



THE PARISH OF ST. BARTHOLOMEW WESTHOUGHTON

St. Bartholomew

St. George

St. Thomas



ANNUAL REPORTS FOR 2024

PRESENTED TO THE APCM

MONDAY 28TH APRIL 2025





The Parish of St Bartholomew Westhoughton

St Bartholomew St George St Thomas

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING:
MONDAY 28th APRIL 2025, 7.30pm
ST BARTHOLOMEW'S CHURCH

AGENDA

1. Welcome and Opening Prayers
2. Apologies for absence
3. Minutes of the Annual Meetings held on Monday 29th April 2024 [*which are attached below*] and matters arising

Annual Meeting of Parishioners:

Election of two churchwardens for the year 2025 - 2026

Annual Parochial Church Meeting

- I. Elections and appointments:
 - i. Two deputy wardens each for St Bartholomew's, St Thomas's and St George's (who will be ex-officio members of the Parochial Church Council)
 - ii. Representative for Deanery Synod for the period 2023 – 2026 (who will be ex-officio members of the Parochial Church Council) – *1 vacancy*
 - iii. Two further representatives from St Bartholomew's, St Thomas's and St George's to serve as members of the Parochial Church Council
 - iv. Up to eight people to serve as members of each of the church councils of St Bartholomew's, St Thomas's and St George's
 - v. Appointment of Independent Examiner
2. Annual Reports for 2024:
 - i. Team Rector's Report
 - ii. Churchwardens' Report
 - iii. Secretary's Report on the Proceedings of the PCC
 - iv. Church Electoral Roll Report
 - v. Honorary Treasurer's Presentation of Accounts
 - vi. Safeguarding Officer's Report
3. Any Other Business relevant to an annual meeting (*chair to be notified BEFORE the meeting begins*)
- 4.

5. Date of future Meetings:
 - Archdeacon's visitation – **all dates given on page 6**
 - Next PCC meeting – to be set
 - Annual Parochial Church Meeting 2026 Monday 27th April
6. Closing prayers

There will be a short meeting of the newly constituted Parochial Church Council immediately following the Annual Parochial Church Meetings

AGENDA

1. Appointment of
 - a. PCC treasurer
 - b. PCC secretary
 - c. Vice chair of the PCC
 - d. Safeguarding officer
 - e. PCC Standing Committee [*usually Rector, vice chair, Parish wardens, secretary, treasurer*]
2. Co-option, if required, of further PCC members
3. Appointment of Sidespeople
4. Any other urgent business

Parish of St Bartholomew Westhoughton

St Bartholomew, St George, St Thomas

Meeting of the APCM Monday 29th April 2024 at 7.30pm

held at St Bartholomew's Church

Attendance: Revd Carol Pharaoh (chair), Ed McHale (Acting Secretary), Christine Andrews, Elaine Simkin, Jean Tonge, John Owen, Lynn Owen, Sarah Barry, Pat James, Joan O'Reilly, Angela Greenall, Graham Andrews, Revd Andy Jones, Rachel Dawber, Peter Ingham, Ollie Younge, Linda Casson, Helen Thompson, John Thompson, Fran Bissett,

Apologies: George Twist, Hilary Moore, Revd Angela Wynne, Ryan Battersby, Carole Walsh, Nigel Ginniff

AGENDA ITEM	DISCUSSION and ACTION
Apologies for Absence	Attendance and apologies were noted on the signing in sheets and are listed above.
Introductions:	The rector welcomed everyone to the AGM and opened the meeting with a reading from John chapter 18 with Jesus as the True Vine followed by the Diocesan Prayer.
Minutes of Previous meetings	The minutes of the previous APCM held on the 24 th April 2023 had been circulated to those signing up to attend the meeting electronically or in a paper form. These were accepted unanimously by the meeting.
Annual Meeting of Parishioners: Election of Two Parish Wardens 2024 - 25	Joan O'Reilly and Ed McHale had both consented to stand and had been duly proposed and seconded. There being no further nominations, they were appointed to the two posts of Parish Wardens.
Annual Parochial Church Meeting	Elections and Appointments The following were all duly proposed seconded and appointed
Deputy Wardens: [2 per church]	St Bartholomew's: Christine Andrews / VACANCY St George's: Hilary Moore / Pat James St Thomas' Graham Andrews / VACANCY A tribute was paid to John Moore who had died in post during the year.
Deanery Synod: 4 representatives	Christine Andrews, Elaine Simkin and Joan O'Reilly are in post leaving one vacancy to be filled. It was noted that these posts were for a three year period running until the 2026 AGM.
Elected Members to PCC: [2 per church]	The following were all duly nominated, seconded & appointed St Bartholomew's: Jean Tonge / Rachel Dawber / George Twist St George's: VACANCY / VACANCY St Thomas': VACANCY / VACANCY
Elected Members to DCCs	The following were all duly nominated, seconded & appointed St Bartholomew's – Ollie Younge / Linda Casson <i>NB Sue Robinson-Todd was co-opted at the first committee meeting</i>

	<p>St Thomas' – Claire Smith / Caroline Darby St George's - John Thompson, Angela Greenall, June Crook, Carole Walsh, Sarah Barry</p> <p>Thanks were recorded to those who have served on our committees through the year.</p>
Appoint of Independent Examiner	Nigel Ginniff has indicated his willingness to continue and was proposed by Graham Andrews, seconded by Elaine Simkin and duly appointed.
Annual reports	
Team Rector Churchwardens PCC secretary Church Electoral Roll Honorary Treasurer & Independent Examiner Safeguarding Group reports	<p>Those received in time had all been circulated prior to the meeting either by e-mail or as a paper copy.</p> <p>It was noted that the electoral roll stood at 182 as of the date of this meeting.</p> <p>From the reports were highlighted</p> <p>(i) the fact that many activities are staffed by the same very small group of people and there is a need for a wider pool of people to run and develop our services and events.</p> <p>(ii) following the meeting with the Diocese, we had agreed a three-year Parish Share agreement which sees our Share cut from £72,000 to £50,000 with a 5% increase for each of the following two years.</p> <p>The reports were accepted <i>en bloc</i> unanimously with thanks to all who had prepared them.</p>
AOB	On behalf of the parish, Ed thanked the clergy for their leadership through the year.
Date of future meetings	<p>Archdeacon's Visitation – Tuesday 18th June 7:30pm at Bolton Parish Church is our most local service but other dates and venues are available.</p> <p>Future dates for the PCC / committee meetings will be circulated following this meeting.</p> <p>This meeting was closed and followed by a brief meeting of the newly elected PCC [minuted separately] and cheese and wine served in the parish room.</p>

To the Rector, Vicar or other Officiating Minister of:

This notice must be displayed on the principal door of your church.

ARCHDEACONS' VISITATIONS 2025

CHURCHWARDENS WILL BE ADMITTED AT THE FOLLOWING VISITATION SERVICES,

COMMENCING AT 7:30PM UNLESS OTHERWISE INDICATED:

ARCHDEACONRY OF MANCHESTER

Wednesday 11 June	St George Chadderton
Thursday 19 June	Holy Family Failsworth
Tuesday 24 June	Manchester Cathedral
Monday 30 June	Holy Trinity Platt

ARCHDEACONRY OF ROCHDALE

Monday 9 June	St Mary in the Baum
Thursday 12 June	Oldham Parish Church
Thursday 19 June	St Leonard Middleton
Wednesday 25 June	Christ Church Ashton-under-Lyne

ARCHDEACONRY OF BOLTON

Wednesday 11 June	Bury Parish Church
Thursday 12 June	St Mary, Rawtenstall
Wednesday 25 June	Bolton Parish Church

ARCHDEACONRY OF SALFORD

Tuesday 15 July	St Mark, Worsley
-----------------	------------------

It is a legal requirement for all churchwardens to be admitted into office

The act of admission at the Visitation is an important and significant event for your Parish. The Venerable Archdeacons of Manchester, Rochdale, Salford and Bolton further request that members of the clergy should be present at the Visitation to support the lay officers of the Parish. All members of parochial church councils are also invited to accompany the churchwardens and sidespeople.

NOTES FOR CLERGY AND NEWLY ELECTED CHURCHWARDENS:

- If a churchwarden cannot attend the date for the visitation service for their deanery, they may attend and be admitted at any alternative visitation service in the diocese.
- An elected churchwarden will lose the right to be admitted into their office if they do not attend a visitation service or complete alternative arrangements (which must be made directly with either an Archdeacon or the Diocesan Registrar) before **31 AUGUST** in the year in which they have been elected at the annual meeting of parishioners.
- All churchwardens (whether elected for the first time or re-elected for a further term) must make the declarations for the due execution of their office. Online forms can be found on the diocesan website www.manchester.anglican.org and searching for 'churchwarden admission'.

DONNA MYERS, Diocesan Registrar,
St John's House, 155-163 The Rock, Bury, BL9 0ND

TEAM RECTOR'S REPORT 2024

I will give thanks to you, Lord, with my whole heart; I will tell of all your marvellous works. (Psalm 9.1 NRSVA)

"I will instruct you and teach you the way you should go; I will counsel you with my eye upon you." (Psalm 32.8 NRSVA)

Have you noticed? I'm sure you have. How nature seems very much alive at the moment? The whole of creation seems bursting with vibrancy and life, from spring bulbs, nesting birds and lighter nights. It helps, of course, when we have lovely sunny spring days.

