service complementing our in-person worship. Our 'Church at Home' community allowed those unable to attend physically to receive Holy Communion from members of our Ministry Team. Our 'Usual Sunday Attendance' in the church building experienced a slight decrease to 77 (71 adults and 6 children), compared to 82 (79 adults and 3 children) in the previous year. However, our average weekly attendance in October saw an increase to 156 (compared to 105 the previous year) due to several special services held during this period.

We were honoured to host various significant civic services, including the annual 'Feast Service' in October, attended by the Deputy Lord Lieutenant, the Mayor of Sunderland, and other distinguished guests. A memorable lunch at Kepier Hall followed the service, bringing the community together. Our traditional Remembrance Sunday service saw a full church, with numerous attendees participating in the outdoor Act of Remembrance at the Cenotaph. Advent and Christmas were marked by well-attended Carol Services, with 370 people joining us on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day (compared to 395 the previous year). Easter attendance increased slightly to 120 (from 118 last year).

Our monthly 'All Age Communion' service explored a range of engaging themes, such as 'Taking Care of Our World', 'The World as It Is and the World as It Should Be', and 'Being Part of Something Bigger'. While the service is different from our regular Sunday worship, it remains essential in encouraging our children and young people's faith journey. On St Francis Day, we hosted an inclusive 'Pet Service' (or 'All Age and All Species' worship) that welcomed pets and cuddly toys for the first time as part of our main Sunday worship. Local Guides attended three services, and Scouts joined us for Christmas and Remembrance Services. We were delighted that all three local primary schools attended Christmas services and visited the church during the year. Kepier School held Remembrance and Christmas services with us as well. Although the number of children regularly attending worship and participating in our 'worshipping community' has seen a slight increase, it remains a concern that we aim to address more proactively in the future.

Music continued to be an integral part of our church life last year. Our talented Musical Director and Organist George Peebles led our skilled robed choir, accompanied by Nikki Lipinski. They enhanced our worship at six or more services every month, in addition to significant seasonal and special services. The Gilpin Singers, our community choir led by Laura Parkin, held their annual concerts and a successful fundraising event during Houghton Feast, also supporting our Summer Concert. We hosted a variety of music events, including Concerts, Organ Recitals, and Brass Bands. Alongside our traditional worship music, our 'All-age' and 'Engage' services feature more contemporary music, led by Stuart Clappison and Andy Slater. Andy also regularly plays the organ at our services.

We sustained our collaboration with St Matthew's, Newbottle and St Michael & All Angels, Easington Lane, organizing joint activities such as a Lent course, and holding joint services on Ash Wednesday, Palm Sunday, and Advent Sunday. We await further guidance from the Archdeacon of Durham regarding our progression towards a Group Ministry structure.

Throughout the year, we conducted 41 baptisms, slightly fewer than the 49 of the previous year. We hosted 2 weddings, a decrease from the 7 held the year before. The number of funerals also saw a decline, with 22 funerals last year, compared to 36 in the previous year and typically 40+ in earlier years. This downward trend is consistent with broader community patterns. We have provided care for one another during bereavement and reached out to support those grieving through our funeral ministry, an 'All Souls' service, a Remembering Service at Christmas in collaboration with Derek Moss Funeral Directors, and a monthly bereavement support group in our Space4 Hub on Newbottle Street.

Our ministry team continued to operate a 'Pastoral Care Scheme' to nurture our wider church family, complemented by the exceptional informal care provided among church members. The production and distribution of our parish 'Signpost' magazine remained a vital means of staying connected with individuals who are still an integral part of our church family despite being less able to attend services in person. We are incredibly fortunate to have an active and hardworking chapter of Mothers' Union at Houghton, which has offered invaluable care to church members and the wider community.

Retired ordained ministers with Permission to Officiate (PTO) – Rev'd Margaret Lee, Rev'd Judith Howes, and Rev'd Claire Cullingworth – along with our devoted team of Readers – Sue Elsey, Ros Pickersgill, and Anne Clappison – have provided indispensable support to our church. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to them, our Standing Committee and to PCC for their tireless efforts behind the scenes, addressing matters related to finances, human resources, administration, and building management. A significant amount of work has been undertaken to maintain the functioning of our church building, with tremendous assistance from our church wardens, verger, technical verger, assistant verger, cleaners, gardeners, stewards, linen and silver washers, brass polishers, tea makers, cake bakers, rota volunteers and others. Our creative flower arrangers and dedicated open-church stewards also deserve our immense gratitude. Additionally, our incredible Parish Administrator has provided indispensable support to our church members, the broader community, and the Rector.

We made remarkable strides in serving our community through the Space4 project. Our primary objective is to foster a 'Space4 everyone to flourish,' concentrating on alleviating food poverty, supporting individuals grappling with isolation and anxiety (especially the elderly and marginalized), and tackling inequalities that affect children and young people. A notable shift in our project focus was transforming our foodbank into a community food store where people can select the food they need and contribute donations if they are capable. Additionally, we collaborate with 'Tyne and Wear Citizens' to venture into Community Organising, enabling us to challenge injustices faced by our local communities.

Over the year, we experienced several staffing changes, and our new Space4 Manager, Justine Merton-Scott, is now leading the project toward greater success. In the early part of the year, we secured additional funding from external grant providers. Notably, we were fortunate to obtain substantial funding from the Lottery's Reaching Community Fund, allowing the project to carry out this crucial work for the next three years. As an indication of our impact, our Foodstore served a cumulative total of 1891 households in 2024, while our drop-in recorded a total footfall of 6118 individuals over the year. Our weekly children's group 'Teatime Treat' had footfall of 1038 children and toddler group 'Stay and Play' footfall of 727 children. We are fortunate to have a solid and committed Project Board comprising PCC members and community representatives to guide our project.

During the first two quarters of the year, we encountered several financial challenges and anticipated a considerable shortfall by the year's end. Major financial pressures included reduced income from regular giving and collections, significantly lower fees from weddings and funerals, and higher running expenses (particularly heating and lighting). To address the projected shortfall, we implemented several measures. In the short term, we paused our parish share payments to manage cash flow. We launched a stewardship campaign, intensified fundraising efforts, and worked diligently to cut costs. Our congregations displayed immense generosity, providing substantial one-off donations and pledging increased giving. Additionally, we organized significant fundraising events during the second half of the year. Collectively, these acts of generosity and tireless work significantly strengthened our financial position by year's end, allowing us to pay our parish share in full.

In the final quarter of the year, we joined the pilot national 'Organising for Growth' programme, focusing on fostering growth within families with young children. This initiative, run by the Centre for Theology and Community, aims to support Anglican parishes across the UK in expanding their congregations. The programme integrates community organising (a familiar concept from our Space4 project work) with prayer and theological reflection. The initial stages of the programme heavily emphasize 'listening' to both our congregations and the wider community. We hope that this approach will prove instrumental in promoting growth in our church's membership, depth and social impact.

**5. ST MICHAEL AND ALL ANGELS
HOUGHTON LE SPRING:
INDEPENDENT EXAMINERS REPORT**

1 JANUARY – 31 DECEMBER 2024

REGISTERED CHARITY NO 1135095

**External Examiner
TTR Barnes
Chartered Accountants**

**Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of
St Michael and All Angels Parish Church**

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of St Michael and All Angels Parish Church

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of St Michael and All Angels Parish (the Trust) for the year ended 31 December 2024.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees of the Trust you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under Section 145 of the Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under Section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the Trust as required by Section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a true and fair view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



David Cook FCCA

TTR Barnes Limited
Chartered Accountants
3-5 Grange Terrace
Stockton Road
Sunderland
Tyne & Wear
SR2 7DG

Date: 17 April 2025

**6. ST MICHAEL AND ALL ANGELS: FINANCIAL
STATEMENTS FOR YEAR ENDING 31st DEC 2024**

**6.1 ST MICHAEL AND ALL ANGELS
HOUGHTON LE SPRING: CONSOLIDATED
STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS**

1 JANUARY – 31 DECEMBER 2024

REGISTERED CHARITY NO 1135095

**External Examiner
TTR Barnes
Chartered Accountants**



Annual accounts for the period

Period start date	01/01/2024	To	Period end date	31/12/2024
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Section A

Statement of financial activities

Recommended categories by activity	Guidance	Restricted income funds			Endowment funds	Total funds	Prior year funds
		Unrestricted funds	income funds				
		£	£		£	£	£
		F01	F02		F03	F04	F05
Incoming resources (Note 3)							
Income and endowments from:							
Voluntary Income	S01	89,558	164,594	-	-	254,152	201,142
Income from Trading and Activities	S02	25,849	11,251	-	-	37,100	40,974
Investment Income	S03	86	204	-	-	290	125
Other	S04	-	-	-	-	-	-
	S06	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	S07	115,493	176,049	-	-	291,542	242,241
Resources expended (Note 6)							
Expenditure on:							
Raising funds	S08	9,238	102	-	-	9,340	12,978
Charitable activities	S09	62,886	168,468	-	-	231,353	206,121
Facilities Costs	S10	34,275	16,645	-	-	50,919	51,580
Independent Examiner	S11	1,590	-	-	-	1,590	-
Total	S12	107,988	185,214	-	-	293,203	270,679
Net income/(expenditure) before investment gains/(losses)							
Net gains/(losses) on investments	S13	7,505	- 9,165	-	-	1,660	- 28,438
Net income/(expenditure) Extraordinary items	S14	-	-	-	-	-	-
Transfers between funds	S15	7,505	- 9,165	-	-	1,660	- 28,438
Other recognised gains/(losses):	S16	-	-	-	-	-	-
Gains and losses on revaluation of fixed assets for the charity's own use	S17	3,245	- 3,245	-	-	-	-
Other gains/(losses)	S18	-	-	-	-	-	-
	S19	-	-	-	-	-	-
Net movement in funds	S20	10,750	- 12,410	-	-	1,660	- 28,438
Reconciliation of funds:							
Total funds brought forward	S21	70,976	72,295	-	-	143,271	171,709
Total funds carried forward	S22	81,726	59,885	-	-	141,611	143,271

Section B Balance sheet

		Guidance	Unrestricted funds £ F01	Restricted income funds £ F02	Endowment funds £ F03	Total this year £ F04	Total last year £ F05
Fixed assets							
Intangible assets (Note 15)	B01		-	-	-	-	-
Tangible assets (Note 14)	B02		-	-	-	-	-
Heritage assets (Note 16)	B03		-	-	-	-	-
Investments (Note 17)	B04		-	-	-	-	-
Total fixed assets	B05		-	-	-	-	-
Current assets							
Stocks (Note 18)	B06		-	12,017	-	12,017	1,432
Debtors and Prepayments (Note 19)	B07		478	6,747	-	7,225	2,388
Investments (Note 17.4)	B08		-	-	-	-	-
Cash at bank and in hand (Note 24)	B09		83,033	43,722	-	126,755	143,739
Total current assets	B10		83,511	62,486	-	145,997	147,559
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year (Note 20)	B11		1,786	2,601	-	4,387	4,288
Net current assets/(liabilities)	B12		81,725	59,885	-	141,610	143,271
Total assets less current liabilities	B13		81,725	59,885	-	141,610	143,271
Creditors: amounts falling due after one year (Note 20)	B14		-	-	-	-	-
Provisions for liabilities	B15		-	-	-	-	-
Total net assets or liabilities	B16		81,725	59,885	-	141,610	143,271
Funds of the Charity			-	0	0	-	0
Endowment funds (Note 27)	B17		-	-	-	-	-
Restricted income funds (Note 27)	B18		-	59,885	-	59,885	72,295
Unrestricted funds	B19		81,726	-	-	81,726	70,976
Revaluation reserve	B20		-	-	-	-	-
Total funds	B21		81,726	59,885	-	141,611	143,271

Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees

Signature	Print Name	Date of approval dd/mm/yyyy
<i>S-Bradley</i>	S-Bradley	17/4/2025
<i>John B...</i>	John B...	17/4/2025

Note 1 Basis of preparation

This section should be completed by all charities.

1.1 Basis of accounting

These accounts have been prepared under the historical cost convention with items recognised at cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant note(s) to these accounts.

The accounts have been prepared in accordance with:

• and with*

✓

the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) issued on 16 July 2014

• and with*

✓

the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)

• and with the Charities Act 2011.

