

The Parish of St Oswald, Warton and St Mary, Borwick



**Annual Report and
Financial Statements
of the
Parochial Church Council
of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Warton
for the year ended
31 December 2025
Charity No. 1146393**

Believing | Living | Sharing

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The Parochial Church Council of St Oswald, Warton and St Mary, Borwick Trustees' Annual Report for the year ended 31 December 2025

Aim and Purposes

Warton Parochial Church Council ("the PCC") has the responsibility of co-operating with the incumbent in promoting across the ecclesiastical parish, the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical.

Objectives and Activities

The PCC is committed to enabling as many people as possible to worship at our churches and to become part of our parish community. The PCC maintains an overview of worship throughout the parish and makes suggestions on how our services can involve the different groups that live within it. Our services and worship put faith into practice through prayer and scripture, music and sacrament.

When planning our activities for the year, we are mindful of the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit and, in particular, the supplementary guidance on charities for the advancement of religion. In particular, we try to enable people to live out their faith as part of our parish community through:

- Worship and prayer; learning about the Gospel and developing their knowledge and trust in Jesus
- Provision of pastoral care for people living in the parish
- Outreach work

We seek to develop our life together as we affirm individual strengths; value diversity; nurture growth, vocations and leadership; work towards accessibility, and respect and sustain our environment.

To facilitate this work, it is important that we maintain the fabric of St Oswald's Church, Warton, the Church Hall at Warton, and St Mary's Church, Borwick.

Achievements and Performance

The PCC is keen to offer a range of services during the week, and over the course of the year, that our community finds both beneficial and spiritually fulfilling. Our worship is principally centred on the Eucharist; our usual pattern of services includes Sunday and midweek Eucharists across the wider Benefice. We offer a range of environments from more formal, traditional and choral services to smaller and more intimate opportunities for prayer, worship and reflection. This included, for most of 2025, the informal, monthly, Sunday evening 'Lighthouse' service held at St Mary's in Borwick.

In November 2025 the Diocese announced that our incumbent, the Reverend Alice Ormondroyd, was to resign as a Parish priest, following her final service in the Benefice on 28 December 2025. Sadly, this means that we ended the year in Vacancy and are once again enormously grateful to our Licensed Lay Minister, Annette MacKenzie, who continues to work tirelessly to ensure that a full pattern of worship can, and will, continue in the weeks and months ahead. We wish Revd Alice and her family well in her future calling, as we begin our search for a new incumbent in 2026.

In March 2025 Revd Alice had accepted an invitation from The Bishop of Burnley to join the Diocesan Renewal Programme (Rural stream), an initiative funded by the national Church, and specifically designed to support and grow churches in rural Benefices. Whilst she and a member of each church had attended the initial sessions of the programme, the Benefice's participation ended on her departure.

The Benefice is seeking to re-engage with the objectives of the programme in 2026 via the Rural Renewal Officer, who has kindly agreed to act as our Vision Partner as we embark on the recruitment process.

Notwithstanding the challenges faced in 2025, enthusiastic and dedicated volunteers from both churches worked hard throughout the year to provide activities to serve and enrich the lives of our communities. These ranged from leading exciting and innovative worship and activities for children and young people, through to delivering opportunities for fellowship and companionship for the older generation, both within and beyond our regular congregations.

Further details of activities, events and groups follow in the individual reports.

Structure, Governance and Management

The Parish of Warton forms part of the United Benefice of Warton St Oswald and Borwick St Mary with Yealand Conyers St John, within the deanery of Tunstall and the Diocese of Blackburn.

The Parish Church of St Oswald's, and the Ecclesiastical Parish of Warton as a whole, are governed by the Parochial Church Council. As a District Church forming part of the Parish of Warton, St Mary's has its own District Church Council ("the DCC"), with powers delegated from the PCC.

The method of appointment of PCC and DCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules and the Rule 18 Scheme, under which St Mary's was established as a District Church.

The Warton PCC should ideally comprise the incumbent (the Vicar), two Parochial Churchwardens, two Deputy Churchwardens at St Mary's, the Deanery Synod representatives, the Licensed Lay Minister(s), 10 members elected by those members of the congregation who are on the St Oswald's part of the parish electoral roll and 2 members elected by those members of the congregation who are on the St Mary's part of the parish electoral roll. All those who attend our services are encouraged to register on the electoral roll and to stand for election to the PCC and DCC as appropriate.

Unfortunately, to-date no-one has come forward to act as Churchwarden for St Oswald's Church since the untimely and sad death of Alison Semple in early 2024. In 2024 the vicar appointed two deputy wardens at St Oswald's; one with a special interest in the fabric and heritage of the St Oswald's church building and its environs, and the other with a mission to improve and promote its Eco-friendly credentials. The search continues for full Churchwardens, the appointment of which is so important to the ability of the Parish to attract a new incumbent. Meanwhile all duties relating to the conduct of worship, administration and finance, fabric, and other practical matters, were diligently and conscientiously undertaken and fulfilled by members of the PCC and DCC, supported by colleagues from our sister church, St John's, Yealand, and by other volunteers from our local communities. The PCC was grateful to all involved, not least to the Deputy Churchwardens, and to Antonia Allum who served as an Administrative Assistant to the incumbent, and subsequently to the wider Benefice.

The PCC members are responsible for making decisions on all matters of general concern and importance to the parish including how the funds of the PCC are to be spent.

The full PCC met five times during the year. It was chaired by various members of the PCC. The Looking Forward in Faith group (formerly the St Oswald's Mission and Ministry committee) and the St Oswald's Fabric and Finance committee had both been disbanded by the incumbent and did not meet in the year. Both have subsequently been reactivated. These committees are responsible to the PCC and report back to it, with minutes of their decisions being received by the full PCC for relevant consideration and action.