Have you noticed? I'm sure you have. How our churches seem very much alive at the moment? If you look, albeit sometimes a little bit more closely in some instances, you will see our churches are flourishing with vibrancy and life.

You see with all the anxieties and problems that often bombard our lives, from TV news to real concerns about our families and friends, it's easy to feel gloomy. With all the issues and difficulties facing us in our churches, it is easy to feel a bit gloomy about our life as a church too. We struggle with finding volunteers to help with various tasks. We feel a little afraid about who will continue the ministry and mission when we perhaps are no longer able to or we are no longer here. We worry about finding money to resource our work and, at St Bart's Church, the list of problems with our church building and tower seems to be growing. If we think about the wider church, we know that our Diocese too faces many challenges. Problems and difficulties within the Church of England, which are reported in the media, seem to surface every few weeks.

Acknowledging this and despite all this, have you noticed? Have you noticed how much we have to be thankful for? My desire is that reading through the various reports from individuals and groups making up this annual report, will give you much pride and hope. It does me. Our churches are thriving and flourishing in many ways and, there are some new green shoots, if you take the time to carefully look for them. For example. there are green shoots as we see new people, adults and children, coming to join us for our worship and activities. We are becoming a much more multi-cultural community as new people join us from other parts of our world and now call Westhoughton their home. Our Junior Church and Sunday School

groups for children are thriving and growing. There are new people volunteering to help with various roles in the church. Our work with our local schools continues to flourish. We now have regular contact with Thurston's Residential Home and Woodlands Care Home.

Our work continues of course in many other ways. We continue to welcome many families seeking baptism for their children. We continue to support couples wanting to declare their commitment to one another through marriage. By our prayers and care, we continue to support people who are ill or anxious or distressed. We continue to support those who have been bereaved and coping with loss.

We continually give thanks too for Alan and Elaine who give so freely of their time and talents as Reader Emeritus in serving our churches. We are thankful for our ALM Christine and all she gives. We are also pleased that two ALMs James and Pauline, who serve as ALMs in other churches in our team, now also regularly help lead worship in our parish too. We are thankful that they are willing and gifted to share their ministry more widely. Thank you to our Church Wardens Ed and Joan and our Deputy Wardens Christine, Graham, Pat and Hilary. Honestly, without them, our churches would not function at all. Thank you to our PCC secretary Ed and DCC secretaries. Our parish treasurer Graham and church treasurers Claire, John and Elaine. Thank you to our parish Safeguarding Officer Joan, for the expertise and care she exercises in the role she has. Once again a big thank you to all who hold other roles in our church, from PCC & DCC member to sidespeople, vergers to organist, cleaners to gardeners, sound system operators to refreshment makers, children's workers, youth workers, musicians and singers. Thank you to everybody who has helped our churches in 2024.

As we think now of our Team Ministry, I am once again extremely thankful for the strength, care and determination of my clergy colleagues across the Team. We said a very fond farewell to our Curate Andy in October as he took up his new post in Farnworth and New Bury. We pray that God will continue to bless him, Katie and Harry and he finds in his new role, joy and fulfilment. We are extremely pleased and proud that in July 2024, Alisdair Cole was licensed as a Reader. Whilst his base is St John's Church, we are so grateful for his new ministry among us, from which ultimately all the churches in our team will benefit. Ignite Youth, our Team Youth Church, is continuing to provide a church for our young people, with opportunities to explore faith in an engaging and creative way. Once again, there are new shoots, new members and leaders. They are linked now to groups within our Mission Community, which also provides a forum for youth leaders to find support and friendship.

We continued to offer different house groups and study groups within the Team Ministry. These are not well supported which is a real shame. We endeavour to find new ways to help people explore and grow in their faith. Maybe, hopefully, this is where we see new green shoots this year. Do have a word with me if you would like to know more about the events and opportunities we have to grow in our Christian faith.

There is so much that is good in our churches. There are always challenges and we are always evaluating and looking to find ways we can do things better. Sometimes it can feel that those green shoots of hope and all that is flourishing in our churches, is in danger of being trampled. When Jesus asked people to follow him, there was no detailed roadmap or promise of an easy time. No one outlined the hardships they'd face – or the incredible fruit they'd see. And yet, they said 'yes', trusting God with the unknown. God doesn't tell us everything we'll face when we say yes to Him. If He did, many of us might hesitate. But He does promise this: "I will instruct you and teach you the way you should go; I will counsel you with my eye upon you." (Psalm 32.8)

So please let us be thankful and encouraged by all that is good and flourishing. We continue in faith, in trust and with hope that with God's loving eye on us, God will work amongst us and will show us the way. The adventure continues in 2025. Let's keep looking for and nurture all those green shoots and all the encounters and activities we share.

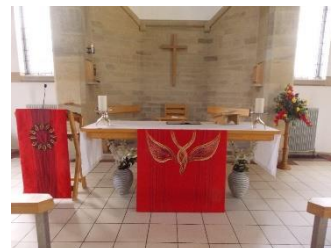
With love and prayers,

Rev'd Carol Pharaoh

Parish Churchwardens' Report for 2024 – to be presented at the 2025 AGM

At the 2024 APCM Joan O'Reilly and Ed McHale were re-elected to the post of Parish Wardens.

During the year, we have been able to run many events with a gradual evolution and development:



- New Year's Eve fell on a Sunday in 2024 and we had a joint 11:00am service at St Bartholomew's with refreshments served before the service.
- Office Hour continues on a Monday morning [drop-in] or Saturday mornings by appointment. With a decrease in the number of baptisms following the Covid backlog being cleared, we have moved Office Hour to the first Monday of each month [excepting Bank Holiday weekends] from weekly.
- The Monday morning 9:30-11:00am Toddler Group and Wiggle Worship has continued steadily in term time.
- The Civic Service for Mayoral Sunday was held with a good attendance from members of the Town Council.
- In March we participated in the 2024 World Day of Prayer Service prepared by the women of Palestine, which was held at Cornerstones church but moved to an afternoon rather than the evening. This has some advantages but does limit attendance to those available during the day.
- Remembrance Sunday services continued, again limiting attendance at the 10:00am Civic Service. The timing of the Act of Remembrance at the War Memorial was managed poorly and we need to work with the Town Council at improving this.
- The town council led a new format with Switching on of the Town Lights forming part of a day of events on the last Saturday in November and without the Carol Service in St Bartholomew's. This was a very successful event and easier to manage than the ticketed, limited attendance event available in church. The town council's decision to move this to Advent Sunday in 2025 is causing issues with clashes with long-standing church events.
- A Confirmation Service was held in July at St Katharine's church in Blackrod led by the Bishop of Bolton, Revd Dr Matthew Porter. This year we ran the two longer Saturday preparation sessions which worked well. Moving to a summer date meant that it was only 6 months since the previous service which limited the number of candidates. In 2025 we're holding the Confirmation service at St Bartholomew's in May to fit better with Sunday School / Ignite Youth terms and plan to keep to a spring date in future years.
- We continue to admit children to Holy Communion on Mothering Sunday following a short preparation session.
- The Team Youth Church continues to meet monthly at St John's Wingates on a Saturday evening and is running well; more help with running this is sought.



- In spring we were able to run a full programme of Lent, Holy Week and Easter services including the Easter Experience and including more daytime / family friendly events. We continued the Stations of the Cross on a Monday evening as a lay led service. On Good Friday we held a Young People's drop in workshop at St Bart's between the more formal services at St James' and St Katharine's churches. This proved very popular with many craft events and attracted a good attendance.
- We continue to run a large number of baptism services. Many thanks to those who give up their Sunday afternoons to staff these. We also run a baptism preparation evening each month; many thanks to Carole Bullough who organises the baptism preparation session attendances with parents and godparents and also writes out all the certificates and candles for the services.
- We have held a small number of wedding services in 2024 with some booked for 2025. We still have a large funeral ministry.
- Cafe church services have run on a Wednesday at St Bart's from 3:45 -4:30pm during term time and are proving very popular. It many thanks again to the team who plan and staff these as well as providing refreshments.
- The All Souls Memorial Service was held and attracted a greater attendance than in 2023.
- We ran a full programme of Christingle and Christmas Services; although attendances were greater than 2023, they were still not at pre-pandemic levels. We ran lay led crib services at St Thomas' [which had a low attendance] and St George's [which proved very popular]. We are looking at bringing the St George's service forward to 5:00pm in 2025 as 6:00pm can finish too late for some families.
- For the Christmas Dinner on Jesus in 2024, we collected after dinner chocolate mints.
- Local schools returned to hold their Christmas events at St Bartholomew's.
- The monthly Wednesday Communion Service followed by Luncheon Club continued at 11:00am at St Bart's with thanks to all who run this. We continue to run monthly services at Thurston's and Woodlands and take communion to a small number of people in their own homes.
- Following St Bartholomew's Patronal Festival at the end of August, we had our usual "bring and share" lunch.
- In May, we were able to hold the Christian Aid collections in our churches.
- Revd Dr Malcolm Wearing organised a Team Retreat in May 2024 and is planning a further one for May 2025.
- We continue to go into schools to lead assemblies and a year group attends St Bartholomew's once per month from all our church schools for a joint service. We also ran an "Experience Creation" event for year 5 children. Although a good event, we did underestimate the amount of staffing required to set up, run and clear away for this event which we will need to tackle should we run it again. We've also run a couple of Family Holiday Club events in August.