The charity constitutes a public benefit entity as defined by FRS 102.*

YES

* -Tick as appropriate

1.2 Going concern

If there are material uncertainties related to events or conditions that cast significant doubt on the charity's ability to continue as a going concern, please provide the following details or state "Not applicable", if appropriate:

An explanation as to those factors that support the conclusion that the charity is a going concern;

The final statements have been prepared on the going concern basis. At the time of approving the financial statements, the incumbent have a reasonable expectation that the Charity has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. Thus, the incumbent continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in preparing the financial statements.

1.3 Change of accounting policy

The accounts present a true and fair view and the accounting policies adopted are those outlined in note { }.

Yes*

✓

No*

☒

* -Tick as appropriate

Please disclose:

<i>(i) the nature of the change in accounting policy;</i>	Change from cash basis accounting to accruals basis accounting
<i>(ii) the reasons why applying the new accounting policy provides more reliable and more relevant information; and</i>	Charity total turnover exceed the legal threshold of £250,000, requiring accruals basis accounting going forward.
<i>(iii) the amount of the adjustment for each line affected in the current period, each prior period presented and the aggregate amount of the adjustment relating to periods before those presented, 3.44 FRS 102 SORP.</i>	Prior period presented, 2023, now recognises the following adjustments to previously presented balance for this period on tab N2. This adjustment now considers debtors, creditors and stock held.

Note 2 Accounting policies

Please complete this note when first reporting under FRS2102. Section 35 of FRS102, requires 3 reconciliations to be presented, if all are applicable.

2.1 RECONCILIATION WITH PREVIOUS GENERALLY ACCEPTED ACCOUNTING PRACTICE

Please provide a description of the nature of each change in accounting policy

Change from cash basis accounting to accruals basis accounting
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Reconciliation of funds per previous GAAP to funds determined under FRS 102

	Start of period £	End of period £
Fund balances as previously stated	171694	143740
Adjustments:		
Debtors		2388
Stock		1432
Creditors		-4288
Opening Balance	16	
Fund balance as restated	<u>171709</u>	<u>143272</u>

Reconciliation of net income/(net expenditure) per previous GAAP to net income/(net expenditure) under FRS 102

	End of £
Net income/(expenditure) as previously stated	-27954
Adjustments:	
Debtors	2388
Stock	1432
Creditors	-4288
Opening Balance	-16
Previous period net income/(expenditure) as restated	<u>-28438</u>

Note 2

Accounting policies

2.2 INCOME

This standard list of accounting policies has been applied by the charity except for those ticked "No" or "N/a". Where a different or additional policy has been adopted then this is detailed in the box below.

Recognition of income	These are included in the Statement of Financial Activities (SoFA) when: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the charity becomes entitled to the resources; it is more likely than not that the trustees will receive the resources; and the monetary value can be measured with sufficient reliability. 	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N/a <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Offsetting	There has been no offsetting of assets and liabilities, or income and expenses, unless required or permitted by the FRS 102 SORP or FRS 102.	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N/a <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Grants and donations	Grants and donations are only included in the SoFA when the general income recognition criteria are met (5.10 to 5.12 FRS102 SORP). In the case of performance related grants, income must only be recognised to the extent that the charity has provided the specified goods or services as entitlement to the grant only occurs when the performance related conditions are met (5.16 FRS 102 SORP).	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N/a <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Legacies	Legacies are included in the SOFA when receipt is probable, that is, when there has been grant of probate, the executors have established that there are sufficient assets in the estate and any conditions attached to the legacy are either within the control of the charity or have been met.	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N/a <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Government grants	The charity has received government grants in the reporting period	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N/a <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Tax reclaims on donations and gifts	Gift Aid receivable is included in income when there is a valid declaration from the donor. Any Gift Aid amount recovered on a donation is considered to be part of that gift and is treated as an addition to the same fund as the initial donation unless the donor or the terms of the appeal have specified otherwise.	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N/a <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Contractual income and performance related grants	This is only included in the SoFA once the charity has provided the related goods or services or met the performance related conditions.	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N/a <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Donated goods	Donated goods are measured at fair value (the amount for which the asset could be exchanged) unless impractical to do so. The cost of any stock of goods donated for distribution to beneficiaries is deemed to be the fair value of those gifts at the time of their receipt and they are recognised on receipt. In the reporting period in which the stocks are distributed, they are recognised as an expense at the carrying amount of the stocks at distribution. Donated goods for resale are measured at fair value on initial recognition, which is the expected proceeds from sale less the expected costs of sale, and recognised in 'Income from other trading activities' with the corresponding stock recognised in the balance sheet. On its sale the value of stock is charged against 'Income from other trading activities' and the proceeds from sale are also recognised as 'Income from other trading activities'. Gifts in kind for use by the charity are included in the SoFA as income from donations when receivable.	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N/a <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Donated services and facilities	Donated services and facilities are included in the SOFA when received at the value of the gift to the charity provided the value of the gift can be measured reliably. Donated services and facilities that are consumed immediately are recognised as income with an equivalent amount recognised as an expense under the appropriate heading in the SOFA.	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N/a <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Volunteer help	The value of any voluntary help received is not included in the accounts but is described in the trustees' annual report.	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N/a <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Income from interest, royalties and dividends	This is included in the accounts when receipt is probable and the amount receivable can be measured reliably.	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N/a <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Income from membership subscriptions	Membership subscriptions received in the nature of a gift are recognised in Donations and Legacies. Membership subscriptions which gives a member the right to buy services or other benefits are recognised as income earned from the provision of goods and services as income from charitable activities.	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N/a <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Settlement of insurance claims	Insurance claims are only included in the SoFA when the general income recognition criteria are met (5.10 to 5.12 FRS102 SORP) and are included as an item of other income in the SoFA.	Yes ✓	No ✓	N/a ✓
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2.3 EXPENDITURE AND LIABILITIES

Liability recognition	Liabilities are recognised where it is more likely than not that there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to pay out resources and the amount of the obligation can be measured with reasonable certainty.	Yes ✓	No ✓	N/a ✓
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Governance and support costs	Support costs have been allocated between governance costs and other support. Governance costs comprise all costs involving public accountability of the charity and its compliance with regulation and good practice.	Yes ✓	No ✓	N/a ✓
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	Support costs include central functions and have been allocated to activity cost categories on a basis consistent with the use of resources, eg allocating property costs by floor areas, or per capita, staff costs by the time spent and other costs by their usage.	Yes ✓	No ✓	N/a ✓
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Grants payable without performance conditions	Where there are no conditions attaching to the grant that enables the donor charity to realistically avoid the commitment, a liability for the full funding obligation must be recognised.	Yes ✓	No ✓	N/a ✓
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Redundancy cost	The charity made no redundancy payments during the reporting period.	Yes ✓	No ✓	N/a ✓
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Deferred income	No material item of deferred income has been included in the accounts.	Yes ✓	No ✓	N/a ✓
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Creditors	The charity has creditors which are measured at settlement amounts less any trade discounts	Yes ✓	No ✓	N/a ✓
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Provisions for liabilities	A liability is measured on recognition at its historical cost and then subsequently measured at the best estimate of the amount required to settle the obligation at the reporting date	Yes ✓	No ✓	N/a ✓
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Basic financial instruments	The charity accounts for basic financial instruments on initial recognition as per paragraph 11.7 FRS102 SORP. Subsequent measurement is as per paragraphs 11.17 to 11.19, FRS102 SORP.	Yes ✓	No ✓	N/a ✓
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Taxation	The Charity is exempt from tax on its charitable activities	Yes ✓	No ✓	N/a ✓
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Fund Accounting	General funds represent funds of the PCC that are not subject to any restrictions regarding their use and are available for application on the general purposes of the PCC. Any funds designated for a particular purpose by the PCC are also unrestricted. The accounts include all transactions for which the PCC is responsible for in law. They do not include the accounts of Church groups that owe their main affiliation to another body nor those that are informal gatherings of church members.	Yes ✓	No ✓	N/a ✓
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2.4 ASSETS

Tangible fixed assets for use by charity	These are capitalised if they can be used for more than one year, and cost at least 1000	Yes ✓	No ✓	N/a ✓
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	They are valued at cost.	Yes ✓	No ✓	N/a ✓
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	The depreciation rates and methods used are disclosed in note 9.2.	Yes ✓	No ✓	N/a ✓
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	Goods or services provided as part of a charitable activity are measured at net realisable value based on the service potential provided by items of stock.	Yes ✓	No ✓	N/a ✓
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Debtors	Debtors (including trade debtors and loans receivable) are measured on initial recognition at settlement amount after any trade discounts or amount advanced by the charity. Subsequently, they are measured at the cash or other consideration expected to be received.	Yes ✓	No ✓	N/a ✓
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POLICIES ADOPTED ADDITIONAL TO OR DIFFERENT FROM THOSE ABOVE

2.4 Tangible Fixed Assets	Consecrated land beneficed property is excluded from the accounts by S.96(2)(a) of the Charities Act 2011. No value is placed on moveable church furnishings held be churchwardens on special trust for the PCC and which require a faculty for disposal since the PCC considers this to be inalienable property. All expenditure incurred during the year on consecrated or benefice buildings and moveable church furnishings, whether maintenance or improvement, is written off as incurred in the SOFA.
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Note 3

Analysis of income

		Unrestricted funds	Restricted income funds	Endowment funds	Total funds £	Prior year £
	Analysis					
Donations and legacies:	Donations and gifts	57,819	5,148	-	62,967	60,414
	Gift Aid	30,202	360	-	30,562	24,669
	Legacies	1,187	-	-	1,187	-
	General grants provided by government/other charities	-	-	-	-	-
	Membership subscriptions and sponsorships which are in substance donations	-	-	-	-	-
	Donated goods, facilities and services	-	-	-	-	-
	Other	-	-	-	-	-
	Total	89,208	5,508	-	94,716	85,083
Charitable activities:		-	-	-	-	-
	Grants	-	159,086	-	159,086	116,059
	Sales	14,633	10,246	-	24,880	32,286
	Fundraising	11,565	-	-	11,565	8,688
	Room Hire	-	1,005	-	1,005	-
	Other	-	-	-	-	-
	Total	26,198	170,337	-	196,535	157,033
Other trading activities:		-	-	-	-	-
		-	-	-	-	-
		-	-	-	-	-
	Other	-	-	-	-	-
	Total	-	-	-	-	-
Income from investments:	Interest income	86	204	-	290	125
	Dividend income	-	-	-	-	-
	Rental and leasing income	-	-	-	-	-
	Other	-	-	-	-	-
	Total	86	204	-	290	125
Separate material item of income:		-	-	-	-	-
		-	-	-	-	-
		-	-	-	-	-
		-	-	-	-	-
	Total	-	-	-	-	-
Other:	Conversion of endowment funds into income	-	-	-	-	-
	Gain on disposal of a tangible fixed asset held for charity's own use	-	-	-	-	-
	Gain on disposal of a programme related investment	-	-	-	-	-
	Royalties from the exploitation of intellectual property rights	-	-	-	-	-
	Other	-	-	-	-	-
	Total	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL INCOME		115,493	176,049	-	291,542	242,241

Other information:

All income in the prior year was unrestricted except for:
(please provide description and amounts)

Warm Spaces Grant from Sunderland Council - 5000, SCC Grant - 1028, SCC Holiday - 4388, RCF - 92480, Other space 4 restricted donations, match funding and fundraising - 31,518

Note 4

Analysis of receipts of government

	Description	This year £
SCC Products	Provision for Foodbank /Community Foodstore - restricted to product costs.	7,000
Digital Hub	Provision of an IT Hub - restricted to IT & Office equipment, ongoing IT support costs	9,261
SCC Grant 24	Provision for Foodbank /Community Foodstore - restricted to product costs.	32,000
Links for Life	Provide extended drop-in, brunch service and slowcooker courses - restricted to salaries, food and activity expenses	17,410
SCC Hol. 2	Holiday club provision - restricted to accommodation, product costs, expenses.	4,917
SCC Grant	Provision for Foodbank /Community Foodstore - restricted to product costs.	4,799
christmas lunch	Provision for Food for Christmas Day Lunch for people who are isolated, lonely and on the margins - restricted to food supply.	1,149
Other		-
	Total	76,535