The St Mary's DCC, which also reports to the PCC, met 3 times during the year and was chaired by either the incumbent or Joyce Tombs. The Annual District Church Meeting was held on 11 May 2025, ahead of the Meeting of Parishioners and Annual Parochial Church Meeting, which were held on 18 May 2025.

At the Annual Meetings there were a total of 115 names on the electoral roll, including 12 who were on the Borwick part of the roll and 17 who were resident outside the Parish.

The Benefice Advisory Group (BAG), an informal team which used to comprise the former Vicar and two members of each church, had been disbanded during the previous Vacancy. In early 2025 a new Benefice Coordination Team (BCT) was formed following a meeting with the Archdeacon in January 2025. This comprises around 10 members from the three churches in the Benefice. The team met informally on a number of occasions during the year and was chaired by various attendees. The Parish of Warton has been very grateful for assistance and support received from Linda Gardner, PCC Secretary at St John's, Yealand and other colleagues at St John's. Initiatives and ideas discussed by the BCT are reported back to the relevant PCC or DCC for formal consideration and action as required.

Administrative information

St Oswald's Church (the Parish Church) is situated in Main Street, Warton, with St Mary's Church, Borwick (a District Church/Chapel of Ease) situated on Borwick Lane between the villages of Borwick and Priest Hutton. The churches are part of the United Benefice of Warton and Borwick with Yealand, in the Deanery of Tunstall, in the Diocese of Blackburn, within the Church of England.

The PCC is a body corporate (PCC Powers Measure 1956, Church Representation Rules 2020) and is registered with the Charity Commission under charity number 1146393.

PCC members are either ex-officio, elected by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (the APCM) holding office for three years, or co-opted by the PCC. Members of the Deanery Synod are ex-officio members of the PCC, holding office for three years; they are also elected by the APCM. All appointments and elections are done in accordance with the Church Representation Rules 2020.

PCC members (and Trustees) who served at any time from 1 January 2025 until the date of approval of this report are noted below. Members served throughout the period unless otherwise stated.

<i>Incumbent:</i>	Revd Alice Ormondroyd (appointed 21 January 2024, resigned 28 December 2025)	In Vacancy from 28 December 2025
<i>Churchwardens:</i>	Vacancy (x 2)	
<i>Deputy Churchwarden - St Mary's</i>	Mrs Joyce Tombs (reappointed as Deputy Churchwarden and <i>ex officio</i> to PCC on 3 August 2025)	Treasurer (and <i>de facto</i> Secretary) of St Mary's DCC
<i>Licensed Lay Ministers</i>	Mrs Annette MacKenzie	
<i>Deanery Synod Representative:</i>	Mrs Pamela M Defeu	
<i>Elected Members:</i>	Mrs Marjorie Ashton (retired 18 May 2025) Dr Trevor Blease Mrs Emma V Brantley-Tziros (appointed 14 January 2025) Miss Tracey Lawther Mr Nicholas C Vereker Mrs Sandra M Parker Mrs Christine A Wellock Mrs Jodie A Kilty Mr Alan Bird	Electoral Roll officer PCC Treasurer Choir leader Safeguarding officer Hospitality PCC Secretary from 2026 Deputy churchwarden – Eco Deputy churchwarden –

Heritage

Mrs Dorothy Pearce (resigned 4 November 2025)
Mrs Susan E Brown (co-opted 4 November 2025)

Approved by the PCC on 5 May 2026 and signed on its behalf by

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Reports from Church Officers, Committees and Organisations

Bible Study Group

Annette MacKenzie LLM

A Bible Study Group which is open to anyone has continued over the year. Firstly, it has been at the home of Noeline Clarke, but is now hosted at the home of Annette MacKenzie. The group meets once a month. Much discussion takes place in all our studies as we learn much from each other. This year we have continued to look at the work of the Holy Spirit.

Breaking Bread

Annette MacKenzie LLM

Breaking Bread has continued to offer a meal after the mid-week Eucharist at St Oswald's, although attendance at this is not a requirement. It has seen a slight increase in numbers attending. Many thanks go to the three teams of three who give up their time, not only serving the meal and clearing up after, but also for the wonderful soups donated, the fresh home baking and preparation of sandwiches. We welcome children from Archbishop Hutton's School who come to help, serve, and bring us extra joy!

St Oswald's Church, Warden's Report

Jodie Kilty, Deputy Churchwarden – Eco Church

As St Oswald's Church was without a Churchwarden throughout 2025, the churchwarden role was covered by several members. What follows therefore is an overview from one contributor to the churchwarden role through the lens of Eco Church activities across our various church ministries.

As the Eco church remit is broad in scope, the activities are many and various and overlap other areas.

In-nature praise, prayer and teaching occurred across the year beginning with a walk up Warton Crag in Holy Week. Subsequent outdoor services were held at the Crag beacon at Pentecost, and at Senset Well in August. A lesson on Creation was heard by church participants at Hyning Quiet Day. Several church members also attended a creation-themed Lighthouse Service at St Mary's, led by Rev Alice in September. Planet-safe detergents were promoted at a Church Cleaning Day and at Church fundraisers.

Our florists, Jean and Marjorie, hosted a Spring demonstration by Warton sustainable flowers expert, Becky. This demonstration showcased alternatives to using florist foam and promoted the use of in-season blooms and greens. We were delighted that florists from our sister church, St John's, Yealand, were able to join us for this event.

Informal car sharing has increased throughout the year. This was a boon to those struggling for transport and brought additional benefits such as reducing the number of vehicles at church and encouraging a 'bring a friend to church' culture.

Through Lent, Junior Church worked with the charity Egg Cup, which matches food destined to be thrown away to households in need. Thank you to our Junior Church children and team for their engagement with food redistribution and for their superb presentations and displays.

Pollinator-friendly plants were planted in pots behind our church hall Gym. Peat free compost was used. Thank you to the hall team for tending pots through dry spells.