Blackrod, Daisy Hill, Westhoughton & Wingates Team

Lent for Everyone 2024

<p>TUESDAYS 8.30pm to 10pm St Katharine's Church Study group based on the book 'The Way of the Cross' by David Stead. Led by Revd Dr Malcolm Wearing and David Stead. Starting on Tuesday 20th Feb 2024</p>	<p>WEDNESDAYS Starting on Wednesday 14th Feb 2024 7.30pm Stations of the Cross 7.30pm Holy Communion Starting on Wednesday 21st Feb 2024 10.30am Ecumenical Prayer Service St Katharine's Church</p>
<p>HALF TERM LENT PRAYER WALK FOR FAMILIES Thursday 22nd Feb at 2pm Meet at St Bart's Church</p>	<p>SUNDAYS 6.30pm to 8pm Malcolm's house. Led by Revd Dr Malcolm Wearing. 1st Sunday 18th Feb 2024 The Stations of the Cross - A Lent course of reflection on the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Led by Revd Dr Malcolm Wearing. Starting on Sunday 18th Feb 2024</p>
<p>LUNCHEON PRAYER & PRAYER 11.45am to 1.15pm St Bart's Church Meeting Room Using painting to pray. Come and pray, or watch others pray. All parents provided. Led by Revd Carol. 8 sessions: Thursdays 15th Feb, 20th Feb, 27th Feb, 6th March, 13th March, 20th March, 27th March, 3rd April. All sessions 11.45am to 1.15pm.</p>	

- Our bell ringers continue to provide an excellent addition to our worship on Sundays and at weddings / funerals and for national events. We welcome regularly teams of visiting ringers and in 2024 welcomed Father Christmas for a charity appeal in aid of Christies.



- For the first time, the church has been used as a polling station for local and national elections which does provide useful income as well as challenges in covering opening / closing up. We made copies of a Church of England daily prayer diary “Play Your Part” available to our congregations in the run up to the general election.
- As part of the Mission Community Outreach events, we held a “Bring a Friend to Church” services at St George’s and St Bartholomew’s and joined in the joint Mission Community Celebration Service in September.

Publicity:

The expanded Pewsheets Plus and is now e-mailed out to 85 - 90 people each week [with a hard copy to those who have requested one] in addition to the smaller pewsheets distributed at our services. The pewsheets are also available from the church website with many thanks to Neil Belch for maintaining this.

Although we have had an initial meeting about redesigning the Website and moving it to a new platform, we have not been able to make further progress with this.

We have had a couple of leaflet drops in Autumn and Christmas to new housing developments around St Bartholomew’s.

We still continue to produce posters and publicity for services and events which appear on the internal and external church noticeboards, St Bart’s railings and, again thanks to Joan O’Reilly, in shops & sites through the town.

All of this falls upon the churchwardens and there is currently no support or back-up available to cover illness or holidays.

Staffing:

We said farewell to our curate Revd Andy Jones along with Katie and Harry as they moved to the Seven Saints parish with thanks for all that he had done over his period with us. Many of us were able to attend and support them at the induction service at St George with St James, New Bury in November. This has had most impact on the service at St George’s church and left a gap on the governing body.

Revd Malcolm Wearing’s role was altered he was Licensed as Team Vicar (SSM) in Blackrod, Daisy Hill, Westhoughton & Wingate Benefice, in autumn.



The PCCs across the team agreed that Pauline Rowley and James Young’s ALM roles be team-wide.

It is of note that the staffing plans for the local mission partnership [effectively the former Deane deanery] require a cut in stipendiary clergy from 6 to 5 by the end of 2025 although there is as yet, no strategy for this. The current plan is for the vacancy in the Horwich team to be filled, however.

We held a couple of meetings with wardens to look at the Team Strategy for services and service cover with more limited staffing across the Team and, twelve months from those sessions, it's time to review this.

Parish Share / Finances:

There are still issues with parish finances, the situation at St Thomas' worsening over 2024.

In October we ran concurrent Stewardship campaigns at both St Bartholomew's and St George's [the **5%** in **2025** tagline at St George's being a highlight] with a more limited campaign at St Thomas' later in autumn. This has raised awareness of the costs of running our churches and the need for additional support to run events. We need to look at this being an annual event.

The Parish social events committee has organised a number of events throughout 2024 continuing into 2025 raising funds with events including

- Houghton Weavers Concert
- The annual Bolton Chamber Orchestra Concert [co-ordinated by Ed McHale]
- Organ Recital marking World Organ Day in April
- St Bartholomew's coffee mornings
- Two joint concerts by Westhoughton Community Choir and the Affetside Singers [in June and December, co-ordinated by Ed McHale]
- An autumn fair [much appreciated by stall holders and those attending]
- The Brixton Singers Christmas performance [co-ordinated by Ed McHale]



St. Bartholomew's Building:

During the year a Buildings and Maintenance committee met, currently chaired by Ed McHale, to prioritise work across the church and tower and to split these into a manageable set of smaller tasks.

Membership: *Revd Carol Pharaoh [rector], Joan O' Reilly, Ed McHale [Parish Wardens], Graham Andrews [PCC Treasurer], Ged Robinson-Todd [Bell Ringers], Linda Casson [secretary], Ryan Battersby [Tower Captain]*

All the usual testing of electrical and emergency equipment has been completed along with routine annual services and maintenance.

In 2024/5 we had a number of additional building works:

- There are ongoing issues with boiler failures / problems with the timer override which have been fixed currently.
- Lighting work for the church path has been completed with funding for this as a result of a bequest from Joyce Cunliffe. The work took about one week with minimal disruption to church events. For those using the building at nights in winter, the impact of this has been very beneficial.
- A further assessment of the dry rot has been completed but we await roof repairs to the church before tackling this.
- We have confirmed our ownership of the patch of land behind the columbarium and are looking at how to landscape this and use it as a memorial site for ashes.
- Three companies have assessed the state of the church roof and quoted for the remedial work. In conjunction with St Bartholomew's committee, we have opted for one company and plan for this work to be completed in April 2025. Diocesan funding is available for this work.
- Following the failure of some lights in the church, particularly over the choir gallery, we have started to look at options for replacing the bulbs with LED lighting that would be cheaper to run and help with Eco Church status. Designs for a new lighting system were expensive and we are reviewing the options still.
- During storms in December 2024 the flagpole was damaged but has now been replaced; a bid has been made for town council funding towards the costs.

Civic Events:

We marked the 80th anniversary of D Day on 6th June with a bell peal and Civic Service at St Bartholomew's. In October we dedicated a new Union flag at a service with the Westhoughton Branch of the Royal British Legion. Organ music at the service came via Glenn Miller and Dame Vera Lynn, which may have surprised some. We're planning events for the 80th anniversary of VE day in May 2025 and the dedication of a new British Legion Standard.



The Pretoria Pit commemorations again took place on 21st December. The Civic Service will move to Monday 22nd December in 2025 to avoid clashing with the programme of Christmas service on Sunday 21st December.

We were saddened to hear of the death of Christine Morris, long-standing Westhoughton Town Clerk with whom we had worked on many civic events over many years.

We apologise if we've missed anything and thank all those who work across all our churches, in many other unsung roles, who keep the many activities across the parish running so well. It must be noted, however, that much is done by a very small group of people and we need to look at involving a greater number of volunteers and succession planning if we're going to be able to continue to run the number of events that we do across the year.

Nothing happens without an enormous amount of planning, co-operation and paperwork and we're grateful to Christine Andrews, Pat James and Graham Andrews and welcomed Hilary Moore who serve as deputy wardens in the parish taking on a lot of additional duties at the different churches as well as our readers and clergy.

Joan O'Reilly – Parish Warden

Edward McHale – Parish Warden

2024/2025

PCC Treasurer's report to Annual Parish Meeting regarding 2024 accounts



St Barts PCC
consolidation maste

1. Income

Overall income was £1702 lower than 2023 at £98906¹.

Looking first at direct giving, this was £3625 lower in 2024 than in 2023, both planned giving (envelopes and Standing orders) and loose plate being significantly down.

Other voluntary giving was up in 2024 by £5891. £4218 of the increase came from wedding and funeral fees at £22976, part of which is subsequently paid to the diocese. Bellringing at Weddings was up by £1200 (subsequently paid to the bellringers). Concerts and events income (including autumn fair and coffee mornings) was up by a pleasing £2603, so congratulations to the events team. Unfortunately, all these increases were dragged down somewhat by a fall in Gift Day / general donations of £1788.

Appeals income was only £241 for the parish in 2024, comprising £96 for Chrisitan Aid and £145 gift for the minister at St George's.