	Description	Last year £
SCC Grant	Accommodation, product costs, expenses	1,028
SCC Holiday	Accommodation, product costs, expenses	4,388
Warm Spaces	Utilities costs	5,000
Other		-
	Total	10,416

Note 6

Analysis of expenditure

Analysis	This year				Last year			
	Unrestricted funds	Restricted income funds	Endowment funds	Total funds	Unrestricted funds	Restricted income funds	Endowment funds	Total funds
Expenditure on raising funds:				£				£
Incurred seeking donations	7,960	-	-	7,960	11,280	-	-	11,280
Investment administration costs		102	-	102	-	94	-	94
Total expenditure on raising funds	7,960	102	-	8,062	11,280	94	-	11,373

Expenditure on charitable activities:

Staff salaries	9,824	102,872	-	112,696	9,091	75,027	-	84,118
Sessional Workers	-	3,613	-	3,613	-	18,051	-	18,051
Accommodation	32,300	16,645	-	48,945	31,322	26,502	-	57,824
Product Costs	5,169	38,098		43,267		25,290		25,290
Expenses	6,867	4,536		11,402	7,154	4,416		11,570
Office Costs & Training		1,670		1,670		2,428		2,428
Equipment		8,582		8,582		1,975		1,975
Professional fees		9,097		9,097		9,446		9,446
Cost of sales	1,278			1,278	1,605			1,605
Parish Share	43,000			43,000	47,000			47,000
Total expenditure on charitable activities	98,438	185,112	-	283,550	96,171	163,134	-	259,305

TOTAL EXPENDITURE	106,398	185,214	-	291,612	107,451	163,228	-	270,679
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Other information:

Analysis of expenditure on charitable activities

Activity or programme	This year				Last year			
	Activities undertaken directly	Grant funding of activities	Support Costs	Total this year	Activities undertaken directly	Grant funding of activities	Support Costs	Total last year
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Space 4	22,229	162,883	-	185,112	46,481	116,728	-	163,209
Church	106,500		-	106,500	107,470	-	-	107,470
Other		-	-	-		-	-	-
Total	128,729	162,883	-	291,612	153,951	116,728	-	270,679

Section C Notes to the accounts

Note 9 Support Costs

Please complete this note if the charity has analysed its expenses using activity categories and has support costs.

This year

Support cost (examples)	Raising funds £	Space 4 £	Church £	Activity 3 £	Grand total £	Basis of allocation (Describe method)
Staff Salaries	-	99,332	10,118	-	109,449	Directly attributable costs
Expenses	-	425	1,368	-	1,793	Directly attributable costs
Office Costs		1,051	5,141		6,192	Directly attributable costs
Accommodation costs	-		19,179	-	19,179	Directly attributable costs
Professional Fees	-	9,097	9,081	-	18,178	Directly attributable costs
Parish Share	-	-	43,000	-	43,000	Directly attributable costs
Total	-	109,905	87,886	-	197,791	

Last year

Support cost (examples)	Raising funds £	Space 4 £	Church £	Activity 3 £	Grand total £	Basis of allocation (Describe method)
Staff Salaries	-	67,041	9,359	-	76,400	Directly attributable costs
Expenses	-	399	1,884	-	2,284	Directly attributable costs
Office Costs		1,509	5,599	-	7,108	Directly attributable costs
Accommodation costs			13,697	-	13,697	Directly attributable costs
Professional Fees	-	8,421	9,092	-	17,513	Directly attributable costs
Parish Share	-	-	47,000	-	47,000	Directly attributable costs
Total	-	77,371	86,630	-	164,002	

Please provide details of the accounting policy adopted for the apportionment of costs between activities and any estimation techniques used to calculate their apportionment.

No estimation. All support costs are directly attributable to the above activities

Section C**Notes to the accounts****Note 10** Details of certain items of expenditure**10.1 Fees for examination of the accounts**

Please provide details of the amount paid for any statutory external scrutiny of accounts and other services provided by your independent examiner. If nothing was paid please enter '0' in the appropriate box(es).

Independent examiner's fees

This year £	Last year £
1,590	-

Section C**Notes to the accounts****(cont)****Note 11** Paid employees

Please complete this note if the charity has any employees.

11.1 Staff Costs

Salaries and wages
Social security costs
Pension costs (defined contribution scheme)
Other employee benefits

Total staff costs

This year £	Last year £
104,309	68,952
1,923	10,282
6,464	4,885
-	-
112,696	84,118

Please provide the total amount paid to key management personnel (includes trustees and senior management) for their services to the charity. For specific amounts paid to trustees, see Note 28.

This year £	Last year £
44,291	45,712

11.2 Average head count in the year

The parts of the charity in which the employees work

	This year Number	Last year Number
Fundraising	-	-
Charitable Activities	10	6
Governance	-	-
Other	-	-
Total	10	6

Section C	Notes to the accounts	(cont)
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Note 12 **Defined contribution pension scheme or defined benefit scheme accounted for as a defined contribution scheme.**

12.1 Please complete this note if a defined contribution pension scheme is operated.

	This year	Last year
	£	£
Amount of contributions recognised in the SOFA as an expense	6,464	4,885

Please explain the basis for allocating the liability and expense of defined contribution pension scheme between activities and between restricted and unrestricted funds.

<p>6464 Contribution is made for staff who are conducting charitable activity within the space 4 project which is grant funded. So this is restricted funds.</p>	<p>4885 Contribution is made for staff who are conducting charitable activity within the space 4 project which is grant funded. So this is restricted funds.</p>
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Section C	Notes to the accounts	(cont)
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Note 18 **Stocks**

Please complete this note if the charity holds any stock items

18.1 Please state the carrying amount of stock and work in progress analysed between activities.

	Stock		Donated goods		Work in progress
	For distribution	For resale	For distribution	For resale	
	£	£	£	£	£
Charitable activities:					
<i>Opening</i>	-	1,432	-	-	-
<i>Added in period</i>	-	10,585	-	-	-
<i>Expensed in period</i>	-		-	-	-
<i>Impaired</i>	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Closing</i>	-	12,017	-	-	-
Other trading activities:					
<i>Opening</i>	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Added in period</i>	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Expensed in period</i>	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Impaired</i>	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Closing</i>	-	-	-	-	-
Total this year	-	12,017	-	-	-
Total previous year	-	1,432	-	-	-

Section C	Notes to the accounts	(cont)
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Note 19 Debtors and prepayments

Please complete this note if the charity has any debtors or prepayments.

19.1 Analysis of debtors

Prepayments and accrued income

Other debtors

Total

This year	Last year
£	£
6,808.5	2,388.2
416.7	-
7,225.1	2,388.2

Section C	Notes to the accounts	(cont)
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Note 20 Creditors and accruals

Please complete this note if the charity has any creditors or accruals.

20.1 Analysis of creditors

Accruals for grants payable

Bank loans and overdrafts

Trade creditors

Payments received on account for contracts or performance-related grants

Accruals and deferred income

Taxation and social security

Other creditors

Total

Amounts falling due within one year		Amounts falling due after more than one year	
This year	Last year	This year	Last year
£	£	£	£
-	-	-	-
-	-	-	-
2,797	4,288	-	-
-	-	-	-
-	-	-	-
-	-	-	-
-	-	-	-
2,797	4,288	-	-

Section C	Notes to the accounts	(cont)
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Note 24 Cash at bank and in hand

Short term cash investments (less than 3 months maturity date)

Short term deposits

Cash at bank and on hand

Other

Total

This year	Last year
£	£
-	-
-	-
126,755	143,739
-	-
126,755	143,739

Note 27 Charity funds**27.1 Details of material funds held and movements during the CURRENT reporting period**

Please give details of the movements of material individual funds in the reporting period together with a balancing figure for 'Other funds'. The 'Total

* Key: PE - permanent endowment funds; EE - expendible endowment funds; R - restricted income funds, including special trusts, of the charity; and

Fund names	Type PE, EE R or UR *	Purpose and Restrictions	Fund balances brought forward £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers £	Gains and losses £	Fund balances carried forward £
William Trust	R	Grant from Communities Foundation to support delivery of Toddler Group - restricted to salaries.	1,717	-	1,717	-	-	0
SCC Grant	R	Grant from Local Authority for Holiday Club provision - restricted to accommodation, product costs, expenses.	141	-	141	-	-	0
SCC Holiday	R	Grant from Local Authority for Holiday Club provision - restricted to accommodation, product costs, expenses.	1,939	-	1,939	-	-	0
SCC Products	R	Grant from Local Authority for provision for Foodbank /Community Foodstore - restricted to product costs.	-	7,000	7,000	-	-	-
Mackem	R	Grant from Community Foundation for after-school club for children and families restricted to salaries, food and activities expenses	-	4,675	2,425	-	-	2,250
Digital Hub	R	Grant from Local Authority for provision of an IT Hub - restricted to IT & Office equipment, ongoing IT support costs	-	9,261	7,806	-	-	1,454
SCC Grant 24	R	Grant from Local Authority for provision for Foodbank /Community Foodstore - restricted to product costs.	-	32,000	32,000	-	-	-
Links for Life	R	Grant from Local Authority to provide extended drop-in, brunch service and slowcooker courses - restricted to salaries, food and activity expenses	-	17,410	17,410	-	-	0
P&G	R	Grant from Community Foundation for provision for Foodbank /Community Foodstore - restricted to product costs.	-	5,000	4,974	-	-	26
Karbon Homes	R	Grant from local Housing Provider for provision for Foodbank /Community Foodstore - restricted to product costs.	-	1,000	-	-	-	1,000
Sir J. Knott	R	Grant from Charitable Trust Fund to provide core funding to support Space4 Project - restricted to salaries	-	10,000	5,020	-	-	4,980
SCC Hol. 2	R	Grant from Local Authority for holiday club provision - restricted to accommodation, product costs, expenses.	-	4,917	1,521	-	-	3,396
Transport	R	Provide transport to enable people to attend elderly care group - restricted to transport expenses	-	1,125	-	-	-	1,125
CTD Grant	R	Grant from Communities Together for Holiday Club provision - restricted to accommodation, product costs, expenses.	-	500	500	-	-	-
SCC Grant	R	Grant from Local Authority for provision for Foodbank /Community Foodstore - restricted to product costs.	-	4,799	-	-	-	4,799
cake and chat	R	Grant for support for elderly care group - restricted to food, expenses, salaries.	-	500	-	-	-	500

christmas lunch	R	Grant from Local Authority for provision for Food for Christmas Day Lunch for people who are isolated, lonely and on the margins - restricted to food supply.	-	1,149	- 224	-	-	925
Reaching Communities Fund	R	Grant from National Lottery Community Fund: Reaching Communities/Partnerships for provision of a Community Hub, Community Foodstore, Children's Project work and Community Organising - restricted to salaries, accommodation, product costs, expenses, equipment	29,539	53,420	- 82,959	-	-	-
Music Fund	R	Gift from Parishioner to support Childrens Choir - restricted to developing music with children	2,000	-	-	-	-	2,000
Legacy	R	Legacy from parishioner - restricted to purchasing specific item for church - planned for church tech	770			- 770		-
Donation for Bellringing	R	Gift from surviving members of Bellringing Group - restricted to supporting bellringing, music or missional activity.	5,308					5,308
Legacy	R	Legacy from parishioner - restricted to purchasing specific item for church - planned for IT Equipment	1,000			- 1,000		-
Legacy A Jackson	R	Legacy from parishioner - restricted to provision of new Rectors Board				1,500		1,500
Donation for church tech	R	Gift from parishioner - restricted to purchasing church tech				625		625
Donation for church building	R	Donation from 'Friends' Trust - restricted to spend on church reordering	4,651	360	- 102			4,909
Fundraising for Parish Share	R	Outstanding monies from "Close the gap" fundraising restricted to enabling church to meet parish share commitment.	12,000			- 3,600		8,400
Church deposit	R	Historical church projects related to church building.	-	181	-			181
Other donations and project contribution match funding or fundraising	R	Donations and project contribution match funding or fundraising. Restricted to use on Space 4 Project	13,230	22,753	- 19,476			16,507
All other funds	U	Unrestricted funds	70,976	115,493	- 106,398	3,245		83,316
Other funds	N/a	N/a						-
Total Funds			143,271	291,542	- 291,612	-	-	143,201

Section C

Notes to the accounts

(cont)

Note 27 Charity funds (cont)

27.2 Details of material funds held and movements during the PREVIOUS reporting period

Please give details of the movements of material individual funds in the reporting period together with a balancing figure for 'Other funds'. The 'Total funds' figure below should reconcile to 'Total funds' in the balance sheet.