A Spring 'Cherish the Churchyard' fundraising event was held with participation from local youth group, Warton Eco Gang. Plant sales, baked goods and tea towels were available for donations. Outside events included a treasure hunt (Vanessa) and Grave tours (Alan & Tracey). This event was a success in no small part because of the dedicated mow team who keep the churchyard safe, orderly and clear of litter, and through the generosity of stall holders, donors and the hospitality team.

Efforts to reduce paper and printing continued and a shift from a large commercial printer to a smaller one was made in the autumn - a gift from St John's Church.

All who print are encouraged to monitor their usage in a notebook kept nearby. Church members have been encouraged to receive the Parish News magazine and Weekly Sheet electronically, if able - though paper copies continue to be made available. Thanks to Tom for assistance with our Weekly Sheet and for serving as minute-taker in the absence of a PCC secretary.

Our digital capacity improved with the installation of fast internet to our church hall. This makes us more attractive to hall renters and gives us digital ministry options, if wanted.

As mentioned later in the Finance Report, solar panels were installed on the Warton church hall roof. Thank you to Trevor and team.

A lecture entitled 'Net Zero Your Castle' was attended at Muncaster Castle, Cumbria, and key ideas shared with the PCC. An Energy and Decarbonisation audit of our main church building also took place and its findings join those in other significant reports to form the basis for a plan of works.

Rev Alice donated our Eco Bronze plaque which, after volunteers repainted that area, was hung in our porch. Thank you Rev. Alice and decorators.

Our church assisted St John's Eco Officer (Paul) with his church's Eco Church award application. We congratulate St John's on achieving their A Rochas UK 'Silver Award.'

Outside, churchyard tree care included ivy management to protect drystone walls and yew tree topping. Beech hedges also received attention. The importance of safe and pleasant access to this space cannot be overstated so we thank our churchyard team for their dedication.

Our main church electrics received urgent attention in the autumn as kitchen circuits and path lights had failed. Damp in the west section of church had corroded all infrastructure so a new, wall mounted rig was installed.

Several church members attended Warton Eco Gang's 'Big Lunch' in early Autumn. Community sustainability conversations began in late autumn at meetings held by Sustainable Warton and Yealand group (SWAY). St Oswald's will be represented at the Warton Repair Cafe and Warton Pollinator Trail - both due to launch in 2026.

Our Junior Church and Young Generations took part in a litter pick with Warton Eco Gang. Young Generations composed a Creation Prayer.

In conclusion, volunteers balanced the access to and protection of our church throughout 2025. Indeed there were many individuals who dealt with cash, purchasing, linen care, verging, cleaning and many other activities for the benefit of us and the Warton community. Our church greatly appreciates all who faithfully serve in these silent, invisible ministries.

St Mary's Church, Borwick

Joyce Tombs and Sally Fletcher, Deputy Churchwardens

Mission and Ministry

Throughout 2025 we maintained our regular pattern of worship, comprising a twice-monthly Sunday morning service of the Eucharist and, when possible, a monthly, music-based, Sunday evening service, known as the "Lighthouse" (after the 1970's gospel song of that name). Our typical Eucharist congregation ranged from 6 to 13 people, averaging 8. However, the congregation was significantly boosted by locals and by friends from across the Benefice and beyond, as we celebrated all the major Christian Festivals, and also Remembrance Day and three baptisms. The St Mary's patronal festival in September was attended by 46 people, who enjoyed an uplifting service of the Eucharist followed by convivial fellowship and refreshments in church. Our Carol Service was enjoyed by around 40 people, with 22 worshipping on Christmas morning. Both services were delightful. Special thanks go to the St Oswald's choir who joined us for the Carol Service, and to several of their members who greatly enhanced the singing by joining us at a number of Sunday services. We combined our Harvest Festival with the early evening Lighthouse service in September, attracting some 21 people to this lively celebration of God's Creation. In May, the church was filled with over 120 people for the funeral of Sheila Barnes, a former St Mary's churchwarden, who served the church and the local community for many, many years, and who sadly died on Easter Sunday.

Our thanks go to Revd Alice, and to all the retired and visiting clergy who made it possible to maintain this schedule of worship and thanksgiving throughout the year, not least to Revd Peter Mann, with whom it is always a delight and a privilege to worship. Above all, our very grateful thanks go to Annette MacKenzie, our Licensed Lay Minister, without whom simply none of this would have happened.

Members of the DCC, aided and assisted by a growing number of other residents of Borwick and Priest Hutton, were pleased to continue to provide Winter Warmer Lunches, concluding the 2024/25 season at the end of February 2025 and commencing the 2025/26 season in early November. We reached out to the local community producing and serving delicious home-made soup, sandwiches and cakes from the comfort of the Borwick and Priest Hutton War Memorial Hall. Our thanks go to all involved and not least to the 25 to 40 people who regularly attended. Special thanks go to the Borwick Pools Land Charity, to the village hall committee and to all who cooked, baked, shopped, served, operated the raffle, and socialised in order to make these inspiring events possible over the dark winter months. Our Lent Lunch in April was also very well supported and we were delighted to raise funds for Mosamaria.

Fabric

Revd Alice, with her assistant Antonia, applied for and obtained a Parish Vision Grant from the Diocese of Blackburn to update and improve audio visual equipment in both churches. As a result, the DCC was able to acquire a new sound system, a new wearable microphone, and a projection screen for use in the Lighthouse services. There remain some ongoing fabric issues due to difficulties in bringing appropriately skilled individuals to site on a timely basis to repair lead flashing, etc., but generally the building is in good condition and is well maintained.

Finally, in addition to everyone already mentioned, our thanks go to all those who helped to deliver and enrich what we do at St Mary's: from those who clean, provide refreshments, open and close the building on a daily basis, and maintain the churchyard, through to Trevor Blease who gives up his chance to sing in St Oswald's choir in order to play the organ so brilliantly at our services. We also thank Noeline Clarke, not only for her many years of steadfast and devoted service to St Mary's, but in particular in 2025, for representing us on the Diocesan Renewal Programme.