The value of our investments rose by £1096 in 2024. This is not a real gain unless we sell the investments, but needs to be shown as a consolidation adjustment to balance the books. Current global stock market turmoil suggests that this might be a loss in 2025.

Bank interest remained a significant item in 2024 with interest rates remaining strong, St Bartholomew's receiving £2264

The income from the 200 club rose by £65 in 2024. St Bartholomew's church had an income of £2078 for hire of the meeting room in 2023 but only £740 in 2024, a fall of £1338, as sadly the renter concluded that the business was not viable and has since moved out.

Clergy cost sharing within the Team reflects the total clergy costs for the four parishes in the Team split in the ratio of the four Parish Share allocations. The cost sharing procedure brought us a reimbursement of £780 from the other parishes.

Each of the three district councils in our parish pays money to the PCC towards the shared PCC expenses including parish share. Again, this is not real income for the PCC, just a transfer within the parish, and so is removed from the external account with a consolidation adjustment. This year the PCC received £41022 from the three district councils, down from £43219 in 2022. The £10259 HMRC refund is not included in the £41022, as the claim is made for us by the diocese and they retain the refund towards our parish share.

In 2023 the parish received a grant from the diocese of £1580 in total towards energy costs. There were no significant extraordinary income items in 2024

So in summary, some ups and downs leading to an income slightly down on that of 2022.

¹ Numbers in this report have been rounded to the nearest pound

2. Expenditure

Headline:

Our Parish Share for 2023, previously known as quota, was £68200 of which we paid £49112 including the HMRC refund. Following discussions with the diocese our parish share was set at £50000 for 2024, rising by 5% in 2025 and again in 2026. By means of using reserves we paid the £50000 in full. This is good news, but our 2024 deficit of £18848 for the year after allowing for specific capital expenditure on lighting, is not sustainable and we shall not be able to keep using reserves like this.

In detail:

Our payment to Parish Share was £888 more than in 2023. The higher wedding and funerals income than in 2023 resulted in a £1818 higher payment to Manchester Diocese. Church service expenses were £1091 lower than in 2023. Higher payments to the organist and choir were balanced by lower payments to the vergers. The bellringers were paid the £1200 previously mentioned under income.

Our payments under the outreach heading were £301 higher than in 2023 with more expenditure by the luncheon club and on events but less overall on Education / youth work and Sunday School.

Our expenditure on buildings and equipment at £40569 was £17704 higher than in 2023. This includes nearly £14000 spent on external pathway lighting at St Bartholomew's using the Joyce Cunliffe legacy money. Church maintenance, mainly at St Bartholomew's, was £3043 higher than in 2023 and utilities at £10977 were £1016 higher. Utilities will be higher again in 2025 as we have not been able to match the price in our previous gas contract that expired at the end of 2024. Just for interest, utilities cost us £5825 in 2021.

Administration costs at £10301 are substantial, although lower than in 2023. Telephone and internet cost £1849 and we are working on reducing this cost.

Grants and expenses of trading were similar to 2023. Under extraordinary items we have included £2707 for St Bartholomew's cheques that have been issued but not cashed by the end of the year. This is a change in our accounting practice to show commitments we had at year end.

Overall, the total expenditure for the parish of £131688 was £22636 higher than in 2023, so the deficit for the parish increased to £32782 overall (£18848 + £13934 on external lighting). It will be very difficult for us to pay our full £52500 parish share in 2025.

3. Statement of main assets.

The revaluation of investments up by £1096 has already been mentioned.

The total held in various St Bartholomew's funds was £48092, down from £76374, a £14348 reduction after allowing for the planned lighting costs. As in the notes to the accounts, £7144 is designated for St Bartholomew's church building and tower work. St Thomas and St Georges ran deficits of £512 and £943 respectively.

The total monetary assets of the parish at 31st December 2024 were £103230 which was £32782 lower than the previous year.

G P Andrews, PCC Treasurer, 06/04/2025

PCC Secretary Report 2024/5

PCC Members April 2024 – APCM April 2025

***Clergy:

Team Rector – Revd Carol Pharaoh

Team Vicar – Revd Angela Wynne

Curate – Revd Andy Jones [*until October 2025*]

***Readers Emeritus:

Alan Morris / Elaine Simkin

***Churchwardens:

Joan O'Reilly [*Safeguarding Officer*] / Ed McHale [*PCC lay chair / acting secretary*]

***Deputy Wardens:

St. Bartholomew – Christine Andrews / *vacancy*

St George – John Moore / Pat James

St. Thomas – Graham Andrews [*PCC Treasurer*] / *vacancy*

***Deanery Synod Representatives: serve until APCM in 2026

Christine Andrews / Elaine Simkin / Joan O'Reilly / *vacancy*

Elected Members:

St. Bartholomew – Jean Tonge / Rachel Dawber / George Twist

St George – June Crook / Sarah Barry

St. Thomas – *vacancy* / *vacancy*

*** = *ex officio* members

At its first meeting immediately following the APCM, the PCC appointed the sidespeople for 2023/4 and appointed to post

Graham Andrews PCC Treasurer

Ed McHale PCC Vice Chair / PCC Secretary

Rector / Wardens / PCC Secretary / PCC Treasurer to form the Standing Committee

The PCC has met regularly during the year with standing agenda items including

- reports from individual church committees
- reports from church schools within the parish [noting the changes in head teachers and appointing school governors]
- Treasurer's report
- Electoral roll updates

During the year,

- we have accepted the 2024 Diocesan fees for occasional offices and the revised fees,
- completed the three yearly review of Eucharistic assistants
- agreed changes to Pauline Rowley and James Young's ALM roles so they can also minister in Westhoughton parish and to the update to Revd Malcolm Wearing's post within the team.
- agreed the Bishops' Instrument regarding marriages within the Team Benefice with regard to the reading of banns
- reviewed the "Prayers for Love and Faith" guidance from the Church of England

Ed McHale
PCC Secretary

St. George's Church Committee report 2024 for 2025 APCM:

Clergy Revd Andy Jones [*until October 2025*], Revd Carol Pharaoh

Churchwardens:

Joan O'Reilly / Ed McHale [*committee chair*]

Deputy Wardens:

Pat James / Hilary Moore

PCC Reps:

Vacant / Vacant

Elected Reps: John Thompson [*treasurer*], Angela Greenall, Sarah Barry, June Crook, Carole Walsh



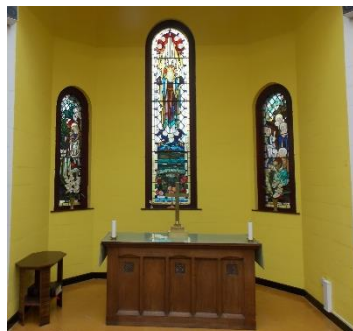
In September, it was announced that our curate, Revd Andy Jones had been appointed Team Rector of the Seven Saints Team in Bolton. We paid tribute to his work in the parish and team and particularly at St George's, both church and school, in his time with us at his final service in October and were able to make a presentation to him, Katie and Harry. Many of us were able to attend and support them at the induction service at St George with St James, New Bury in November.

This has had an impact upon service cover at St George's but we continue to meet weekly. We are currently running a service pattern with Communion services on the first and third Sundays and Services of the Word on the other Sundays. We ran a very successful Café Church style Nativity Service and Crib service at Christmas in house and are looking at developing this ministry over this year.



Attendances in 2024 are approximately the same as in 2023 but still not at pre-Covid numbers.

Sunday School continues and meets on the first and third Sundays during the first part of the Communion Service. We have a good number of leaders including some very keen and able young leaders, but numbers attending fluctuate. The Sunday school have been meeting in the school room recently and have updated the noticeboards to include a Prayer Tree and Fair Trade noticeboard and are excellent Bible readers at our services.



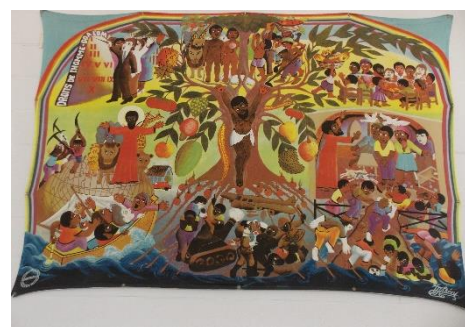
The initial building work had been completed and the new entrance and library space looked very attractive. We had access for services during this work with no issues. The church noticeboard had been resited in the entrance. The hall and sanctuary area have been

redecorated in a very vivid yellow.



The self-defence classes meeting on a Saturday in the school have now finished but a dance group is hiring the hall in that slot. One of the conditions of hire is that they will set out the church and this is generally working well.

Pat James has cleaned the tapestry and this is once again displayed in the hall.