* Key: PE - permanent endowment funds; EE - expendable endowment funds; R - restricted income funds, including special trusts, of the charity; and U - unrestricted funds

Fund names	Type PE, EE R or UR *	Purpose and Restrictions	Fund balances brought forward £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers £	Gains and losses £	Fund balances carried forward £
Gentoo (Empower)	R	Food for food bank	2,000	-	- 2,000	-	-	-
Warm Spaces Part 2	R	Utilities costs	-	5,000	- 5,000	-	-	-
William Trust	R	Salaries	4,261	-	- 2,544	-	-	1,717
SCC Grant	R	Accommodation, product costs, expenses	4,855	1,028	- 5,742	-	-	141
SCC Holiday	R	Accommodation, product costs, expenses		4,388	- 2,449	-	-	1,939
Reaching Communities Fund	R	All Space 4 operations	-	92,480	- 62,941	-	-	29,539
Music Fund	R	Childrens Choir	2,000	-	-	-	-	2,000
Legacy	R	New Rectors Board	770					770
Donation for Bellringing	R	Bellringing	5,308					5,308
Legacy	R	IT Equipment	1,000					1,000
Donation for church building	R	Reordering of church	4,651					4,651
Fundraising for Parish Share	R	Restricted "Close the gap" fundraising	12,000					12,000
contribution match funding or	R	Space 4 Project	64,347	31,518	- 82,636			13,229
All other funds	U	Unrestricted funds	70,517	107,827	- 107,367			70,977
Other funds	N/a	N/a	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Funds			171,709	242,241	- 270,679	-	-	143,270

Section C	Notes to the accounts	(cont)
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Note 27 **Charity funds (cont)**

27.3 Transfers between funds

This year

	Reason for transfer and where endowment is converted to income, legal power for its conversion	Amount
Between unrestricted and restricted funds	Restriction removed by doner and passed to unrestricted donation at project end	3245

Section C	Notes to the accounts	(cont)
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Note 28 **Transactions with trustees and related parties**

If the charity has any transactions with related parties (other than the trustee expenses explained in guidance notes) details of such transactions should be provided in this note. If there are no transactions to report, please enter "True" in the box or "False" if there are transactions to report.

28.1 Trustee remuneration and benefits

This year

None of the trustees have been paid any remuneration or received any other benefits from an employment with their charity or a related entity (True or False)

FALSE

In the period the charity has paid trustees remuneration and benefits. Please give the amount of, and legal authority for, any remuneration or other benefits paid to a trustee by the charity or any institution or company connected with it.

Name of trustee	Legal authority (eg order, governing document)	Amounts paid or benefit value				
		Remuneration	Pension contribution	Redundancy	Other	TOTAL
		£	£	£	£	£
Jade T Mason	Governing Document	11,462	625	-	-	12,087
Margaret Lee	Governing Document	705				705
George Peebles	Governing Document	2,240				2,240
David Turnbull	Governing Document	2,738				2,738

Please give details of why remuneration or other employment benefits were paid.

<p>Jade T Mason receives a salary for work provided to the charity completely distinct from her role as trustee, Margaret Lee receives payment for occasional services to the charity as a sessional worker, completely distinct from her role as trustee, David Turnbull and George Peebles receive payment for occasional services to the charity as a sessional worker, completely distinct from their role as trustee.</p>
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Last year

None of the trustees have been paid any remuneration or received any other benefits from an employment with their charity or a related entity (True or False)

FALSE

In the period the charity has paid trustees remuneration and benefits. Please give the amount of, and legal authority for, any remuneration or other benefits paid to a trustee by the charity or any institution or company connected with it.

Name of trustee	Legal authority (eg order, governing document)	Amounts paid or benefit value				
		Remuneration	Pension contribution	Redundancy	Other	TOTAL
		£	£		£	£

Jade T Mason	Governing Document	18,637	1,644			20,281
Margaret Lee	Governing Document	2,042				2,042
George Peebles	Governing Document	2,745				2,745
David Turnbull	Governing Document	3,013	-	-	-	3,013

Please give details of why remuneration or other employment benefits were paid.

Jade T Mason receives a salary for work provided to the charity completely distinct from her role as trustee,
Margaret Lee receives payment for occasional services to the charity as a sessional worker, completely distinct from her role as trustee,
David Turnbull and George Peebles receive payment for occasional services to the charity as a sessional worker, completely distinct from their role as trustee.

28.2 Trustees' expenses

If the charity has paid trustees expenses for fulfilling their duties, details of such transactions should be provided in this note. If there are no transactions to report, please enter "True" in the box below. If there are transactions to report, please enter "False".

No trustee expenses have been incurred (True or False)

FALSE

Type of expenses reimbursed	This year	Last year
	£	£
Crafts and activity consumables	638	1,756
Subsistence & Travel	1,508	1,639
Catering Expenses	185	136
Recruitment		95
Training	-	32
Licenses	187	91
Books	132	115
Music	89	137
Stationary and office supplies	76	154
Equipment	139	2,443
Repairs and Maintenance	20	63
Stock Costs for Food store	15,729	9,657
TOTAL	18,704	6,661

Please provide the number of trustees reimbursed for expenses or who had expenses paid by the charity

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7

**6.2 ST MICHAEL AND ALL ANGELS
HOUGHTON LE SPRING: PAROCHIAL CHURCH
COUNCIL ANNUAL STATEMENT
OF ACCOUNTS**

1 JANUARY – 31 DECEMBER 2024

REGISTERED CHARITY NO 1135095

PCC Treasurer
Mrs Sue Bradley

External Examiner
TTR Barnes
Chartered Accountants

St Michael & All Angels Church
Church Street
Houghton le Spring
DH4 4DN

St Michael and All Angels, Houghton le Spring
Treasurer's Annual Report for Year 1 January – 31 December 2024

Overall Bank Balance

The end of year Overall PCC and Next 900 Bank Accounts Balance at 31 December 2024 breakdown and comparison to previous years is detailed below:-

	December 2022	December 2023	December 2024
PCC - Unrestricted	£31,869.61	£23,995.19	£31,893.70
PCC – Restricted	£21,078.00	£21,078.00	£17,833.00
TOTAL	£52,947.61	£45,073.19	£49,726.70
Next 900 Account	£ 4,324.61	£4,650.61	£4,908.61
Overall Total	£57,272.22	£49,723.80	£54,635.31
CBF Legacies	£ 166.27	£171.60	£180.70

Assets

The PCC hold a log of all material assets and this report covers only the monetary assets.

Creditor and Debtors

Debtors as at 31 December 2024 - £478

Creditors as at 31 December 2024 - £195.75

Receipts and Payments for 2024 in comparison to previous years.

	December 2022	December 2023	December 2024
Receipts	£118,057	£97,299	£107,857
Payments	£104,903	£105,173	£103,204

An overview breakdown of some of the main headings of Receipts and Payments as a comparison to previous two years is detailed below:-

Receipts	December 2022	December 2023	December 2024
Planned Giving	£44,719	£43,458	£45,889
Gift Aid Recovered	£11,578	£11,570	£13,089
Collections	£10,228	£9,296	£ 9,644
Donations	£ 9,261	£4,954	£10,031
Other Giving	£ 534	£ 470	£ 2,829
Parish Magazine Sales	£ 1,783	£1,713	£ 1,661
Parish Magazine Adverts	£ 1,013	£ 810	£ 518
PCC Fees	£ 9,569	£7,074	£ 5,405
Fundraising	£ 5,810	£5,535	£10,698
Transfer from Restricted	£ 0	£ 0	£ 5,370

Our Planned Giving income in 2024 increased by £2,431. This is as a result of the successful Stewardship Campaign in September & October 2024:-.

Regular Planned Givers	2022	2023	2024
Parish Giving Scheme	40	37	36
Standing Order	30	27	26
Stewardship Envelope	26	25	25
Total Regular Givers	96	89	87

Collections from our Church Services, Funerals, Weddings, Baptisms and Other Events has remained stable with a small increase of £348 from previous year

Donations – In addition to giving through Church Boxes, one-off donations remembering loved ones and during the Autumn Stewardship campaign, together with donations from The Gilpin Singers contributed to the increase of £7435 from the previous year.

Parish Magazine Sales have been reasonably consistent over the last year, with a small reduction in income of £52. Our pricing structure for 2024 remained at (£6 per annum for an email version and £1 per copy for the printed version or £10 instead of £12 for a full year). Thank you to all involved in the production of the Magazine especially Editor Malcolm Foster, Philippa Elsey and the magazine distributors.

Parish Magazine Advertising, has reduced steadily over the last few years and has again reduced in 2024 by £292. This an area that will require review during 2025.

PCC Fees – 22 Funerals (18 Church, 4 Crematorium/Burial Only) 3 Burial of Ashes, 1 Memorial Service and 1 Wedding took place in 2024. There was a significant decrease in the number of Funerals and Weddings as compared to 2023 - (34 Funerals – 26 Church, 8 Crematorium) and also in Weddings 5 held in 2023.

Fundraising got underway in January with the Parish Party, Coffee Mornings were held in March and June, also in June we enjoyed an Italian themed evening.

Over the Summer there was a concert by the Gilpin Singers in July and the annual Summer Concert in August.

At the beginning of October saw the start of two weeks of Houghton Feast celebrations a Feast Saturday coffee morning and lunches, Feast Sunday Civic Service followed by Community Lunch. Concerts held in church by Houghton Brass Band and Gilpin Singers and a Ceilidh evening ended a very successful Houghton Feast. At the end of November, we held the annual Christmas Fayre.

Thank you to all involved in arranging and making these events happen and to those who contributed and participated. The Bonus Ball raised £1327 during 2024 and continues to run smoothly. Thank you to Brian Scott for organising and to all who take part.

Payments	December 2022	December 2023	December 2024
Parish Share	£48,000	£47,000	£43,000
Clergy & Staffing	£ 9,448	£11,637	£12,071
Repairs & Redecoration	£ 1,086	£1,593	£ 2,575
Church Running	£21,866	£27,452	£31,700
Parish Magazine Costs	£ 1,020	£1,020	£ 1,020
Costs of Generating Funds	£18,063	£11,280	£ 7,960
Transfer to Restricted	£ 6,308	£ 0	£ 2,215

We paid £43,000 for our Parish Share in 2024, which met our pledge for the year.

Clergy and Staffing costs are higher this year due to increase in Salary and Retained payments in line with the Real Living wage.

Repairs and Redecoration costs –

Church Running – includes Utilities, Insurance, Maintenance and Servicing, Organ/Choir, Photocopying, Technology, Upkeep of Services and HRDept Services. Utility contracts saw considerable price increases in 2024 together with other annual increases resulted in increased spending of £4,248

Costs of generating Funds – covers Fees paid out for Funerals, Weddings, Burial of Ashes and costs of activities and events in Church.

Restricted Budget Breakdown

Balance carried forward from 2023

Organ / Music Fund	£ 2,000
Legacy	£ 770
Parish Share Contingency	£ 12,000
Bellringing Donation	£ 5,308
Legacy	£ 1,000
Income Transfer 2024	£ 2,125
Payment Transfer 2024	£ 5,370
Total as at 31 Dec 2024	£ 17,833

Next 900 Account

Balance carried forward from 2023	£4,650.61
Income in 2024	£ 360.00
Charges in 2024	£ -102.00
Total Balance	£4,908.61

(Please see attached detailed Accruals Accounts for Year ended 31 December 2024)

End of Year Summary

Overall, for the year we ended with an excess of receipts over payments of £4,654 plus £3,245 (transfer to Unrestricted) totalling £7,899. We have been able to achieve reasonable Unrestricted Reserves of £31,894 to start 2025. We will continue to carefully manage budgets and review at monthly PCC meetings.

We had a very successful Stewardship campaign with both regular givers increasing their donation and a number of generous one-off donations. However, we must highlight that overall at the end of 2024 the number of regular givers has decreased.