Safeguarding

Tracey Lawther

The Benefice has due regard for the House of Bishops' Safeguarding Practice Guidance.

All PCC members, as well as all children's and youth volunteers, are supported in applying for DBS clearance and in completing the required online safeguarding training. The Diocese has developed a very helpful online safeguarding hub and dashboard, which assists us in identifying those in key roles within our Benefice and enables us to effectively monitor DBS checks, training compliance, and risk assessments.

Safeguarding must remain the golden thread that runs through everything we do, not only within the church but also within the wider community, ensuring that we support and care for one another.

I am pleased to report that we have continued to see a significant improvement in compliance levels. Ongoing steps are being taken to ensure that we remain fully compliant in all areas, with the continued support and guidance of the Diocese.

Over the past year there have been a small number of low-level safeguarding concerns which have been appropriately addressed and managed. None of these concerns have reached the threshold requiring referral to external agencies.

If you require any clarification about safeguarding or would like to know more about how we work to keep our church communities as safe as possible for children and vulnerable adults, please speak to Tracey, our local Safeguarding Lead at St Oswald's, or contact the Diocese directly.

There are also a number of helpful safeguarding resources available on the diocesan website, including guidance and signposting to additional support services.

Junior Church

Vanessa Alpin et al

At present there are 11 children on the Junior Church register ranging in age from 2 to 13 and there are a few occasional visitors. There are four leaders with three covering each session. Children under 3 are accompanied by a parent.

Junior Church runs on Sundays in term time during the main service at St Oswald's. Most Sundays it takes place in the Church Hall, and we join the congregation for Communion but on the second Sunday each month we are in church for the "All Together" service contributing through the welcome, readings, intercessions, offertory and collection; and sometimes the reflection.

Topics covered this year have included Jesus' early life, the events of Easter and what happened after Easter. We thought about some of the different ways that God is amazing culminating with our annual visit to Hyning Monastery where we reflected with Sister Audrey on how God turns the world upside down.

During Lent we challenged families across the Benefice to donate at least one item a week to Eggcup – a local charity that aims to reduce food waste by distributing surplus food to those who need it most. We learnt about food waste, food insecurity and visited Eggcup's warehouse where we helped sort food and learnt more about their work.

During the Season of Creation, we thought about God's gift of water and specifically about the damage done by plastics in our oceans and what we can do about it. We had a bake sale to raise money for a global charity that removes plastics from the sea. Diane Sammon came to talk to the children about how plastics get into the sea and led a litter pick for us on the banks of the Keer. The children produced a leaflet encouraging people to reduce their use of plastics which were distributed at the Autumn Fair.

In Advent and after Christmas we focused on how God's promises were fulfilled when Jesus was born and learnt about the flight to Egypt as an introduction to this year's Lent Challenge which is for Global Link, a charity in Lancaster which supports refugees and asylum seekers. Someone from the charity came to talk to us and we have visited the charity to learn more about their work.

We continue to focus on opportunities for the older children to find roles within the church. We now have two children on the reading rota, and three who are valued members of the Bubble Church team. Some of the children have helped running stalls at the Friends of Irvine Coffee Morning in the Summer, and the Autumn Fair.

We continue to work with the team providing Messy Church at the Methodist Church in the village and provided a Children's Easter Workshop on Good Friday as one of our free children's holiday activities.

Children's Holiday Activities

Vanessa Alpin

The St Oswald's Church community run free children's activities every half term and holiday throughout the year. They are a way of helping local families with the challenge of finding fun, stimulating and affordable things for their young people to do. They provide a way of serving our community and welcoming them into our church buildings.

We run one themed, 2-hour family café in the church hall each half term with more in the holidays. Free refreshments are provided and there is lots for the families to do together. They cafés run this year have included Lego and Duplo, family games, and card making and crafting. The activities are laid out on tables for the older children and on a carpet for the toddlers and families are free to move around and choose what they want to do. They are very relaxed and friendly.

They are well attended (there can be over 40 people at one activity) and are greatly appreciated by children, parents and grandparents.

They are staffed by a team of 3 or 4 volunteers who provide and serve the refreshments and help the children as and when needed.

On Good Friday we also ran a Children's Easter Workshop in which the children were taken through the events of Easter in an interactive way. This included activities, crafting, puppets, making an Easter Garden and transforming a cross. It was provided by a team of volunteers drawn from the Junior Church and Bubble Church teams. It was very well attended and received and will be repeated in 2026.

At the beginning of September, together with the Messy Church team, we provided recycled craft activities for children at the village Big Green Lunch organised by the Eco Gang.

In February this year we organised a coffee morning to showcase our children's activities and raise money for them in St Oswald's Church. There were taster activities of all 8 of our children's activities (the three different cafes, Messy Church, Junior Church, Bubble Church, Young Generations and the children's book

swap). The children were given passports, getting a sticker for each activity they did and a prize for doing them all. The coffee morning was well attended and it was lovely seeing all generations enjoying an event together.

Many thanks go to all the volunteers who help run these events.

Bubble Church

Vanessa Alpin

Bubble Church, which has been running for a little over 2 years, has bedded in and is flourishing. It is a half hour, monthly service specifically for young families with puppets, songs, prayers, a story and activity. All of the service is accessible for young children so the whole family can worship together. The services are welcoming, fun and filled with joy!

They take place on the second Sunday of the month at 11.30am in the Warton church hall and are followed by a free light lunch. It is the only service of its kind in the diocese and is part of a national pilot study to see how the concept works in different communities and parts of the country.

Since we started, 29 families have attended, 39 adults and 48 children. 6 families now attend regularly, of whom 4 did not go to St Oswald's prior to Bubble Church, and another three families come quite often. We also have visiting families on a regular basis. Our highest attendance was for the Dress-up Nativity in December when there were 24 attendees.