During the year:

- we celebrated the anniversary of opening on St George's day. We welcomed some members of the school who led us in our Mothering Sunday and Harvest services.
- as part of the Mission Community Outreach Plan we marked "Bring a Friend to Church" Sunday which resulted in a few additional people coming to St George's that day. Many thanks for those who provided refreshments that day. It was good that outreach / mission / growth were being discussed at church meetings.
- Carole Walsh and Sarah Barry are now Eucharistic assistants
- we ran stalls at the St Bartholomew's autumn fair, raising approximately £500 for St George's with second hand books, Christmas goods and a wine raffle
- on Mothering Sunday 2024, five of our young people took communion for the first time following the Belonging to God course.
- we have held a further Games Afternoon at St George's which proved fun and popular. The use of the hall on Saturdays limits the opportunity for further events
- we have been able to provide refreshments after the service on special occasions
- John Thompson has been looking at the St George's Eco Church proposals, recognising that as a church meeting in a school, our options are limited



- we ran our stewardship campaign in October with the tagline **5** in **2025** showing that we need to raise income by 5% to stand still. The response to this has been very positive.

We are grateful to all at St George's for their generous giving meaning that we have overpaid[!] our portion of the Parish Share in 2024 especially the majority of people who give to the church by direct debit / envelopes. We have also done the usual fund-raising during the year including both an Advent and Lent challenge as well as the smarties tube challenge.

Many thanks also to the committee for their tireless work each week especially John & Helen Thompson [for the powerpoints, financial stewardship and music], Samuel Greenall [for running powerpoint services], Pat James and Hilary Moore who undertake the wardens' duties and represent us on the parish committees and to all who serve on the St George's committee.

In 2025 we were pleased that James Young was appointed as Head teacher and look forward to develop further links with the school as we move forward together.

Ed McHale

St George's Committee Chair / Secretary

St. Bartholomew's Church Committee report 2024 for 2025 APCM:

Clergy Revd Carol Pharaoh [*chair*]

Readers Emeritus Alan Morris / Elaine Simkin

Churchwardens:

Joan O'Reilly / Ed McHale [*vice chair / committee secretary*]

Deputy Wardens:

Christine Andrews / *vacancy*

Deanery Synod Representatives:

Christine Andrews / Elaine Simkin [*St Bart's treasurer*] / Joan O'Reilly

PCC Reps:

Jean Tonge / Rachel Dawber / George Twist

Elected Reps:

Ollie Younge / Linda Casson

St Bartholomew's committee has met regularly in 2024/5 and, at its first meeting, co-opted Sue Robinson-Todd onto the committee.

During the year [*see also churchwardens' report above for many more details*]:

- There have been updates on the various building projects underway, including faculties for the external lighting and initial dry rot treatment and investigation in the church and tower; internal lighting; PA system; roofing repairs; vestry cupboard door repair.
- There is a regular financial statement from the treasurer

- Relevant services and events are discussed
- There is feedback from Sunday School, St Bartholomew's school
- We have adopted the hire agreement for use with school bookings, clarifying the maximum attendances at events
- We held an additional meeting in August to plan the stewardship campaign
- We have agreed an updated Health and Safety policy which also includes areas within the tower
- The key holders list is being reviewed and updated
- We have agreed a legacy policy and accompanying leaflet

Ed McHale
St Bartholomew's Committee Secretary

St Thomas' Team Vicar's Annual Report 2024-2025

Church Council



The Church Council met formally 4 times last year. Members are The Team vicar Revd Angela Wynne, Joan O'Reilly & Ed McHale Church wardens, Graham Andrews -Deputy warden, Claire Smith Treasurer, council members Christine Andrews. There are vacancies on the church Council. Once more I am very grateful to the Church Council for all their support and input. Graham and Christine open up the church each Sunday and set out the pews / seats, clean, Hoover and set up the altar for Communion, welcome people and keep us stocked up with all we need for the services. Graham looks after the rota for

readers and sidespeople.

Claire has kept the accounts in order and claimed our gift aid back. Claire opens up if Graham and Christine are on holiday. Many thanks to her for all she does.

Thanks to Gail Stocks who kept the minutes until she stepped down during the year. Other commitments also meant that Caroline Darby is no longer able to be on the council. Thank you to both of them for all they've done at St Thomas' and we wish them all the best.

Thank you to all those who contribute by doing the readings, being a sides-person and welcoming people, those who operate the CD player. Your participation is very much appreciated. Several of our young people volunteer to welcome people to church and to read the lessons.

The Church Council has met four times over the year. Finances is one of our major concerns. We held a Stewardship campaign, but this is ongoing. We had a stall at the Christmas Fair. We held a raffle for a Christmas hamper. More people are using the QR code in church.

Another challenge is to recruit more volunteers. One of our parents was confirmed last year and she volunteered to help with Sunday School.

Services

We have roughly half Eucharistic, half non-Eucharistic services. Up to Christmas 2024 we offered Pre-school but now our prayers have been answered and we are now able to have a Sunday School

for children 5-11 years and also we will be able to offer the Pre-school again when the Safeguarding checks are complete.

We continue to put the message across that we need the congregation to be more involved. We have lots of new families attending. Average 25 children and their carers. It's lovely to have them with us. We have been working with the school. They have helped us with Café Church, refreshments and technology and The Songs of Praise we held for the Connect Mission which was well attended.

There is a very loyal core of older people who support us financially and practically as much as they are able. In November we held a **Remembrance Day service** with an act of Remembrance.

During the year we have had 2 baptisms after the main service. Thank you to Graham and Claire who stay behind to support.

At Christmas we supported Christmas Dinner on Jesus, Fort Alice with our Toy Service and we held our Carol Service. On Christmas Eve we held a Crib Service and Christingle. Thank you to Christine who organised transportation, speaker for Toy Service and led our Crib Service.

Christine our ALM, regularly leads Service of the Word which enables me to be at St Katharine's or even take a break.

Looking ahead...

The priorities for the coming year will continue to be how we can improve our fundraising

And how we can engage with the families so that they have a meaningful worship time.

Your prayers that such help may be forthcoming would be very much appreciated.

Every Blessing

Revd Angela Wynne, Team Vicar.

Data Protection Report for 2025 AGM

Our church forms including remain compliant with the Data Protection laws.

As a Parish we continue to e-mail out the weekly pewsheets and occasional special advertising. Regular attendees from our congregation have signed up or e-mailed to request which publications they wish to receive and can withdraw approval at any time by e-mailing the Parish office.

Baptism / wedding families who have indicated consent when booking will receive the special advertising. Anyone can remove their names from this contact list simply by sending an email reply.

We are not aware of any non-compliance with Data Protection in 2024 and no complaints have been raised. The policy was reviewed and there were no revisions to the policy made in 2024.

The churchwardens continue to oversee Data Protection but would be pleased to hand this on to a Data Protection Officer appointed by the PCC now that the policies are in place and the workload known.

Ed McHale

St. Bartholomew's Church Choir Report for 2025 AGM

We have been able to return to singing a full complement of hymns at Sunday services and have contributed anthems and special pieces at services in Advent, Lent and Easter.

Highlights of the year included the Services over the Coronation weekend the Parish Carol Service.

My thanks must go to those who come and practice weekly whatever the conditions. We have faced a lot of health issues over the last 12 months and it's good that we can act together as a support group.

Recruiting new members is always difficult. We are always open to new members of any age – please just come and have a word with me.

Ed McHale

Director of Music

Safeguarding Report 2024

All who work with children in the parish, parish wardens, deputy wardens all PCC members and those who take communion into the homes of parishioners. All must have an up-to-date DBS. Not everyone has completed their DBS training online, this is absolutely essential. At the time of writing this report we have had one concern which was reported to the diocese. From Sunday School, home communion, bellringers, choir, and all Wiggle worship helpers all DBS.

St. Thomas's St Georges and St Bartholomew's have 24 DBS.

Joan O'Reilly

Café Church 2024

We know a lot of the parents and children come to Café Church to get the children into a certain school. We give them all a reading from the bible which they can take away with them. Café church starts at 3.45 on Wednesday when children are served with juice and a biscuits and the parents can choose either tea or coffee.

We start with a worship service followed by songs, prayers then a bible reading and a talk which is followed by crafts.

At the end we come together to say grace.

Thank you to all who help with the refreshments.

Joan O'Reilly

St Bartholomew's Sunday School Report 2024

Sunday School meets on 1st, 2nd and 3rd Sunday of the month. The 4th Sunday is all age worship with children and adults taking part in readings and prayers.

It can vary how many children attend it is normally between 6 and 10. This really depends on whether they need a mark to get their child into a certain school.

Some parents come into Sunday School to support their children which we really do not want to encourage.

I would like to thank Rachel, Helen, Nicola (who leads Sunday School) and Andrea who supports the leader. We now have new leaders, Linda and her son Dion.

We must not forget that these children are the future of our church.

Joan O'Reilly

Wriggle worship report.

Monday mornings are going very well we have about 14 adults and roughly about 16 toddlers.

We start at 9 30 am when the toddlers have toy time, we also have activities which goes with wriggle worship.

10 30 is tidy up time where all adults and toddlers help.

After wriggle worship starts all join in with the song then a story connected to the activity followed by our special prayer. Then we finish with more singing and bubbles

Joan, Christine, Elaine, Carol and Linda.

Ignite Youth Westhoughton

Ignite Youth is a space where our young people across the Team in Year 6 or above can meet each month. We continue to meet at St John's and our thanks go to all the Team PCCs and churches for their prayers and support. Also, to Tim Eden (St John's treasurer) for administering the TYC funds.