Our Guided Pledge from the Diocese for 2025 is £45,150. At September 2024 PCC we agreed to pay a Parish Share of £30,000 in 2025. The PCC also agreed to designate £1,000 per month towards meeting the full Parish Share amount. The PCC will review on a quarterly basis to determine if the extra designated amount should be paid.

In 2024, in addition to regular maintenance and servicing, repairs were carried out to the Boiler / Heating controls. The Projector was replaced and the screen mechanism repaired scaffolding was required to undertake this work. Thank you to Tim Cullingworth for carrying out this work.

A survey undertaken in November 2023 identified work required on our Stained Glass Windows. An estimate for the most urgent work (Phase 1) has been received. Work was due to be carried out in the Autumn of 2024, however this has now been rescheduled for March 2025. The Friends of Houghton Church have very kindly agreed to pay for this work. Further work on the Windows (Phase 2) will need to be scheduled over the next few years. Costings for this work will be undertaken when a timetable is agreed. Funding sources for Phase 2 to be investigated.

The Quinquennial survey was undertaken in October / November 2024 by the Church Architect, Michael Atkinson. The report is due to be received in early 2025. One particular problem regarding which we are awaiting advice from the Survey is the plaster flaking from the walls and dampness, particularly in the North Transept.

Thank you to all for your help, support and generosity throughout the year.

Thank you to TTR Barnes Chartered Accountants, for Examining our Accounts for 2024.

Sue Bradley
PCC Treasurer

St Michael & All Angels Houghton-le-Spring
Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December
Statement of Financial Activities

2024

	Note	Unrestricted Fund	Unrestricted Designated Fund	Restricted Funds	Endowment Funds	Total Funds 2024	Total Funds 2023
		£	£	£	£	£	£
Receipts							
Voluntary receipts:							
Planned giving		45,889	-	360	-	46,249	43,886
Collections		9,644	-	-	-	9,644	9,296
Gift Aid recovered		13,089	-	-	-	13,089	11,570
All other giving/voluntary	2	12,860	-	-	-	12,860	5,425
		81,482	-	360	-	81,842	70,177
Activities for generating funds	3	11,216	-	-	-	11,216	6,345
Investment income	4	86	-	-	-	86	125
Church activities:							
Income from trading	5	2,424	-	-	-	2,424	3,341
Asset sales	6	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other receipts	7	12,649	-	-	-	12,649	17,739
		15,073	-	-	-	15,073	21,080
Total receipts		107,857	-	360	-	108,217	97,727
Payments							
Church activities:							
Parish share		43,000	-	-	-	43,000	47,000
Clergy and staffing costs	8	12,071	-	-	-	12,071	11,637
Church running expenses	9	31,700	-	-	-	31,700	27,452
Hall running costs	10	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mission giving and donations	11	4,620	-	-	-	4,620	4,608
Costs of trading	12	1,278	-	-	-	1,278	1,605
Repairs and redecorations	13	2,575	-	-	-	2,575	1,593
Asset purchases	14	-	-	-	-	-	-
		95,243	-	-	-	95,243	93,895
Cost of generating funds	15	7,960	-	102	-	8,062	11,382
Governance costs	16	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other Outgoing Resources costs	16	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total payments		103,204	-	102	-	103,306	105,277
Excess of receipts over payments		4,654	-	258	-	4,912	(7,550)
Transfers between funds		3,245	-	(1,475)	-	1,770	
		7,899	-	(1,217)	-	6,682	(7,550)
Sale/(purchase) of investments		-	-	-	-	-	
Cash at bank and in hand at 1 Jan		23,995	-	25,729	-	49,724	57,272
Cash at bank and in hand at 31 Dec		31,894	-	24,512	-	56,405	49,724

St Michael & All Angels Houghton-le-Spring
Financial Statements for the year ending 31st December 2024
Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the year

	Note	Unrestricted Funds	Unrestricted Designated Fund	Restricted Funds	Endowment Funds	Total Funds 2024	Total Funds 2023
		£	£	£	£	£	£
Cash funds							
Bank current account		31,894	-	22,742	-	54,635	43,693
CBF deposit fund				181		181	172
						-	-
						-	-
						-	-
Other cash funds						-	-
		31,894		22,922	-	54,816	43,865
Other monetary assets						-	
Income tax recoverable						-	
						-	
		-	-	-	-	-	-
Investment assets							
Investment Fund Shares at market value						-	
						-	
						-	
						-	
		-	-	-	-	-	-
Assets retained for Church use						-	
						-	
						-	
						-	
						-	
		-	-	-	-	-	-
Liabilities						-	
						-	
						-	
						-	
		-	-	-	-	-	-

Further Analysis of Income and Expenditure

	Note	Unrestricted Fund	Unrestricted Designated Fund	Restricted Funds	Endowment Funds	Total Funds 2024	Total Funds 2023
		£	£	£	£	£	£
Receipts							
All other giving/voluntary receipts:	2						
Other regular gifts		1,641	-	-	-	1,641	1,038
Donations, appeals, etc		10,031	-	-	-	10,031	4,386
Legacies		1,187	-	-	-	1,187	-
Recurring grants		-	-	-	-	-	-
Non-recurring one-off grants		-	-	-	-	-	-
Other funds generated		-	-	-	-	-	-
		12,860	-	-	-	12,860	5,424
Activities for generating funds:	3						
Bookstall sales - fund raising		-	-	-	-	-	-
Magazine income - advertising		518	-	-	-	518	810
Fundraising Activities & Events		10,698	-	-	-	10,698	5,535
		11,216	-	-	-	11,216	6,345
Investment Income:	4						
Dividends		-	-	-	-	-	-
Trust fund interest		-	-	-	-	-	-
Bank and building society interest		86	-	-	-	86	125
Rent from lands or buildings		-	-	-	-	-	-
Rent from Masts and other property		-	-	-	-	-	-
		86	-	-	-	86	125
Income from Trading:	5						
Bookstall sales - trading		-	-	-	-	-	-
Church hall lettings - trading		-	-	-	-	-	-
Parish magazine sales		1,661	-	-	-	1,661	1,713
Use of photocopier		-	-	-	-	-	-
Other income		763	-	-	-	763	1,627
		2,424	-	-	-	2,424	3,340
Asset sales:	6						
Sales of fixed assets		-	-	-	-	-	-
Other receipts:	7						
PCC Fees for weddings and funerals		5,405	-	-	-	5,405	7,074
Assigned Fees for weddings and funerals		7,244	-	-	-	7,244	10,665
Insurance claims		-	-	-	-	-	-
Surplus - sales of fixed assets		-	-	-	-	-	-
Sundry income for Mission		-	-	-	-	-	-
Sundry income		-	-	-	-	-	-
		12,649	-	-	-	12,649	17,739

Payments**Church activities:**

Missionary giving and donations	11	4,620	-	-	-	4,620	4,608
Clergy and Staffing costs	8	12,071	-	-	-	12,071	11,637
Church running costs	9	18,032	-	-	-	18,032	18,682
Church utility costs	9	13,667	-	-	-	13,667	8,770
Hall running costs	10	-	-	-	-	-	-
Costs of trading	12	1,278	-	-	-	1,278	1,605
		49,668	-	-	-	49,668	45,301

Major repairs and building works: 13

Church major repairs		2,575	-	-	-	2,575	1,593
Hall + major repairs		-	-	-	-	-	-
New building costs		-	-	-	-	-	-
		2,575	-	-	-	2,575	1,593

Asset purchases: 14

Purchase of fixed assets		-	-	-	-	-	-
--------------------------	--	---	---	---	---	---	---

Cost of generating voluntary income: 15

Costs of Church Activities & Events		741	-	-	-	741	499
Fees paid out for weddings and other services		6,606	-	-	-	6,606	10,120
Investment management costs		613	-	102	-	715	762
Bookstall costs		-	-	-	-	-	-
		7,960	-	102	-	8,062	11,382

Governance costs: 16

Examination/audit fee		-	-	-	-	-	-
		-	-	-	-	-	-

Other Outgoing Resources:

Other Outgoing Resources:		-	-	-	-	-	-
		-	-	-	-	-	-

John Barron
S. Bradley

JOHN BARRON 17/4/25
Susan Bradley 17/04/2025.

Public benefit

The members have had regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on their legal duty on public benefit and are satisfied that the charitable company delivers public benefit in terms of the services it provides within the community, and due regard is paid to the guidance on public benefit when reviewing the aims and objectives of the Church and Space 4 community project. aims and objectives and when deciding what new projects the charitable company should undertake.

Reserves Policy

To maintain general/unrestricted reserves at a level which will cover 3 months operational costs

Risk management

The members have a duty to identify and review the risks to which the Church is exposed and to ensure appropriate controls are in place to provide reasonable assurance against fraud and error. The Standing Committee has conducted its own review of the major risks to which the church is exposed and systems have been established to minimise those risks. External risks relate to the generation of future income and funding and some grant funding has been secured with NLCF and Sunderland City Council.

Internal risks are minimised by the implementation of procedures for authorisation of all transactions and events.

**6.3 ST MICHAEL AND ALL ANGELS
HOUGHTON LE SPRING: SPACE4
HOUGHTON LE SPRING - ANNUAL STATEMENT
OF ACCOUNTS**

1 JANUARY – 31 DECEMBER 2024

REGISTERED CHARITY NO 1135095

**Accounts Prepared by
Social Enterprise Acumen**

**External Examiner
TTR Barnes
Chartered Accountants**

**Space4 Community Project
76 Newbottle Street
Houghton le Spring
DH4 4GB**

Space4 – Statement of Accounts as at 31 December 2024

	Charity Name		No (if any)		
	Space 4				
	Statement of Financial Activities				
	For the period from	Period start date	To	Period end date	
		01/01/2024		31/12/2024	
Section A Receipts and payments					
	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds	Total funds	Last year
	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £
A1 Receipts					
Voluntary Income	8,076	164,234		172,309	132,435
Income from Trading and Activities		11,251		11,251	11,161
Investment Income		23		23	
Other				-	
Sub total (Gross income for AR)	8,076	175,508	-	183,584	143,596
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).					
Asset Sales	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	8,076	175,508	-	183,584	143,596
A3 Payments					
Cost of Generating Income				-	
Charitable activities	5,169	164,935		170,104	142,790
Facilities Costs		18,745		18,745	20,435
Other				-	
Sub total	5,169	183,680	-	188,849	163,225
A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)					
Asset purchases	-	-	-	-	
	-	-	-	-	
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total payments	5,169	183,680	-	188,849	163,225
Net of receipts/(payments)	2,907	- 8,172	-	- 5,266	- 19,628
A5 Transfers between funds			-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	48,234	46,566	-	94,800	114,429
Cash funds this year end	51,140	38,394	-	89,535	94,801

Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period				
Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B1 Cash funds	Bank Account 33254355	51,139	20,456	-
	PayPal Statement		311	-
	PettyCash		32	-
	Total cash funds	51,139	20,799	-
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	Agreement Error	Agreement Error	OK
		Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B2 Other monetary assets	Debitors	-	6,330	-
	Stock	-	12,017	-
	Prepayment	-	417	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
B3 Investment assets	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
B5 Liabilities	Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
	Creditors	Restricted	2,601	
			-	
			-	
			-	
Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees		Signature	Print Name	Date of approval
		S Bradley	S Bradley	17/04/2025
		John Burn	John Burn	17/04/2025

Space4: Financial Commentary - 31 December 2024

Our Space 4 project has again had a successful year, providing much needed support to those more vulnerable in our community, but also providing a welcome venue for community gatherings and activities, and encouraging much needed social interaction. Funding has been secured for the Community Foodstore which provides welcome relief to many families. Funding and collaborative support has also been provided to create a Digital Hub at the center, providing internet connectivity to those who may have limited access at home.

In the year we achieved a deficit of £5,266 and at the end of the year restricted reserves were £38,394 and unrestricted reserves were £51,140.

Overall Receipts of £183,584 compared to £143,596 last year.

1. A total of £175,508 of receipts was restricted and £8,076 unrestricted.
2. Grant funding of £171,508 was received which was made up of:
 - a. £53,420 - National Lottery Community Fund: Reaching Communities/Partnerships
 - b. £118,088 - Grants Other
3. Donations of £5997.93 were received with a further £4,200 coming from our PCC main funds, Gift Aid produced income of £1374.
4. Sales of produce generated income of £11783.12, an additional £0 from building lettings and a further £349.08 was raised through fundraising.