The services are delivered by the Bubble Church Team which has 18 members ranging in age from 9 to 70+. 9 of those are adults and 9 are children. Each service takes a minimum of 8 team members and roles range from leading, providing the audio-visuals, puppeteering, welcoming and providing refreshments. Each team member is able to carry out at least two of the roles. They are all extremely committed and enthusiastic.

Over the last year a real sense of ownership of, and commitment to, Bubble Church has grown in our core families. One family has joined Junior Church and one is thinking about it. Most of them attend Messy Church regularly, our family activity cafés in the school holidays and they are starting to come to the monthly charity coffee mornings now that they are becoming a little more child friendly. It is a real joy to worship with these families and to get to know them. It has been a particular joy to welcome our newest attendee who was just 2 weeks old on his first visit! Recently one of the children brought cakes to share to celebrate his birthday.

The team continue to be extremely committed, enthusiastic and versatile, really working together to make our Bubble Church services the best they can be. They provided puppets for the Children's Easter Workshop and will be doing so again in 2026. They also provided the story and songs for one of the Messy Churches.

Two of the team attend 6-monthly Bubble Church Northern Network meetings and there are online seminars provided by the national team every month for any who are interested.

Young Generations

Faye Vereker

Over the last 12 months, there have been a few changes at Young Generations, not least Emma stepping down since its conception. Thankfully, Cain Ormondroyd and I worked alongside Emma for a while to get some tips from the master!

Over the summer of 2025, Cain and I attended the Youth Leaders Conference at St John's in Blackpool. The event was very informative and led to some networking with other groups in the Lancaster area, which has both given us some support and opportunities for some of the Young Generations' members to partake in other activities happening in the area. In October, a couple of the Young Generations spent the evening at St Thomas' in Lancaster at Abide with other Youth Groups.

In November, Cain and I officially took the reins, hosting a session on All Souls and Remembrance, then in December we explored the meaning of Christmas and the significance of the birth of Jesus. In the new year we have started looking at the Northern Saints and how Christianity developed in the North. From this we are planning a pilgrimage at the end of May to St Patrick's Chapel in Heysham.

We open each session with a prayer that the children write; they all enjoy taking turns to be the one to read it. We have also started having a period of short Bible study, which the children love reading as a group.

We currently have a committed group of 6 children that join us every month. Some months we have more turning up. One evening we had so many extra children we ran out of food!

Monthly Charity Coffee Mornings

Vanessa Alpin

On the first Saturday of every month, St Oswald's hosts a coffee morning raising money for charity. Three of these raise money for the church itself. The other nine are available for local charities to book. The church provides the refreshments and a team to serve the refreshments, for which the charity donates £20, and all the remaining money raised goes to the charity in question.

These coffee mornings are provided as a way of supporting our local community, providing a regular event where people can meet friends and socialise, supporting local charities as fundraising becomes increasingly difficult and of making the church more accessible to all.

The charities hosted this year have included Cancer Care, North West Cancer Research, The Children's Society, Lancaster Hospital Baby Unit, Eggcup and British-Ukrainian Aid. Some coffee mornings are organised by community groups such as the WI and The Inner Wheel, others by individuals or the charities themselves.

Roughly £3,100 have been raised for charity and £2,800 for our church over the last year. The coffee mornings are attended by a core group of regulars and then a wide range of people who come to support the charity in question.

They are run by a minimum team of four volunteers and extra help is provided when charities need it. Many thanks go to these volunteers for their enthusiasm and hard work.

St Oswald's Church Hall - Warton Community Wellbeing Centre

Tracey Lawther

Situated at the centre of Warton Village, the Hall operates as a not-for-profit, community-focused enterprise, supported by two contractors and a voluntary committee. The hall, fitness, and treatment rooms offer a venue at a reasonable cost for individuals and organisations, with community wellbeing at the heart of everything we do.

The main hall is an airy, well-lit, warm, and spacious room. It provides an excellent venue for its current users, regularly hosting yoga, dance, Pilates, LDS Dance School, and St Oswald's Junior and Bubble Church. The space is also used for private bookings such as parties, charity events, group meetings, and occasionally local and general elections.

Most of these activities take place during evenings and weekends, which means there is still some midweek daytime availability for potential hirers.

Both areas of the centre have continued to grow and thrive, and we would like to recognise and thank our valued contractors, Carol and Antonia, for their dedication, commitment, and hard work.

One important matter the committee would like to highlight is the condition of the hall floor. Over several years, signs of damp ingress through the concrete floor slab have begun to affect parts of the wooden flooring, causing some areas to deteriorate. While temporary repairs have been made, we are mindful that the floor will eventually need replacing within the next 10–15 years. The committee has started to take small steps to build up funds towards this, and in the future, we will also need to explore grant opportunities and fundraising initiatives.

As a committee, we are committed to ensuring the long-term sustainability of the centre. Many of you may have noticed the recent installation of solar panels. We would like to extend a huge thank you to Trevor Blease for securing the grants that made this possible and for managing the project with the support of the team. We would also like to thank our neighbours for allowing access through their garden while the work was completed.

We would continue to appreciate your support by spreading the word to friends and neighbours about what the centre has to offer.

Finally, thank you to all our users, supporters, volunteers, and the wider community for helping to keep this valuable village enterprise thriving.

St Oswald's Church Choir

Emma Brantley-Tziros

Organist Keith Worsman

The Choir has continued to go from strength to strength throughout the year. To date, we have 19 members on roll. We are led by Emma Brantley-Tziros, supported by the dedication and commitment of so many valued members of the Choir.

We continue to feel the loss of our dear Alison Semple and ensure she remains very much in our thoughts, with regular references made in her memory. We look forward to having a memorial in her honour in the near future.

Palm Sunday once again saw us begin the service in the Rectory Ruins, where the Choir led the procession across the street, singing loudly for all to hear and attracting many positive comments from the local community. Mothering Sunday was another joyful occasion, giving the Choir an opportunity to shine once again.