We are blessed to have had 20 young people who have attended over the year. Numbers have settled at around up to 12-14 each session. Each year, we have been encouraged to see new Year 6's to join us after the summer and continue to link Ignite Youth attendance with the Team confirmation classes.

We had a slight blip in July due to the weather and a certain football competition meaning we had to delay our BBQ until September. However, this didn't really impact attendance and we continue to see the same core of young people coming.

Topics have included "Running the Race", "It Must Be Love" "Generosity - Social Action" and "Generosity – Thanksgiving & Harvest". We focus on a bible passage, prayer and bible breakdown based including enjoying games and activities linked to the topic. We really value the time spent sharing over "take away" food. We have fun evenings too, including showing the film "Yes Day", our Summer BBQ and Christmas Party.

This year our young people presented our churches with Easter freezes as a Thank You. These included angels which were part of the Easter Experience

for our local schools at St Bartholomew's church. The other pictures created this session were amazing and used by St John's over the Easter season. They also considered their generosity and giving by collecting for Urban Outreach at Harvest, focussing on the items that are not always thought about including toiletries and cleaning items. These were greatly appreciated.

We want to say a big thank you to the volunteers Caroline, Claire, Lisa and Tracey from across the team who help support running Ignite Youth. We welcomed Janet and Rhea in the autumn and they have already been a great asset to the team. We continue to pray that more volunteers will come forward from other churches as we need more support and ideas.

We especially wish to thank Lisa for all her help until Summer 2024, when she stepped down to focus on her own church and wider commitments. Her ideas and enthusiasm will be missed and we wish her God's blessing as she continues to serve. We will miss Reverend Andy Jones help and support - we wish him well in the Seven Saints team and as he seeks to introduce a similar ideas to their young people's group.

We continue to be involved with Bolton West Mission Community Youth Leaders benefitting from sharing our experiences, encouraging one another and arranging events each term. In February - a games & pizza event at St Elizabeth's Horwich, with some staying for Alive & Free, where the speaker was Bishop Matthew, Bishop of Bolton. In June - 3 of our young people attended the Catalyst Youth Weekend with around 35 from other groups. Ni-Cola Scott, Children Changing Places Shade Project Leader, led 3 sessions and there were wonderful times of worship and fun together. In November - "Into the Light" was held at St John's Wingates focussing on journeying towards Advent. 37 young people attended, including 12 from Ignite Youth. An amazing evening of worship, games and activities, with Reverend Vinnie Jones providing the reflection. More events already planned for 2025!

Please pray continually for Ignite Youth as we encourage and support our young people to continue to follow Jesus. Also, for our leaders as we seek God's direction and continue to seek his heart for them.

Evelyn Eden & Andy Glynn

Bolton Deanery Report for APCMs and PCCs 2024-5

Your Deanery needs you!

Yes, you. Not just the clergy or the Deanery Synod reps. Bolton Deanery needs your prayers and your support for the calling we all share as Christians in our churches, parishes and teams, to love God and love our neighbours as ourselves, and to pass on the gospel of Jesus Christ to the people and communities around us in this, our part of God's creation.

You might be thinking what actually is Bolton Deanery, or what's the point of Bolton Deanery anyway – why don't I ever hear much about it? You might be thinking, what are these mission communities I sometimes hear about? What even are they, and why do we have them at all?

This report is about giving you some clear information about these things, whether you know some bits, or have heard some things, or are really not sure at all.

It's also an encouragement and an invitation to find out more, by asking your Area Dean, asking for a visit to your church or PCC or group, and encouraging you to pray for what's going on across Bolton Deanery in many parishes and churches where God is being worshipped faithfully, the gospel is being shared with people of all ages, and lives are being transformed by the love of God in Jesus Christ.

So what is Bolton Deanery – and what's it for?

Bolton Deanery is made up of 50 places of worship and 33 parishes. It includes the borough of Bolton, but also some parts of Blackburn and Salford. It's one of seven Deaneries in the Diocese of Manchester – and it's basically a support network for the parishes and teams, clergy and volunteers within it.

It has a Deanery Synod, a formal gathering of representatives elected from every parish for sharing information and discussion across the Deanery. This

Synod can look at issues raised by the national Church, by the Diocese, and by PCCs at a local level.

In Bolton our Deanery Synod has a policy of looking at key issues and themes in its four meetings across the year.

In recent years we have had presentations and discussions on:

Closing Churches – How, Why and Who

Growing our Churches

Clergy Vacancies, Deployment and the Diocesan Vision

Children, Families and Schools

New mission ideas – Talkin’ Tables and other projects in our Mission Communities

Parish Share and the Discussion and Agreement Process

Safe Families and Home For Good – support for vulnerable young people

The Emerging Strategy for the Diocese 2025-2030

So what’s an Area Dean for – and why are they full-time?

The role of a full-time Area Dean is to support clergy, volunteers and parishes across the Deanery in their ministry and mission.

This includes mentoring, encouraging and advising clergy, individually and collectively as the Deanery Chapter; working with parishes and teams in vacancy or times of clergy illness or sabbatical; working with the Diocesan teams and projects like Children Changing Places across the Deanery; being the local link point for the Archdeacon and Area Bishop, and for the Bishop of Manchester, advising on clergy appointments, parish support and any issues or questions arising; supporting parishes and teams to develop their vision and strategy; preaching and leading worship across the Deanery – especially during vacancies – and encouraging everyone in the Deanery, lay and ordained, to live out their God-given call to follow Jesus.

Or as one person put it – to be a kind of chief exec during the week, and a supply vicar on the weekend...

Area Deans used to be full-time parish priests as well, with much smaller Deaneries. This meant a lot of this support work simply didn’t happen, and clergy and parishes were much more isolated than they are now.

What is a Mission Community and what are they for?

A mission community is a group of parishes within an area of a Deanery who are encouraged to work together in mission and ministry and to support each other. They aren’t ‘mega-parishes’ or ways to get rid of the parish system – they’re a new, and hopefully in the long term better, way to support it. Lots of parishes don’t have the volunteers they used to, and the number of paid clergy in the Diocese is less than it was, for many reasons, mostly around finance.

While we can certainly argue about whether there should be more money from the national church for paid clergy and workers, there's also a shortage of people with the right calling and training for these roles – and loads of the ones there are have a mysterious calling to the South East of England...

In the meantime, every Diocese needs to find ways to share resources and work together across parishes so that we continue with the mission and ministry God has given us. That's what mission communities in this Diocese are about.

Now you may be thinking you don't know much or anything about this – and what difference does it make anyway? The short answer is that these communities are still very new – and while some are already doing amazing things, others are finding it hard to get off the ground or spread the word that this is even a thing, which is one reason why this report has been written and shared.

In Bolton we have four mission communities – Bolton West, Bolton Central, Bolton North East and Bolton South East. The parishes in each are listed below in case you don't know which one you're in:

Bolton West	Bolton Central	Bolton North East	Bolton South East
St Bede Bolton-le-Moors St Mary Deane + St Andrew Over Hulton St Thomas/St John Lostock St Katharine Blackrod St James Daisy Hill St Bart's Westhoughton + St George's the Hoskers + St Thomas Chequerbent St John Wingates Holy Trinity Horwich St Catherine Horwich St Elizabeth Horwich Rivington	Christ Church Heaton St Margaret Halliwell St Peter Bolton-le-Moors St Philip Bolton-le-Moors West Bolton Team St George the Martyr Emmanuel Centre St Luke Halliwell St Paul Halliwell St Thomas Halliwell St Peter Halliwell St Stephen AM Lever Bridge	Christ's Church Harwood Turton Moorland Team Christ Church Walmsley St Andrew Bromley Cross St Anne Turton St James Edgworth St Maxentius Bradshaw St Peter Belmont St James Brightmet St Paul Astley Bridge (Antioch Church Plants: - New Life Brightmet - Oldhams Estate)	Clifton St Anne Clifton St Thomas Clifton Green Farnworth & Kearsley St Stephen Kearsley Moor Stoneclough Holy Trinity Prestolee St Saviour Ringley St Augustine Tonge Moor + St Aidan Crompton Way St Matthew Little Lever Seven Saints St Catherine New Bury St George New Bury St Michael Great Lever

For many of our clergy, their mission community gives them a chance to meet together, to pray and support each other, and explore ways of working together over the area, which the new bigger Deanery doesn't allow. It's also a great way for lay volunteers and parish officers to find support and work on new projects together.

This has seen some exciting developments, building on good pre-existing relationships and foundations, and trialling new things amid the busyness of parish life and ministry.

In Bolton West, the clergy have been meeting and praying together for many years, and the youth leaders and volunteers from the different parishes and teams also meet together regularly to pray and support each other – and over the last two years young people from across the community have shared an annual Away Weekend, Catalyst, and are growing as followers of Jesus and leaders in their own right.