Overall Payments of £188,849 compared to £163,225 last year.

1. Staff salaries totaled £94567.82 with sessional worker fees totaling £3721.10.
2. Building rents were £13369.64 with £4549.13 costs for utilities and overheads.
3. Product costs for food distributed were £51667.74.
4. A total of £0 was spent on developing our buildings and £8581.56 on equipment.
5. Staff and volunteer expenses were £4535.70 with a further £1670.44 spent on office costs and training.
6. Professional fees of £9097.16 were spent for bookkeeping, accountancy, payroll, HR and marketing.

Our balance at the beginning of the year was £94,801 and at the end of the year £89,535: (£38,394 restricted, £51,140 unrestricted).

7. Report on Church buildings and fabric

The 2019 Quinquennial Survey revealed some minor works that required action. These were all done during 2020 and 2021. Another requirement was a survey and report upon the Church Windows. We commissioned Iona Glass to carry out a survey and that was done in 2023. The report was received in early 2024. Various matters were highlighted. After receiving approval for funding from the friends of Houghton Church, Iona Glass were instructed to start work upon the urgent issues. During this time they had been on site to carry out minor repairs. Work is scheduled to begin in 2025.

These are the works done in 2024:

In February both the fire alarm and the burglar alarm were serviced; the burglar alarm was serviced by our new contractor as part of the regular maintenance.

After receiving a quotation in May from an approved roofing company, they attended in June to re-affix the substitute lead flashing that had been damaged by thieves. Whilst upon site the gutters were cleared and an inspection of the roofs and guttering was carried out.

In July the Church Clock was serviced, and found to be in good order. This is paid for by Sunderland Council.

During the summer months the Church heating is turned off to save money and in September the boilers were serviced as part of their annual maintenance by the original installers. It was noted that the Church heating was not working. The company arranged to send one of their heating engineers to investigate. It was discovered that the two circuit boards associated with the Heritage Centre and Mezzanine room underfloor heating had burned out. The engineers declared that these boards were now obsolete but they would investigate further and come back to me [they have not done so].

Having heard nothing from them, I contacted the heating engineer who had designed the heating circuits for the reordering. He agreed to come out and examine the problem. Having been shown the burned-out circuit boards, he could offer no solution to the underfloor heating in those areas, but asked to go into the “boiler house” and examine the control panel. Once the panel door had been opened, he found a switch that had tripped. Resetting that switch restored the Church heating. He also replaced some parts of the control panel.

In November Michael Atkinson, our new Church Architect, came to begin the Quinquennial [five yearly] Survey. As part of the survey the tower and all the roofs are examined. Our Church neighbour, Alex Scullion, had bought a new drone and wanted to see how well it worked. He offered to survey the Church roofs and tower stonework. He gave me a computer memory stick with this information on it. We plugged it into a laptop computer and the Architect, David Turnbull and myself watched the drone flight. The Architect took the memory stick away, but I have it saved the information on my computer. The Architect returned later and he and David went up the tower and carried out a physical inspection.

We await the Quinquennial Survey which is expected in January 2025.

Alastair Bradley
Church Warden

8. Report on Proceedings of the Deanery Synod

There have been four Deanery Synod meetings since the last Annual Parochial Church Meeting.

The first was held on the 28th May 2024 at Holy Trinity Church, Usworth and chaired by Rev. John Lintern, Area Dean. The Rev. Paul Childs, Parish Giving Advisor, gave a presentation on behalf of the Generous Giving Team. He stated that when thinking about giving, the acronym MINT is useful:

- 1 Mechanism- making it easy to give by contactless, online and QR code.
- 2 Impact- Tell stories linking our giving to the impact their giving would have.
- 3 Need- Explain the need not just for the Church but the community
- 4 Trust- Explain how the money will be spent and spent wisely.

Elections to the Diocesan Synod - Four places in the House of Clergy and five in the House of Laity were available. Nominations to be returned to Andrew Cresswell, Deanery Returning Officer, by 4th. June 2024. The Rev. Catherine Walton and Rev. Nick Barr-Hamilton were elected to the House of Clergy. Lucy Barr-Hamilton, Alex Nelson, Simon Wilkinson and Maureen Boettcher were elected to the House of Laity.

It was reported that interviews would be held for the vacant incumbent post at St. John's Birtley. Meetings were ongoing regarding the future ministry at St. Matthew's, Newbottle.

Vacancy of See - Following consultations the Crown Nominations Committee (CNC) would formulate a role description in June/July 2024 with an anticipated appointment in January 2025.

The second Deanery Synod meeting was held at St. Andrew's Church Chiltern Moor on the 17th. July 2024 and Chaired by the Area Dean, Rev. John Lintern.

Beth Miller, Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor spoke about training and the various ways to access it. There are three training levels: Basic (all Volunteers), Foundation (PCC members, children and youth helpers) and Leadership (those with a licence, churchwardens, those ordained and Authorised Pastoral Assistants [APA's]). Details on the diocesan website. DBS checks - parishes should have access to Access Personal Checking Services (APCS) who do checks for the diocese.

Vacancies - An interview was undertaken for the vacant post for St. John The Evangelist church at Birtley (with Lamesley) but no appointment was made. The Rev. Teresa Walton was appointed to the vacant post at Holy Trinity, Washington.

The third Synod meeting was held at Holy Trinity Church, Pelton on the 6th November 2024 and Chaired by the Rev. John Lintern.

All new building work at St. George's, Fatfield, was reported as complete. The Rev. John welcomed the Rev. Teresa Walton, the new incumbent at Holy Trinity, Washington, and noted the recent licensing of the Rev. Gav. Rushton as vicar at Oxclose church.

Current Vacancies and appointments - There is to be a joint appointment at St. John The Evangelist, Birtley and St. Andrew's, Lamesley. Their respective PCC's to complete their profiles.

St. John The Evangelist to move into the Gateshead West Deanery. The vacancy will be re-advertised after Christmas.

At St. Matthew's, Newbottle, things are moving in terms of new relationships with other churches and services are well covered. Catherine Britcliffe to be licensed as Associate Priest, St. Andrew's, Chilton Moor on the 11th November 2024 and Hilary Avent has been licensed as Associate Priest at St. Michael and All Angels, Easington Lane, St. Nicholas Parish Centre, Hetton-le-Hole and Eppleton.

Parishes were asked to report on parish positives and challenges. Even though challenges seemed overwhelming with smaller congregations since covid, less funerals and weddings all resulting in lower income, there were positives. The Rev. Julie Wing, Rector at Holy Trinity and St. Michael's, Usworth stated that the congregation had steadily grown and have announced a new project to bring a picture of the Madonna and Child in Howarth to Sulgrave.

Our Rector gave an upbeat report on our Space 4 project and all the community projects emanating from the projects. He stated that there was a 6 week season of invitation from September to October where we invited people from the wider community to come to Church starting with Back to Church Sunday In September going through to Harvest Festival in October.

John Estall reported on Christ Church, Lumley, St. Andrew's, Chiltern Moor, St. Cuthbert's East Rainton and St. Mary's West Rainton. New people are joining all four congregations although not enough to compensate for those leaving. The new Blue Christmas service and Open the Book are going well. A new Youth group has inspired members to ask difficult questions showing conviction that people are hungry to know God.

St. Michael and All Angels, Hetton Lyons - Rev. Sarah Quinn, Curate, gave a report. Services are growing, especially amongst children. A new all age service for Harvest was well attended and incorporated learning into services i.e. Why do we do this the way we do? Collects, intercessions etc..

Holy Trinity Church, Pelton/West Pelton - Rev. John Lintern, reported that they have Open the Book in four schools twice each half term and are doing assemblies, teaching through quizzes and games. Starting up prayer stations in schools.

The fourth Synod meeting took place at St. Michael's, Sulgrave. The meeting was chaired by the Rev. John Lintern, Area Dean. A talk was given by Claire Estall and colleagues from Communities Together Durham. Members of Synod also took part in a participatory exercise about benefits. John Lintern gave an update of the current situation regarding the appointment of the new Bishop of Durham. The next short listing will take place on the 3rd September with interviews set for the 9th and 10th December.

Deanery Synod representatives

David Hann, Sue Elsey, Dian Scott

9. Safeguarding Report

We continue to operate to the values and principles set out in the Parish Safeguarding Policy which was readopted by the PCC in February 2025. DBS checks are up to date for salaried staff and church officers, and a programme of renewal is in place for all existing volunteers and staff. The safeguarding training programme for PCC members, community outreach programmes and church activities continues. Training undertaken is recorded and monitored.

Using the online Safeguarding Dashboard, the Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) has undertaken a review of safeguarding practices and procedures in line with the parish safeguarding policy, and areas for development are identified in the Dashboard safeguarding action plan.

Several safeguarding issues / incidents have been reported in the last year. In line with the parish safeguarding policy, all issues are recorded by appropriate officers and are reviewed and monitored accordingly by the Church and the Diocese. Where appropriate, actions are put in place and these are reviewed and regularly updated in the monthly safeguarding meetings held between the Rector, PSO and Community Project Manager.

Ali Young,
Parish Safeguarding Office

10. REPORTS ON OUR ACTIVITY IN THE YEAR ENDING 31st DEC 2024

10.1 REPORTS FOR CHURCH GROUPS

Churchwardens' Report

“Churchwardens are the Bishop’s lay officers, responsible directly to him/her for the life and work of the church in the parish. Their office is therefore both a privilege and a responsibility.”

This past year as usual has been a busy year! It felt that no sooner had we enjoyed the Parish Party than Lent was upon us followed by Easter. As usual “we” are a very busy Church with a coffee morning in March, which leads us into Palm Sunday and Holy Week.

After Easter, we have Church open days, and once again a big thank you goes to all our volunteers who help keep the building open and welcome visitors during these times!

As an aside I have looked at what other Churches reported and some were welcoming congregations back after lockdown, showing we were leading the field, and others were reporting storm damage, and thankfully we were unaffected.

As our year rolls on, there was the “Friends” week, where other events were enjoyed in Church, but there will be a full report elsewhere.

In June the roofers carried out minor repairs (one where our substitute lead flashing had been ripped off), re-attached other flashing and cleared some gutters, coming back the next day with longer ladders to finish the job! Thankfully this work did NOT require a Faculty from the Diocesan Secretary!

We marked the King’s Birthday, and then held a coffee morning on the 22nd June. Later that month we held an “Italian” evening, with entertainment provided by C-Saw group lead by Stuart Clappison, with food produced by the culinary skills of Messrs. Hardy and Turnbull and a pleasant evening was enjoyed by all.

July and August are traditionally quiet times socially in our Church when we enjoy holidays.

We resumed activities in September, when Heritage open day occurs. Sadly over the many years this has run, its appeal has declined, although there were more visitors than usual.

Then in October we enjoy the whirlwind of Houghton Feast! We had a coffee morning with stalls on Saturday, the first full day, and on Sunday we hosted the Civic Service followed by the Civic Lunch and Community Hymns in the evening. During the week there was a concert by Houghton Brass on Thursday, a Ceilidh with licensed bar on Friday, and a concert by the Gilpin Singers on Saturday. On Sunday, we resumed our usual pattern of worship.

During the summer the heating in Church was not working. At first it was thought that mice had gnawed through a cable, but after consulting heating engineers who discovered burned out circuit boards, it was established that the fault was a micro switch which had tripped in the main panel in the "Boiler Room". This was discovered and rectified by the heating engineer who had originally designed the system. So heat was gradually reintroduced into Church.

In November, as usual, we held our Fireworks display, with Space4 catering in the Kepier Hall. The whole event went with a "BANG" and was financially successful. Then bringing us down to earth we held our Remembrance Day service in Church assisted by Houghton Brass. The weather stayed dry and a large crowd marked the occasion in The Broadway.

Next came our very successful Christmas Fayre, with coffee and cakes, stalls and a visit from Santa!! When everything was tidied away our Christmas tree was put up, welcoming visitors during Advent. There were many Carol services with local schools and uniformed organisations held during this time.

Leading up to Christmas we had our Children's Nativity, then our Carol Concert, followed by Midnight Mass, and Eucharist the next day at 10 o'clock!