Our Hymns and Pimm's evening in May 2025 was musically successful, although poorly attended, and we have therefore decided to give this event a rest for the time being.

Emma has continued to attend regular RSCM Choir Director courses, and we remain committed to using the Sunday-by-Sunday RSCM resource. This supports our shared music planning across the Benefice and remains a work in progress. Emma is very grateful to Annette for her ongoing help and guidance, and more recently to Anne Pilkington too. Where possible, we continue to include more family-themed music in "Altogether" services and as the final hymn at services attended by children of Junior Church.

We continue to enjoy our regular two rehearsals each week on Mondays and Thursdays at 6.30pm, allowing us to prepare for upcoming Sundays as well as future anthems and events. Unfortunately, some Choir members have commitments with other choirs and can only attend one rehearsal a week. Despite this, the sound produced on Sundays—whether by five singers or nineteen—is always delightful.

Natalie has recently chosen to devote more time to singing at the Priory. This is a wonderful opportunity for her, and we wish her every success and enjoyment. We also express our thanks and good wishes to other members who are taking a break or stepping back from Choir life.

Our new members—Jonathan, Glenn and Susan Morris—have been an absolute joy and a true gift to the Choir. Their dedication is evident in the way they regularly take music home to practise, supported by recordings of Keith playing their parts on the organ. More recently, Michelle and her daughter Elsie have joined us to see if Choir life suits them, and we are all thrilled to welcome them.

Our Facebook presence continues to be very active, and we remain convinced that this has encouraged more villagers to attend our musical events. While Junior Choir remains paused, we have had success by personally inviting individuals to join us.

The Choir was at full strength for the Christmas Carol Service in December and sounded wonderful, receiving rave reviews from a congregation of over 100. Some Choir members also sang at the Community Carols, where we performed an impromptu rendition of *Up! Good Christen Folk* alongside traditional carols and with the local folk band, The Red Cats. There were also wonderful showcases by Tom, Katherine and Jonathan. With over 150 people attending, the evening received glowing feedback. The first service lasted one hour and five minutes, and the second thirty minutes.

Some Choir members have also attended Marilyn Prescott's occasional Sunday evening services at Morecambe Parish Church, helping to strengthen links between choirs and directors.

Once again, we would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to our incredible organist, Keith Worsman, whose expertise, flexibility and support are invaluable. Huge thanks also go to Michaela Lawrence and the Morris family for their continued support and the vital roles they play within the Choir—we simply could not manage without you.

We continue to move forward together, and the future looks bright. Thank you all for your continued support.

St Oswald's Church Heritage Team

Sue Brown (with Malcolm Brown and Alan Bird)

In October we organised a Warton community heritage event. We invited the local school and villagers to join in and share stories. We were very grateful to the headteacher, Mr Pugh, and the school. The church and the school co-hosted the event and five households gave tours of their homes as did the Old School Brewery. The Mourholme Local History Society manned the display in school and provided speakers. There was a display in church and a church team provided refreshments. Alan gave two tours of the churchyard. This was a fun and popular event.

Alan and Sue continue to research 'Telling Stories' from the church memorials and research Parish records from the online archive. Alan has completed the stories of the dedications for the stained glass windows. Sue continues to research and write the 'Do you know?' for the Church and Warton village Facebook pages.

Requests to locate graves continue to come in from people researching their family history.

Packing up the old vicarage led to the discovery of handwritten copies of John Lucas's History of Warton, the full version. This was copied in the early twentieth century and instigated by the vicar, the Rev J K Floyer; this is treasure! Eighteenth and nineteenth century copies of the parish magazine were also found and are a very useful source for research.

We continue to print Church and organ guides for visitors.

Finance Report and Accounts of the PCC of Warton for the year ended 31 December 2025

Trevor Blease (PCC Treasurer)

Joyce Tombs (St Mary's Treasurer)

Overall financial position

2025 was a year in which significant property-related expenditure was incurred benefitting both of the churches and the church hall. This totalled over £26,000 which, *inter alia*, delivered improvements to the sound system at St Mary's, enabled the installation of solar panels on the Church Hall, and funded professional investigations into the cause of damp in the oldest parts of St Oswald's parish church. The vast majority of this expenditure was funded by grants, for which the PCC is very grateful. The PCC is also very appreciative of, and grateful for, the painstaking work done by those preparing and submitting the grant applications on its behalf. Some grants had been received in advance during the previous financial year and, as a result, within Restricted Funds in the year ended 31 December 2025, expenditure exceeded income by £10,292.

The activities of the church hall and gym contributed significantly to the cash flow of the Parish, with its income exceeding expenditure by almost £8,000. When combined with the receipts and payments of the two churches, the overall effect on Unrestricted Funds was a cash surplus of £1,460.

Taking Restricted and Unrestricted Funds together, the net effect on cash held by the Parish was a reduction of £8,832. Combined with a fall in the market value of investments (held via the Diocese in the CBF Church of England Investment Fund) of just under £1,000, this led to a reduction in overall reserves of £9,830 (2024: Increase £17,850). At 31 December 2025 total reserves were £113,110 (2024: £122,940) of which Unrestricted Funds were £64,568 (2024: £64,106) and Restricted Funds were £48,542 (2024: £58,834).

There are significant financial challenges for the future. Clearly the ongoing rise in the cost of utilities and other running costs will need to be met by an increase in voluntary receipts and/or specific fund-raising activities, including the activities of the church hall. Efforts to reduce running costs have borne fruit but arguably more needs to be done to engage our communities in "Joyful, Generous, Giving". With ageing congregations, and households feeling the effects of the seemingly ever-rising cost of living, this is not an easy task. The Parish will continue to seek and apply for relevant grants to fund necessary works, not least those envisaged to maintain the fabric of its buildings and to make the St Oswald's heating arrangements fit for purpose. Meanwhile the PCC remains very grateful to those who contribute financially to Parish funds.