In 2024, Bolton West also held a post-Easter project across all the churches, Connect, encouraging church members to intentionally invite people to church. There have been meetings across the community for the wider ministry teams in all the parishes, and important and robust conversations with the Area Dean and Archdeacon about the challenges of future vacancies, clergy numbers and allocations, and the sheer workload of parish ministry for clergy and volunteers alike. This mission community does not have a leader, but the clergy share leadership amongst themselves as needed.

In Bolton Central there have been regular clergy meetings for sharing and prayer, and shared projects like Ashes to Go on Ash Wednesday, planned Eco-Church training offered in one parish with an invitation to the wider mission community, as well as special services like Autumn and Summer Praise events and a proposed Light Service in October 2025. The mission community has a supportive role to the many initiatives going on its diverse parishes and settings, from Bolton Parish Church to St Peter's Halliwell and everything between at Christ Church Heaton, the West Bolton Team and St Stephen and All Martyrs Lever Bridge – with a increasing emphasis on sharing school governance roles and support across the community. In this mission community, there is no current leader after Ian Hepburn moved to his new role, so leadership is shared amongst the clergy with Dave Thompson acting as spokesman as required.

In Bolton North East the challenge of clergy vacancies, as well as the illness and death of Peter Reiss, has seen the other clergy of the mission community coming together in an extraordinary way to support the ongoing worship of the Turton Moorland Team alongside their own churches, and to hold shared services and other activities with open invitations for everyone to join in during the year, while meeting regularly for prayer and encouragement, especially for the team at Christ's Church Harwood, who have been continuing to minister faithfully despite being in vacancy for four years. There have also been some great shared projects with the two Antioch church plants – New Life Brightmet and Oldhams. There is more to do, especially to support lay volunteers, and with more clergy moving on soon, there will be other opportunities and challenges in the future. In this mission community, Viv Masters serves as mission community leader, looking to convene the clergy and others regularly.

Bolton South East has taken a longer time to get things going, and not because of any lack of effort from the amazing lay and ordained people in the churches here. It is natural and understandable that things have been hard, given the wide

geographic spread, the long vacancies at Seven Saints and Clifton, and a relatively new priest in post at St Matthew's Little Lever with a vacancy before that. Some of the clergy have recently begun to meet at each other's churches

for prayer and conversation, and are beginning to explore ideas for events and activities which might be shared across the community to raise the profile of each parish and team. It would be good to see more opportunities for lay parish officers and other ministers to meet to pray together and support each other, and for training. Currently, Fr Tony Davies is the mission community leader.

Mission communities are not a legal entity – they don't replace parishes or teams but support their work, just as the early churches supported and encouraged each other as we see in the Book of Acts and the letters of St Paul.

What about the Diocese – what's the big picture here?

Bolton Deanery and its mission communities are a kind of scaffolding for the parishes of this part of the Diocese of Manchester. They're there as support, not an end in themselves, and as a way of spreading the load across the whole Diocese as evenly as possible.

So with the 175 paid clergy posts this Diocese funds, with £2 million a year for that coming from the national church, this allocation is shared among the seven Deaneries, with Bolton's allocation being around 18.5 paid posts, and this then allocated by mission community based on numbers of churches, parishes, and people attending for worship or other activities week by week. For more detail about this, invite the Area Dean to come and talk to your church.

The Diocese is the overall structure that holds our parishes together – so the Diocese isn't 'them upstairs', it's all of us in every church, school and parish belonging to it. Every ordained or lay minister has a licence or permission from the Bishop of Manchester in this Diocese in order to serve here, as part of our historic church structures and accountability in Christian ministry. The central team of the Diocese supports parishes by paying your clergy stipends, clergy housing, admin, training, clergy costs, safeguarding and ongoing mission.

As noted above, this is funded by your parish contributions – calculated as fairly as possible across all the churches so each parish pays its 'share' - and also by additional money from the national church, due to the high levels of deprivation in this Diocese, as well as from the reserves of the Diocese – without which we couldn't afford the number of clergy we have.

The Diocese has support teams for education – including our many church schools – and for mission and ministry, training, safeguarding, finance and other support, which are for all parishes. In addition, the central team applies for funding for

major projects – like the transformation programme across the Diocese, and here in Bolton, the incredible Children Changing Places Project, which works to build links between churches, schools and families, helping us minister across all ages, in a world where many younger people and families don't have any connection with or grasp of church or worship or Jesus.

So what's going on now and next with all of these things?

The Diocese is looking to put in a major bid for funding to the national church towards the end of 2025, for significant funding to help us continue to transform our parishes, schools and chaplaincies to be a worshipping, growing and transforming Christian presence at the heart of every community – a Church for a different world.

This is going to focus on four key areas – and it's where right now we need your help and ideas. The four key areas for the next 5 years are:

Growing younger – continuing the pioneering work like Children Changing Places to strengthen churches' relationships with schools, young people and families, and mindful that Jesus tells his followers in Matthew 18.3, 'Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.'

Church planting and revitalisation – starting new churches in new places and sometimes in old buildings where a new spark might bring new people, mindful that every church in history was once a new church, planted in faith, to bring new growth and a harvest, and as that great church planter St Paul writes in Galatians 6.9, 'so let us not grow weary in doing what is right, for we will reap at harvest time, if we do not give up.'

Developing missional leaders – growing as followers of Jesus, lay and ordained, and by doing this together, helping all our volunteers and paid ministers to flourish in their Christian lives, to grow in their faith and their sense of call – and by following Jesus faithfully, to become the leaders he is already calling them

and us to be. As Jesus tells us in Matthew 9.37-8 'the harvest is plentiful but the labourers are few, therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest.'

Parish Renewal – yes, it's here, the thing we all want to see! All of us want to see parishes renewed in their ministry and mission to the communities around them. That's about support and encouragement, from new appointments, revitalisation, mission initiatives or re-planting teams.

Sadly, in this key area we also have to consider Church buildings at risk of closure. We will look at all possible options and interventions to recover the situation, including planting teams and interim support, and only if nothing else works do we look at helping our PCCs and congregations to close their church buildings – as only the PCC and congregation can make that decision. Even then we will look to do something new and different in such parishes, looking for where God may be at work, and seeking to join in – as Isaiah 40.31 says, ‘...those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.’

So what does this have to do with you and me?

The Diocese of Manchester is not some faceless blob sitting in St John’s House in Bury, or in Bishops court in Salford – it’s you and me and all of us, the people in our churches and parishes, schools and chaplaincies, on Sundays and during the week – whether we work or are retired, have families or live alone, whatever our age or stage or background.

The four areas for our work have been identified from the good and the challenging things going on in our parishes and deaneries over the last five years, and this is being led by the Bishop’s Leadership Team and the central team based in Bury. Their role is to shape our ideas and contributions with their own overview across the deaneries, and the learning from projects like Children Changing Places as well as the experience of other dioceses, about what we ought to be doing now and in the future, so that they can prepare a bid for funding which can be successful, and can add value and resource for every parish and person in this Diocese.

Whether it’s more chaplaincy support in schools, more support for encouraging and supporting our volunteers in their vocations, and growing our own new leaders, lay and ordained, your views matter and will help to shape the bid. And your questions about all of this matter too. Which is why this report is aimed at giving you some information, encouraging you to ask questions and discuss these things in your church, parish or team, and suggesting you invite the Area Dean for more discussions.

It’s about asking you to get involved – and above all else to pray. Because it’s when God’s people pray that extraordinary things happen, and what is impossible for us becomes possible with Him.

Every blessing in Christ

Simon Cook Area Dean of Bolton

**The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of St Bartholomew
including the churches of St Bartholomew's, St George's and St Thomas'**

2024 Accounts

2023 (£)	INCOME	St Thomas	St Bart's	St George's	PCC	Consol adj	TOTAL 2024 (£)
	DIRECT GIVING						
28141.03	Gift aided planned giving-envelopes and SO	4428.50	12100.00	9964.00	0.00		26492.50
13097.46	Other planned giving-envelopes and SO	1147.50	10765.03	1094.00	500.00		13506.53
58.50	Other gift aided donations		0.00		0.00		0.00
11915.07	Loose plate collections (inc Sunday Schools)	1256.54	7810.89	673.07	0.00		9740.50
10411.90	Tax refund on gift aid giving	1762.46	5493.92	3002.95	0.00		10259.33
0.00	Memorial donations				0.00		0.00
63623.96		8595.00	36169.84	14734.02	500.00	0.00	59998.86
	OTHER VOLUNTARY INCOME						
3239.28	Gift day and general donations	310.00	699.55	441.75	0.00		1451.30
0.00	Donations for youth work				0.00		0.00
18758.00	Weddings & Funerals		22975.70		0.00		22975.70
20.00	Book of Remembrance		10.00		0.00		10.00
2926.05	Events, Concerts and Refreshments	220.71	5151.09	157.60	0.00		5529.40
435.44	Votive candle stand		348.00		0.00		348.00
245.00	Donations for flowers	0.00			0.00		0.00
0.00	Income from bell ringing		1200.00		0.00		1200.00
25623.77		530.71	30384.34	599.35	0.00	0.00	31514.40
	APPEALS						
262.05	Christian Aid		95.59		0.00		95.59
118.45	Donations for Royal British Legion		0.00		0.00		0.00
0.00	Bishop's fund				0.00		0.00
115.50	Children's Society		0.00		0.00		0.00
0.00	Gift for minister			145.00	0.00		145.00
150.00	Tower fund		0.00				0.00
0.00	Miscellaneous appeals				0.00		0.00
646.00		0.00	95.59	145.00	0.00	0.00	240.59
	INCOME FROM INVESTMENTS						
1966.73	Revaluation of investments					1096.40	1096.40
2270.98	Bank interest	30.88	2663.84	4.78	0.00		2699.50
170.59	Dividends				231.96		231.96
0.00	Received from trust funds				0.00	0.00	0.00
4408.30		30.88	2663.84	4.78	231.96	1096.40	4027.86