Thank You's

To the dedicated people who act as sides people throughout the year, turning up on time and welcoming worshippers with a smile and helping the smooth running of our services. We always need more people to act in this important role. If you feel you can help, please let any of the wardens know and we'll tell you what the job entails and fit you in with an experienced sides person.

We all owe a great deal of appreciation to everyone who has contributed to the events of the past year and our report wouldn't be complete without a list of thanks: George Peebles our Director of Music, Andy Slater, our quiet and much appreciated deputy organist, and Stuart Clappison who provides music on the guitar. To Angela Slater our PCC Secretary, much of whose excellent work goes unseen, as does that of our Treasurer, Sue Bradley. To Philippa Elsey, who runs our Church Office and performs many other tasks to keep things running smoothly. To David Turnbull and Paul Armour, our Verger and Assistant Verger. To the excellent teams of willing helpers who keep the church clean, arrange the flowers and provide music for our services, the Next 900 team, those providing coffee and refreshments week by week, the team working with the Creche and Young Church, the Welcomers, Lay Readers, Pastoral Assistants, the stalwarts of our Church Choir...the list goes on. Apologies if we've missed some...but to all, many thanks.

Sincerely we could not have managed without you. Thank you.

Rita, Alastair, Simon and Brian

Light

The bereavement group 'Light' continues to meet on the 1st Tuesday of every month at 1.15 in Space4. Our numbers have held well with some long-term clients and some newly bereaved clients. We typically have 6-8 members, sometimes more sometimes less, often limited by childminding duties.

The session may be guided by story or may just be free discussion, depending on recent events eg Christmas, summer holidays, first anniversaries. Those who have attended for years pass on their wisdom and experience whilst the newly bereaved find reassurance that while their grief will always be, they will learn to live life anew. Life does go on even though it can never be the same. While we meet because of great sadness, our sessions always find laughter with newcomers commenting how their mood feels lighter for having attended.

I am grateful for the support from Judith Howes and Anne Clappison - there are always two of us at each session.

Margaret Lee

Liturgical Choir Report

The choir has had a good year supporting regular and special services throughout the year, including the Houghton Feast Civic Service. Our special Lenten service on Passion Sunday was well supported by our congregation and also by St Matthew's, Newbottle and St Michael & All Angels, Easington Lane. Our Advent and Christmas Carol Services were both very special.

Our Late Summer Concert which featured the liturgical choir, the Gilpin Singers and other soloists was excellent again this year. We are grateful for the support of Graham Brown, a gifted musician who accompanied the choirs and soloists. We had wonderfully talented singers and musicians taking part.

Our choir numbers are steady. I would like to thank the choir for their continued commitment and support. We are one of the few churches maintaining a choir. We are always looking and hoping for new members.

I would like to say a thank you to Rector John for his support and encouragement to maintain our great music tradition at St Michael's.

Finally, I would like to thank our other musicians here at St Michael's who help with the music: Andy and Stuart. Also, many thanks to Nikki for her support and help with rehearsing and conducting the choir.

George Peebles, Director of Music

Young Church

We are continuing to run sessions alongside the main eucharist at 10am in the meeting room which allows us to share our activities with the congregation at the end of the service. We still have a regular group of 4 or 5 children taking part each Sunday.

Currently, we follow the Gospel stories in church planning from Sermons 4 kids and other useful resources that support the children's faith journey each week. Alongside this, each week worksheets, word searches and colouring materials are available for any children who may want to take part. These activities follow the Gospel story theme in church.

As well as completing tasks/activities each session the children have also taken a role in the 'all age' worship in church each month where the children help with the sermon, take part in the offertory procession, choose the music and the older children support in giving communion. This continues to be an inclusive service and has proved very successful with children of all ages through to the adult congregation!

Philippa, Janine and Jade are continuing to run and support sessions, and sessions are covered on the monthly rota.

We are very excited this year to have 2 children receiving their Holy Communion before confirmation. This has involved them following a set weekly scheme which prepares them for this special event. The children have really enjoyed the programme and have enjoyed sharing the sessions with the congregation at the end of the service. It has involved parents making a commitment to ensure the children are in church regularly and support them in completing little activity tasks at home. As part of the course the children were given their own activity book and were presented with a bible to further support their understanding of the activities and tasks in the sessions. The children are due to receive their first Holy Communion on Easter Sunday.

If anyone knows of any primary aged school children who would enjoy hearing a bible story and then making a craft, please feel free to invite them along.

Clare Taylor, Young Church Leader

St Michaels 'Stay & Play' (previously 'Toddlers')

We were very fortunate to have Susan Watson lead us over the last years. Following her retirement I took the lead of the toddler group in October 2024 after returning from maternity leave. This was at first daunting as I knew how long the toddler group had run for and wanted to do this justice (I even attended myself!) The transition of taking on the group was made so easy by the guidance and dedication of the volunteers. They welcomed me with open arms and really showed me the ropes. Their help was absolutely invaluable in making sure I could open the group to the best of my ability.

There was much discussion when i returned of how we could make small changes to the group to attract new children and families, this is when the Stay & Play name came in, this was to make it seen that the group wasn't just for 'toddlers' but for children from birth right up to those ready to start school. We also introduced a song time at the end of the session and a tidy up time. All of this was done initially as a trial to see how this would work with the groups.

Once I settled into the group we looked into the current toys, the volunteers commented that some of the toys were donated when their grandchildren were attending (over a decade ago) - I put a call out amongst my friends and family for some donations and over time we have managed to change out some toys and update some. One volunteer advised me that she knew parents who did feel some of the toys were outdated, especially some of the character toys. This was rectified with the new toy donations, especially our Paw Patrol Toys! We still have a range of toys available, from the home corner which includes a kitchen, toy babies and prams and a market stall (complete with a shopping trolley!) construction toys, toys that use imagination skills and very noisy instruments! The much loved slide is still centre stage, as well as the rocky horse and the rocking boat. We upgraded some of the outdated ride along toys and added some new bikes and scooters.

After some feedback from parents/carers and a change in ages the 'baby corner' has continued to grow. There is a section for smaller babies and also a section that is for older babies, that aren't quite toddling, but then again aren't quite staying still. Juice and biscuits are still a much loved and integral part of the group, alongside tables boasting toys that work on fine motor skills, plenty of jigsaws and an art and crafts table. Parents still have their table to enjoy hot drinks, safely away from little people but still within eye/ear shot, and this gives a great opportunity for parents/carers to chat.

At the end of the session we have a songtime, we use a speaker and have a song and dance together. Some favourites are 'Sleeping Bunnies' - 'Wind the bobbin up' - 'Head Shoulders Knees and Toes' and 'Twinkle Twinkle' - this does usually go down well, mainly with the older children but adults do sit with the younger ones and hopefully with the repetition of the songs the younger ones will begin to learn actions and recognise sounds and words. We then play the tidy up song and get all our bits back into the boxes, again this is received differently depending on ages.

We were fortunate at Christmas to have our Christmas Parties which were well attended, each child got a book from Space4 and a selection box kindly donated by the Mothers Union.

A big thankyou to our volunteer helpers who are invaluable to the group and without whom it all couldn't happen. A special mention to Edith who will be retiring after Easter 2025 who has given 17 years of volunteering service to the group and the children of Houghton – our huge thanks – we will miss you greatly Edith

Jade Turbull-Mason, Children & Community Coordinator

Flower Guild

We have been able to continue with our work throughout the year. We receive many positive compliments about the flowers which is made possible by the many kind and gratefully received donations.

If you would like to sponsor a pedestal arrangement at any time during the year (apart from Lent or Easter) there is a sign up list on the notice board at the back of Church.

Carole Cunningham

Hand-Bells

The group met after Houghton Feast on Monday evenings at 5pm to practise for the Advent Carol Service and Christmas Eve Service. We play the bells to a number system, so if you would like to join the group and can be available for the services mentioned please get in touch! New members are always welcome!

Carole Cunningham

The Gilpin Singers

This year has seen our usual summer and winter concerts, with the Church filled to full capacity. We have also participated in the Church's Summer concert and the choir also staged a concert for the Houghton Feast celebrations. We were invited to sing at Lambton Castle in December. The guests were very complimentary!

All of this is made possible by our enthusiastic and dedicated conductor Laura Parkin: we are very thankful for her input. Our thanks also to Graham Brown for accompanying the choir at our concerts and to all who work hard and contribute to the choir's success.

Carole Cunningham

Signpost

Our magazine, Signpost, continues to be notice board, advertiser and commenter on local, national and worldwide issues that affect us all at St. Michaels. We try to reflect opinions and current values in what we do and think of the world we are in. Our news is current and reflects where we are this month, but, I think, even more importantly we have an opportunity to comment on the place and time we are in. Most pleasing to me is the copy I receive from members of our congregation that express views on current events and experiences. This "home produced" copy is the difference that makes the magazine "ours". Please keep it coming. Thanks as always to the whole team and distributors for making it happen.

Malcolm Foster

10.2 REPORTS FROM CHURCH AFFILIATED ORGANISATIONS

Kepier Trust and Management Committee

It is my pleasure to report on the amazing work that has been achieved over the last year at the Kepier Hall. The Trust has been very fortunate in successfully bidding for funding from many sources that has enabled major work to the building being carried out. This, of course, is ongoing – as one major job gets done, another one is in the pipeline. We are always on the lookout for other funding opportunities and there are many! The application process takes a lot of time and energy as you can imagine.

The regular users of the Kepier are very complimentary of the newly refurbished interior and a real plus is the much-improved heating system which keeps everyone happy.

We are fortunate to have a new tenant in the newly refurbished Gilpin flat.

I would like to thank the Caretaker/Coordinator, Mr. Darren Snaith, and fellow Trustee, Ali Young, as well as Management Team for their support over this last year when so much has been achieved. Keep watching this space for other improvements!

Jean Henderson

The Friends of Houghton Hillside Cemetery

The committee resumed our meetings earlier in the year and started to organise litter picks and tidy-ups. Our website is being updated and is not available at present. The weather this year has been against us at every opportunity, and our planned clean-ups have had to be cancelled. Once again, we are grateful to members of our local community who have kept the place tidy.

We planned a big clean-up during the late summer, before Remembrance Day, but this had to be cancelled because the wet weather had given the brambles a super boost and made the paths to the War Graves impenetrable. A landscape gardening company were willing to clear the paths at a reasonable cost. Their results were impressive and more than we could achieve.

Our AGM was held in Church on 24th October, and this year we decided to pare back our meeting and not have a guest speaker.

For Remembrance Day, we laid a wreath at the Cenotaph at Church and one against the monument in the Cemetery. The War Graves commission had cleaned the headstones in the cemetery prior to this and people have laid poppies and crosses on the graves.

We are looking forward to getting back into full swing in 2025!

Alastair Bradley, Chair.

The Friends of Houghton Parish Church Trust

Now in our 31st year, we can look back over the years and see how important the Trust has been in providing the funds for essential work and maintenance to our beloved ancient Church of St. Michael and All Angels. This important work continues as we speak!

Looking back to last year's report, we were then thinking of ideas on how to boost the membership numbers. A leaflet drop has been considered but we would need to have a team of helpers to do this. If anyone has any other ideas on how to do this, please get in touch.

We spent a lot of time this year deciding whether to put the annual subscriptions up but in the end we decided to leave it up to each individual member as quite a few have already voluntarily done this.

The Friends are committed to opening the Church throughout the summer months for a short period of time during each week. Come along and have a chat and a coffee with our stewards – it may be something you would like to do.

Jean Henderson, Trustee

Houghton Mothers' Union

We have 44 members. 33 attend regular meetings and 11 are indoor members.

Olive Gibson, who transferred from Newbottle when the branch closed, sadly passed away.

We have welcomed 4 new members and 1 lady has rejoined. 2 of the members have been admitted; the other 3 members will be admitted in our Thursday Morning Service as soon as possible.

Mothers' Union community projects

The branch was able to buy St Michael's toddler group a selection box for each child at Christmas. The refuge in Houghton received bags with a knitted snowman and a selection of sweeties inside.

We continue to support the church with baptisms, sending annual baptism anniversary cards for 5 years after baptism. Each child who is baptised also gets a knitted Teddy.

Mothers' Union UK

We sent a £171 contribution to head office for 'Make a Mother's day': thank you for your generosity.