The Diocesan Parish Share, payable by the Parish to the Diocese of Blackburn to fund ministry stipend costs and the broader mission of the Diocese, increased by 6% to £42,400 (2024: £40,000) as per our negotiated agreement with the DBF, and was paid in full. Of this sum, £4,800 (2024: £4,800) was contributed by St Mary's. The total paid was significantly less than the full requested value of the Parish Share before agreement with the Diocese and, in common with many other parishes, remains a concern for the future.

St Oswald's Church and Church Hall

The dominant factor changing the 2024 surplus of £21,368 into a deficit of £9,833 in 2025 was the phasing of major capital expenditure. Unspent grants from 2024 of £11,690 together with grants obtained in 2025

were used to fund capital projects and associated professional fees costing £25,239 (2024: £5,268). Additionally, expenditure on church maintenance more than doubled to £5,834 (2024: £2,140).

The benefits of the ongoing expenditure review are shown by savings on electricity and gas, printing and website costs, reducing expenditure by £4,354 compared to 2024.

On the income side, planned giving and collections at services (excluding gift aid income from the previous year's donations) declined by 11% to £29,766 (2024: £33,572). Donations via the card reader amounted to just over £1,503 (2024: £1,609). These figures in part reflect falling congregation numbers during the year. Whilst still vital they now, even with Gift Aid, represent only about a third of total income.

PCC fee income from weddings and funerals declined by a third to £3,324 (2024: £4,922). Conversely, income from events, raffles and the new 50:50 lottery draw (introduced from the beginning of 2025) increased by over 20% to £4,097 (2024: £3,390).

Grant income was £17,002 (2024: £14,932) and the church gratefully received one generous legacy.

The activities of the Church Hall again made a very significant positive contribution to the state of the Warton, St Oswald finances.

We are hoping to undertake works on the fabric of St Oswald's, its heating system and the churchyard, but as mentioned above, grant funding will be sought before committing to such expenditure.

Our sincere thanks go to Jean Robinson and Janet Mann for handling cash receipts and banking, and to Malcolm Brown as our Gift Aid Secretary for submitting the Parish's Gift Aid claims to HMRC.

St Mary's Church, Borwick

In 2025 total receipts were £11,557 compared with £13,508 in 2024. The reduction was principally due to having benefitted in 2024 from £2,824 raised by a specific campaign for new LED lighting. Voluntary receipts were £9,229 (2024: £7,683) with a 10% growth in planned giving and collections at services. Grants totalling £2,113 (2024: £500) were applied for and received (as detailed at Note 11). The Winter Warmer lunches, as well as being highly valued outreach to the local community, generated much appreciated additional funds from donations and raffle ticket sales.

Expenditure from Unrestricted Funds, excluding the purchase of new equipment of £1,242, was very similar to that in the prior year at £9,315. We are grateful to our colleagues at St Oswald's for not increasing our share of the Parish insurance cost or the Diocesan Parish share contribution. We are also grateful to our colleagues in the Parish of Yealand, within our United Benefice, who have supported us financially with acts of kindness and generosity such as supplying candles, etc., free of charge.

St Mary's achieved an operating surplus of income over expenditure amounting to £31 for the year ended 31 December 2025. Added to this were dividends and interest receipts of £969 from the St Mary's investments and bank accounts, bringing the overall surplus to £1,000 (2024: deficit £4,237). However, a reduction in the market value of the investments held by St Mary's of some £997 meant that St. Mary's ended the year with total reserves of £37,386, just £3 more than at the beginning of the year.

There is expenditure required in 2026 for maintenance of the building and, of course, the ongoing running costs. The number of regular donors has fallen slightly, and we shall join with the whole Parish in finding ways to encourage Joyful Generous Giving.

Meanwhile our thanks go to all those who give of their time, talents and money to enable us to survive financially and to grow spiritually. Thank you.

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees/Members of the Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Warton

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above for the year ended 31 December 2025.

As the charity's trustees, 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 all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

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 Parochial Church Council as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts did not accord with the accounting records.

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.

Mr Trevor Williams

Address: 3 Kershaw Drive, Lancaster LA1 3FY

Date: 4 May 2026

Major church and hall repairs and improvements	-	25,239	25,239	12,587
Mission giving and donations	129	-	129	975
	95,455	26,758	122,213	109,048
Cost of generating funds	2,560	-	2,560	949
Governance costs	203	-	203	165
Total Payments	98,218	26,758	124,976	110,162
Excess/ (Deficit) of Receipts over Payments	1,460	(10,292)	(8,832)	17,131
Redemption of Investment Account			-	6,581
	1,460	(10,292)	(8,832)	23,712
Cash at bank and in hand on 1 January	42,582	55,415	97,997	74,285
Cash at bank and in hand at 31 December	44,042	45,123	89,165	97,997

Sub total St Mary's		9,336	4,105	13,441	12,441
Total cash at bank and in hand		44,042	45,123	89,165	97,997
Total Cash and Investments	Note 19	64,568	48,542	113,110	122,940
Creditors					
Utilities - gas	St Oswald's	-	-	-	1,348

Approved by the Parochial Church Council on
and signed on its behalf by:

Church running expenses	8	24,382	1,519	25,901	25,577
Hall running costs		15,814	-	15,814	17,159
Major repairs, maintenance and improvements to church and hall	9		25,239	25,239	5,268
Mission giving and donations		129		129	975
		90,217	26,758	116,975	96,924
Cost of generating funds	10	2,216		2,216	496
Governance costs		28		28	-
Total Payments		92,461	26,758	119,219	97,420
Excess/ (Deficit) of Receipts over Payments		459	(10,292)	(9,833)	21,368
Cash at bank and in hand on 1 January		34,246	51,310	85,556	64,188
Cash at bank and in hand at 31 December		34,706	41,018	75,724	85,556

Church running expenses	16	3,996	-	3,996	12,125
Equipment (for services)		1,242		1,242	
		10,213	-	10,213	17,293
Cost of Generating Funds	17	344	-	344	452
Total Payments		10,557	-	10,557	17,745
Surplus / (Deficit)		1,000	-	1,000	(4,237)
Redemption of Investment					6,581
Cash at bank on 1 January		8,335	4,106	12,441	10,097
Cash at bank on 31 December		9,335	4,106	13,441	12,441
Cash is represented by					
Current account		6,443	-	6,443	6,412
Diocesan Deposit account		1,495	2,086	3,581	2,759
Diocesan Sharp Legacy account		1,398	2,019	3,417	3,269
		9,336	4,105	13,441	12,441

As the PCC is not registered for VAT, all figures are shown gross, that is inclusive of VAT, where applicable. Under the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme as operated by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, eligible VAT may be recovered by way of a grant. This scheme, however, ends at the end of March 2026.