INCOME FROM TRADING						
1495.00	200 club			1560.00	0.00	1560.00
0.00	Sale of magazines and advertising space				0.00	0.00
2078.05	Room Hire	740.00			0.00	740.00
3573.05		0.00	740.00	0.00	1560.00	0.00
						2300.00
OTHER SUNDRY INCOME						
0.00	Transfers between accounts	0.00	0.00	41022.05	-41022.05	0.00
649.80	Clergy cost sharing within the Team			780.29		780.29
383.00	Sundries		0.00			0.00
1032.80		0.00	0.00	0.00	41802.34	-41022.05
						780.29
EXTRAORDINARY ITEMS						
120.00	Insurance reimbursement		0.00		0.00	0.00
0.00	Cash not banked, not included elsewhere	29.24			0.00	29.24
1580.00	Energy costs grant from diocese		0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
0.00	Balancing adjustment	0.75	14.00		0.00	14.75
1700.00		29.99	14.00	0.00	0.00	43.99
100607.88	INCOME TOTALS	9186.58	70067.61	15483.15	44094.30	-39925.65
						98905.99

**The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of St Bartholomew
including the churches of St Bartholomew's, St George's and St Thomas'**

2024 Accounts

EXPENDITURE						
2023 (£)	St Thomas	St Barts	St George's	PCC	Consol adj	2024 (£)
WORK OF THE CHURCH						
Leadership						
927.27 Ministerial expenses		430.00		571.61		1001.61
0.00 PCC expenses (including parish share)	6000.00	25000.00	10022.05		-41022.05	0.00
49111.90 Cof E parish share	1762.46	5493.92	3002.95	39741.00		50000.33
0.00 Clergy cost sharing within the Team				0.00		0.00
0.00 Deanery & other subscriptions				0.00		0.00
50039.17	7762.46	30923.92	13025.00	40312.61	-41022.05	51001.94
Services						
9062.00 Manchester DBF (weddings & Funerals)		10880.00		0.00		10880.00
2056.47 Church Services expenses	41.21	258.70	8.00	657.45		965.36
5935.90 Organists and choir		6251.50	147.00			6398.50
2035.00 Vergers		1633.00		0.00		1633.00
0.00 Payments to bell ringers		1200.00		0.00		1200.00
19089.37	41.21	20223.20	155.00	657.45	0.00	21076.86
Outreach						
368.42 Training and education (inc Sunday School)	21.96	0.00	24.38	0.00		46.34
0.00 Urban outreach				0.00		0.00
319.50 Luncheon Club		652.00		0.00		652.00
515.00 Concerts and events		750.00	0.00	0.00		750.00
222.25 Youth work		198.09		79.98		278.07
1425.17	21.96	1600.09	24.38	79.98	0.00	1726.41
Buildings and Equipment						
2929.47 Rectory Council tax / water rates				3142.04		3142.04
6208.73 Church maintenance (incl. cleaning)	678.00	8503.76	70.00			9251.76
3766.21 Churchyard maintenance		17019.90				17019.90
0.00 Rectory / Vicarage maintenance				0.00		0.00
9960.60 Utilities		10906.71	70.00			10976.71
0.00 Flowers and materials	178.31			0.00		178.31
0.00 Purchase of church equipment				0.00		0.00
22865.01	856.31	36430.37	140.00	3142.04	0.00	40568.72

Adminstration						
1330.78	Printing, postage and stationery	17.90	129.04	6.80	994.09	1147.83
772.00	Sundry		1200.00			1200.00
567.00	Equipment maintenance / rental		92.81	7.20	648.00	748.01
1460.68	Telephones and internet		885.16		963.38	1848.54
373.00	Website fees				325.00	325.00
351.00	Copyright licence	170.00		97.00		267.00
0.00	Bank charges					0.00
411.72	Planned giving envelopes				345.82	345.82
4222.07	Insurance	828.40	2935.36	654.86		4418.62
0.00	Stewardship campaign materials				0.00	0.00
1580.00	Transfers between accounts	0.00	0.00		0.00	0.00
11068.25		1016.30	5242.37	765.86	3276.29	10300.82
GRANTS						
115.50	Children's society		0.00		0.00	0.00
3143.19	Church Schools		1102.10	2131.12	0.00	3233.22
239.00	Royal British Legion Poppy appeal		25.00	0.00	0.00	25.00
0.00	Church council grants to School Governors				0.00	0.00
262.05	Christian Aid		95.59		0.00	95.59
0.00	Bishops fund				0.00	0.00
0.00	Miscellaneous					0.00
0.00	Gift for minister			185.00	0.00	185.00
3759.74		0.00	1222.69	2316.12	0.00	3538.81
EXPENSES OF TRADING						
817.50	200 Club winners plus licence fee				890.00	890.00
0.00	Crux magazine	0.00	0.00		0.00	0.00
817.50		0.00	0.00	0.00	890.00	890.00
EXTRAORDINARY ITEMS						
-12.50	Write-back of uncashed cheques from previous year	0.00		0.00	-122.50	-122.50
0.00	Transfer to PCC		0.00			0.00
	Unpresented cheques not included elsewhere		2707.00			2707.00
-12.50		0.00	2707.00	0.00	-122.50	2584.50
109051.71	EXPENDITURE TOTALS	9698.24	98349.64	16426.36	48235.87	-41022.05
-8443.83	NET SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)	-511.66	-28282.03	-943.21	-4141.57	1096.40
						-32782.07

**The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of St Bartholomew
including the churches of St Bartholomew's, St George's and St Thomas'**

2024 Accounts

STATEMENT OF MAIN ASSETS						2024 (£)
2023 (£)	St Thomas	St Bart's	St George's	PCC	Consol adj	TOTAL
TOTAL						
Investments and bequests						
6437.51 White Horse School - sale of nursery	0.00	0.00		6684.42		6684.42
15326.39 G&A Grundy Memorial Fund-income to St Barts	0.00	0.00		15677.19		15677.19
8611.77 Hart Common Sunday School and mission Church	0.00	0.00		9068.86		9068.86
4188.94 Thomas Smith bequest	0.00	0.00		4188.94		4188.94
342.16 Banco Santander Shares	0.00	0.00		383.76		383.76
0.00 Monies held in diocesan account				0.00		0.00
34906.77	0.00	0.00	0.00	36003.17	0.00	36003.17
Bank accounts and cash balances						
St Bartholomew's						
8383.32 Current Acc 40013757		5757.52				5757.52
Unpresented cheques		-2707.00				-2707.00
2926.24 Gift aid account 80773344		3104.96				3104.96
61537.41 CBF Deposit Fund 624108001D		38537.41				38537.41
303.96 Choir		328.46				328.46
2802.85 Belfry Fund		2802.85				2802.85
420.60 Luncheon Club		268.15				268.15
76374.38	0.00	48092.35	0.00	0.00	0.00	48092.35
St George's						
3136.92 Current Account			2448.85			2448.85
329.29 Clubs and Societies reserve			334.07			334.07
Unpresented cheques			-325.00			-325.00
0.00 Cash in hand			65.08			65.08
3466.21	0.00	0.00	2523.00	0.00	0.00	2523.00
St Thomas's						
438.68 Current Account	522.66					522.66
9.45 Cash not yet banked	29.24					29.24
3675.18 Memorial Fund	3028.06					3028.06
333.65 Flower Fund	365.34					365.34
4456.96	3945.30	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	3945.30
PCC						
16807.72 Current Account				12666.15		12666.15
136,012.04	Asset Totals	3945.30	48092.35	2523.00	48669.32	103229.97

The use of the following funds is restricted: G&A Grundy Memorial Fund, Sale of White Horse nursery, Thomas Smith bequest, St Thomas Memorial fund.

£6,944.15 in the St Bartholomew's accounts is designated to the Tower fund.

£199.50 in the St Bartholomew's accounts is designated to the St Bartholomew's Church, tower and churchyard.



CHARITY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Independent examiner's report on the accounts

Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/
members of

Charity Name

The PCC of the Ecclesiastical Parish of St Bartholomew, Westhoughton

On accounts for the year
ended

31st December 2024

Charity no
(if any)

1136063

Set out on page

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31st 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 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed the 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 which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records; or
- the accounts did 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 order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed:

Date:

16th April 2025

Name:

Nigel Ginniff

Relevant professional
qualification(s) or body
(if any):

Barrister at Law of England and Wales

Address:

13 Bankside

Westhoughton

BL5 2QP

Section B

Disclosure

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).

Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.