£114 was sent for the 'Summer of Hope' project.

The 'Summer of Hope' project is a fantastic opportunity to build on years of wonderful work that's transforming the lives of women and girls in sub-Saharan Africa.

Literacy and numeracy are vital life skills for all of us. In the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), our faithful support is already empowering women to release themselves from the cycle of poverty.

Branch programme 2024

January	was our AGM
February	Meal at the mill
March	Easter readings in church
April	Rev Norma Clee, Durham Diocese MU Chaplain
May	Rev John Barron
June	Summer trip to Trenchers, Whitley Bay. We had a grant from the coalfields for the bus.
July	Deanery branches joined us for the 'Summer of Hope' tea.
August	We don't meet.
September	Harvest lunch
October	Sue Elsey
November	Margaret Lee
December	Advent service in church. We also had Christmas lunch one day at the Bistro in Cherry Trees.

Joan Beattie, Branch Leader.

2nd Houghton Rainbows, Brownies, Guides and Rangers

All four units are running at maximum capacity at the moment with waiting lists. We have had a very busy year with many events.

Rainbows had a sleepover in September which also included a visit to the Blue Reef Aquarium. Rainbows have a sleepover coming up on 5th April with 11 girls attending.

Guides/Rangers had a sleepover on 8th February which included a visit to the Escape Room in the Metro centre and then the girls were given time to go shopping. We then returned to the Kepier Hall for pizza and sleep!

Brownies had a weekend at PGL in Newby Wiske in May 2024 and we are going again this year in May with 31 Brownies and Guides.

The units took part in the Houghton Feast parade as well as running a stall at the church coffee morning. We appreciate the support that we are given from church to help us to fundraise for the units.

The girls were involved in the Remembrance Sunday parade.

We attended the Uniformed carol service in church. Many parents came along to watch the service.

Sheila Wynn

10.3 REPORTS FROM SPACE4: THE COMMUNITY

PROJECT OF ST MICHAEL & ALL ANGELS'

Summary

The past year has been exceptionally busy for Space4. We have developed our partnership working with other organisations which has enabled us to offer a wide range of opportunities for our service users, including arts & crafts workshops, digital skills, beauty courses and advice sessions with a number of different organisations, alongside our regular activities and services.

a) Creatively addressing food poverty

Our foodbank/community food store has been at the forefront of our work to address food poverty. We have seen an increase in the numbers requiring foodbank support reflecting the ongoing cost of living crisis. We have been fortunate to receive significantly more grant funding for the foodbank from both Sunderland City Council and grant funders which has enabled us to distribute large amounts of stock over the past 6 months. We have also received several donations from local schools, organisations and individuals in the community, including some large donations from Harvest Festival and at Christmas time, for which we are incredibly grateful.

We have spent much of the past year reviewing and refining our processes and procedures, including moving to online ordering of deliveries which has massively improved efficiency. We have also improved our processes around foodbank membership cards with our food coordinator now meeting with people when they first present for foodbank to find out how best to support them and signposting to relevant organisations. A review meeting is then held after 4 weeks to check whether support is still needed and to follow up on whether they have accessed the support. This process is working well although we continue to monitor and review procedures on an ongoing basis. In addition, we have introduced a much more robust stock management process with weekly summary sheets showing the value of food distributed and amount of wastage alongside regular stock takes, including recording donated food. This has enabled us to have a much clearer picture of the amount of food distributed and the current mix of our food sources.

Our Foodstore served a cumulative total of 1891 households in 2024.

As well as our food store, our food offer in the Hub has grown over the past year with hot food offered 3 days per week. Meals typically cost around £3.50 but can be offered on a PAYF/free basis for those in need.

In June we ran our first slow cooker course which was very well received and delivered another couple of courses later in the year. The courses ran for 4 weeks with participants given the ingredients for that week's recipe to try at home. With the help of match funding from the local authority, we were also able to give participants their own slow cooker to take home, along with a set of knives and kitchen utensils. Feedback from the courses was extremely positive.

b) Responding to isolation

We had a new Hub Coordinator, Natalie, start in post in February and she made a huge impact, particularly in developing relationships with other organisations and providers. It was an exceptionally busy year in our Hub; alongside our daily drop ins, we have offered a wide variety of courses and workshops, thereby creating more opportunities for our service users to learn new skills and improve their confidence and mental wellbeing. These have also resulted in new people coming into Space4 for the first time, many of whom have then returned to access other activities.

Another exciting development was the long-awaited installation of our Tech Hub area at the end of May – although the take up for this hasn't been great, we hope to develop this further in the coming year.

In June we celebrated our amazing volunteers with an awards ceremony and buffet lunch. It was fantastic to have our volunteers and staff from across all Space4's different projects come together and to have the opportunity to say thank you for all they do.

Our children's work has also gone from strength to strength over this year. Our children's coordinator went on maternity leave at the start of the year but Kim did a great job in her absence running our weekly Tuesday Treat afterschool club and various activities during school holidays. The summer months were busy with children's holiday activities taking place twice a week. In total 42 unique children accessed at least one of our summer activities, 24 of whom were new to Space4.

We were able to offer a wide range of activities in partnership with other organisations including Durham Wildlife Trust, Active Sunderland and Sunderland Culture such as drama, dance, healthy eating, graffiti art and bug hunting. A local pub, The White Lion, very generously provided lunch for free for the children throughout the summer holidays and also provided free packed lunches for our Space4 trip to Beamish Museum in August. We filled a double decker bus for this trip and feedback was overwhelmingly positive.

In September, we were delighted to welcome Jade back from maternity leave. As part of her role as children's coordinator, Jade took over the running of the Toddlers group which was rebranded as Stay and Play. As part of the rebrand, we made some changes to the sessions including introducing a song and rhyme section at the end. Although it took a little while for the children (& parents!) to get used to this change, it has given the sessions more structure and helped children understand when the session is coming to an end. Sleeping Bunnies is particularly popular with the children!! Throughout all these changes, our amazing volunteers have, again, provided much needed consistency and continuity for parents and children.

Our adult service users as well as the children have also benefited from activities with partner organisations; Cultural Spring ran 4 art workshops over July-September, focusing on using natural materials including making natural inks whilst WEA ran a number of courses for us including a beginners' digital skills course, jewellery making course and a nail art course which took place on an evening. The latter was so popular with the 8 people who attended that we had to put on a follow up nails, lashes and brows course. All of these courses have helped people connect and open up and it has been lovely to see people's confidence grow.

Our craft group were also fortunate to have a ceramicist come in to work with them over a few weeks as part of the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust's 80 Candles for 80 years project. This project saw 80 community organisations across the UK design and create a bespoke candle holder to highlight the life of an individual or a community persecuted by the Nazis to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau in 2025. The candle holder Space4 designed formed part of a digital exhibition for Holocaust Memorial Day and went on display at Houghton Library.

We were also able to start offering transport to those attending our Cake & Chat group for elderly members of the community in September following a successful grant application to pay for transport for 12 months. This has enabled us to reach more socially isolated people who were previously unable to access the group.

October was very busy with both half-term and Houghton Feast taking place this month. As well as having 55 people take part in the parade at the start of Houghton Feast, we held activities throughout the week, including a rag wreath workshop and a pie and peas afternoon with dominoes and a beetle drive.

The last couple of months of the year didn't see us slowing down! We launched our digital skills sessions and a games afternoon and hosted our first Young Carers' Drop in with Sunderland Carers Centre which now takes place monthly.

We ended the year on a high with lots of different Christmas craft activities taking place throughout December, our annual children's Christmas party which was attended by 66 children and a Space4 nativity service with staff, volunteers and service users taking part. And, of course, we hosted our Christmas Day lunch which saw 39 adults and 11 children share a 3 course meal and join in with carol singing, a Christmas quiz and bingo.

Our drop in has seen a total footfall of 6118 people over the year, 220 of whom were new to Space4. Tuesday Treat has had a footfall of 1038 children whilst Stay & Play has had 727 children.

c) Challenging inequalities

Due to low numbers, we decided to stop our monthly clothing events and instead concentrate on school uniform events at key times of the year, including Easter and May half-term. We held several pre-loved uniform events in August in readiness for the new school term. Through these events we supported a total of 62 households comprising 138 children. An exciting new development was the launch of our online uniform request form in September which allows us to respond to requests as and when needed.

We have also had several partner organisations attend our drop-in sessions over the past year to provide advice and support. These include SHARP (local information, advice and guidance service), Sunderland Carers Centre, Healthwatch, Gentoo Money Matters team and Vodaphone who ran a couple of Tech Tea Parties to help people with IT and digital issues.

We were incredibly fortunate to be chosen by Houghton Rugby Club as their charity of the year and they ran a Christmas gift campaign on our behalf. With their generous donations alongside donations from Dunelm and Lidl, we were able to give Christmas gifts to 60 children whose families are in financial hardship.

Much of our work in this area has been focused on developing a culture of community organising, giving people a voice and encouraging and supporting them to participate in democracy. In the past year we had local, regional and national elections and we worked closely with Tyne and Wear Citizens to put our key 'asks' around cost of living and housing to candidates. We also signed up to become a voter registration hub, ensuring people knew how to register to vote either in person or via postal vote, and having conversations with them about why voting matters.

Prior to the mayoral elections in May, we attended the Tyne and Wear Citizen's Mayoral Assembly on 22nd April. We had a great turnout from Space4 and the church, filling approximately two thirds of a double decker bus, plus others who made their own way there.

Some of our staff and volunteers were involved in the housing and cost of living teams. They were very involved with the process from beginning to end, from feeding in issues that have come out of our listening, providing case studies/testimonies that were used on the night, honing the 'asks' presented to the candidates, planning the presentation of the asks, and we even had 3 people speaking on stage in front of an audience of approximately 800!

Denise spoke very eloquently on the impact of the cost of living crisis on quality of life, Becca gave a very emotional testimony about carer pay (which got the biggest response of the night from the audience), and Beth read out the testimony from a Space4 member about battling with landlords and the difficulty of getting appropriate social housing. The testimonies clearly made a significant impact on the candidates and audience alike.

As a direct result of Denise's moving speech at the assembly, she was invited to go to Darlington to speak with Kier Starmer and Rachel Reeves about the cost of living crisis! Despite being incredibly nervous, she put her case passionately, and was listened to reflectively and thoughtfully by both politicians.

This work continued with the surprise announcement of the general election and preparation for a national assembly in London with representatives from the three main parties. It was a real inspiration to be a part of it and to see people taking on roles way beyond their comfort zone, and absolutely smashing it!

We've not only been involved in influencing regional and national politicians however; Space4 was also visited by representatives of Durham Diocese and the King's Office who are tasked with choosing the next Bishop of Durham. Staff, volunteers and service users all had the opportunity to speak to them about what they wanted from the next incumbent with one of our regulars suggesting that Rev'd John Barron be given the role!

Following the riots in Sunderland in the summer, one of our staff helped facilitate a Weaving Trust session at the Unity in the Community event held at Sunderland Minster on 19th October. Weaving Trust events are a tool for bringing communities together, building bridges, creating awareness and weaving trust through contact and conversation. Using a speed meeting format, 1:1 conversations lasting 6-8 minutes, are facilitated with the use of guided questions (e.g. why do you love your area, what would you change about it) with a wrap up session at the end. The feedback from this session was very positive and a further session was held at the VONNE conference which was equally well received.

In November we had a double decker join us as part of a listening campaign across the northern region to find out what issues people face when using public transport. We listened on the bus and also took to Newbottle Street to listen to those using the buses. Collectively we listened to 37 people and fed this back to Tyne & Wear Citizens. The issues raised ranged from accessibility to reliability and the lack of variety of public transport available to the local community. These issues were shared in a meeting Tyne & Wear Citizens held with Martin Tugwell, CEO for Transport for the North, on 2nd December. One of our staff co-chaired this meeting thereby ensuring that the voice of our community was heard.

For a small grassroots community organisation we have really punched above our weight over the past year and this has been recognised by others, with the deputy director of Citizen's UK approaching one of our staff and congratulating her on our involvement. Our work as a voter registration hub has also been held up by Citizens UK as an example of good practice.

Justine Merton-Scott, Space4 Manager

St Michael & All Angels, The Church of England in Houghton-le-Spring

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