1.3 Grants

Grants awarded, including the above LPOW grant, are treated as income when drawn down and received. Amounts claimed but not received at the year end are included as debtors in the statement of assets and liabilities.

1.4 Funds

Unrestricted Funds

These represent the 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.

Restricted Funds

These are funds which are required to be used solely in accordance with specific restrictions imposed by donors or funders, or have been raised by the PCC for particular purposes.

Designated Funds (and Prior Year Adjustment)

These are funds which, although not legally restricted, are allocated for a particular purpose by the PCC. There is a PCC of Warton Choir Fund which operates its own bank account and which historically had not been consolidated into the Annual Financial Statements. From 1 January 2024 the designated Choir fund and its associated bank account were brought into the Financial Statements and a prior year adjustment was made to reflect the opening position as at 1 January 2024.

Parish News advertising	980	980	1,058
Book stall	85	85	199
Church Hall income	23,657	23,657	22,950
	<u>28,819</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>27,597</u>
4 Investment Income			
CCLA Deposit Fund interest	<u>3,012</u>	<u>3,012</u>	<u>2,144</u>
5 Income from Church Activities			
PCC fees (Weddings, funerals etc.)	3,324	3,324	4,922
Fees for events	260	260	442
	<u>3,584</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>5,364</u>
6 Other Receipts			
Borwick, St. Mary's contribution to Parish Share	4,800	4,800	4,800
Borwick, St. Mary's contribution to Parish expenses			203
Yealand, St John's contribution to Benefice expenses	827	827	1,380
Sundry	-	-	223
	<u>5,627</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>6,606</u>

	24,382	1,519	25,901	25,577
9 Major repairs, maintenance and improvements				
Damp survey and related electrical repair		10,473	10,473	
Roof releading		696	696	
Church flagpole		-	-	2,220
Louvres		-	-	2,040
Professional fees		945	945	1,008
Broadband and Wifi installation - St Oswald's		2,573	2,573	
Faculty application - Handrails		480	480	
Church Hall - Solar panel supply and installation		10,072	10,072	
	-	25,239	25,239	5,268

The majority of this capital expenditure was funded by the grants received in 2024 and 2025.

10 Cost of Generating Funds

Contributing third party payment to secure LEF grant	1,127		1,127	-
50:50 Lottery prizes	432		432	-
Other costs	657		657	496
	2,216	-	2,216	496

The third party contribution was kindly made by the Vera Wolstencroft Children and Animal Trust.

This was paid in 2025 from the monies received in 2024.

15 Other receipts

Contribution from Diocese for clergy fees in Vacancy	-	-	234
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16 Church running expenses

Church Insurance	840	840	840
Church utilities	2,154	2,154	2,232
Electricity			
Water	81	81	85
Church maintenance	131	131	444
General			
QIR repairs to fabric	-	-	4,560
Replacement LED lighting system	-	-	2,759
Organ Maintenance	-	-	319
Upkeep of Services	122	122	322
Upkeep of Churchyard	510	510	435
Sundry expenses	159	159	128
	3,996	-	3,996
			12,125

17 Costs of generating funds

Winter Warmer food costs	344	344	318
Afternoon tea - Hall hire and food costs	-	-	134
	344	-	344
			452

18 Investment account

	At original cost	Market Value at 1 Jan 25	(Decrease) in market value in 2025	Market Value as at 31 Dec 25
Diocesan Shares - Building Fund	£ 12,126	£ 24,943	£(997)	£23,946

Fund Balances at 1 January 2025	29,677	182	29,859	7,524	37,383
Movement in year: Receipts	10,957	600	11,557	-	11,557
Payments	10,213	344	10,557	-	10,557
Excess/(Deficit) of Receipts over payments	744	256	1,000	-	1,000
(Decrease) in market value of investments	17 (997)	-	(997)	-	(997)
Fund Balances at 31 Dec 2025	29,424	438	29,862	7,524	37,386
Combined Funds					
Fund balances at 1 January 2025	55,614	8,492	64,106	58,834	122,940
Net movement in year	2,695	(1,236)	1,459	(10,292)	(8,832)
Increase/ Decrease) in market value of investments	(997)	-	(997)	-	(997)
Fund Balances at 31 Dec 2025	57,312	7,256	64,568	48,542	113,110

The movement on the above designated and restricted funds is shown in Note 20.

Young People Fund	1,213	1,297	1,641	-	869
Choir Fund	3,821	75	1,075	-	2,821
	8,310	1,862	3,354	-	6,818
St Mary's					
Warm spaces	182	600	344	-	438
Combined designated	8,492	2,462	3,698	-	7,256

Restricted Funds**St Oswald's**

R & F Wilson Churchyard Trust	135	1,902	1,519	-	518
Restoration and Fabric Fund	51,175	14,564	25,239	-	40,500
	51,310	16,466	26,758	-	41,018

St Mary's

Live streaming	433			(433)	-
LED Lighting	65			(65)	-
Building Fund	7,026			498	7,524
	7,524	-	-	-	7,524

Combined restricted	58,834	16,466		-	48,542
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