



**The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of
St Luke with St Bartholomew
Reading
Reg. Charity No. 1158694**

**Annual Parochial Church Meeting
Sunday 11 May 2025, 11.30am,
In-person at St Luke's Church and via Zoom**

Agenda

Minutes of 2024 Meeting

Parish Reports including Parish Accounts



Sunday 11 May 2025, 12 Noon, In-person at St Luke's Church and via Zoom

Meeting of Parishioners for the Choice of Churchwardens

(Anyone on the electoral roll of the church, OR resident in the parish may vote in this meeting)

AGENDA

1. Election of Churchwardens

Annual Parochial Church Meeting

*Only those on the electoral roll of the parish may vote in this meeting.
Others may ask questions and join in discussion at the discretion of the Chair*

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence

2. Minutes of the 2024 APCM

3. Confirmation of Deanery Synod Members

4. Elections of PCC Officers and Ordinary Members

- I. Election of PCC members
- II. Appoint independent examiner if necessary
- III. PCC Secretary

5. Outline of the Annual Reports:

- I. Chair of PCC Report
- II. Warden's Report
- III. Electoral Roll Update
- IV. Treasurer's Report

6. The Year Ahead

7. Feedback, Questions and Any Other Business

(Items to be considered for AOB to be sent to the Vice Chair via
office@redlandsparish.org.uk no later than 8 May 2025)

8. Closing Prayers

9. Dates of PCC meetings – to be agreed by members of the PCC



Sunday 14 April 2024, 12 Noon, In-person at St Luke's Church and via Zoom

Meeting started at 11.54. Gordon Cox welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained that in the absence of a Vicar that he was elected by the PCC as Vice Chair to the PCC and was responsible for chairing today's meetings. There are two meetings taking place, the first to elect the Churchwardens for the Parish and the second the main Annual Parochial Church Meeting.

Minutes of the Meeting of Parishioners for the Choice of Churchwardens

(Anyone on the electoral roll of the church, OR resident in the parish may vote in this meeting)

Election of Churchwardens Janet Davis and Lynne Webb were both re-nominated to stand as Churchwardens. No other nominations were received so both have been re-elected as Churchwardens for the coming year. This is their second year of office. This concludes the first meeting.

Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting

*Only those on the electoral roll of the parish may vote in this meeting.
Others may ask questions and join in discussion at the discretion of the Chair*

Attendees: Ann Abernethy; Steve Allen; Margaret Bentall; Christine Blackman; Bar Blakey; Margaret Carter; Ola Cassels white; Martin Clatworthy; Gordon Cox; Roger Cox; Sheila Cox; Janet Davis; Mary Evans; David Ewers; Peter Ewers; Giselle Franklin; Bridget Green; Leslie Green; Francis Jakeman; Hilary Jakeman; Gary Kenyon; Jane Kenyon; Gillian Lyne; Everette Marshall; Sally-Ann McDowell; Elizabeth Rebbeck; Malcolm Reid; Janet Shield; Melanie Shrubsall; Jenny Sims; John Starr; Libby Stroud; Dianne Tavares; Alan Tonkyn; Shelagh Tonkyn; Ant Vine; Chris Wakelin; Lynne Webb; Paul Webster

Apologies for absence: Kirsten Bayes, Paul Carnell, Jenny Page, Julian Pratt, Sylvia Rayner.

1. Minutes of the 2023 APCM

Amendment – Ola Cassels White to be added to PCC members.

Minutes accepted. Proposed by Sally-Ann McDowell. Seconded by Gillian Lyne.

All in favour.

2. Confirmation/Elections of Deanery Synod Members

Hilary Jakeman will be continuing to represent the parish at Deanery Synod. Hilary noted that she is chatting with Everette Marshall to encourage Everette to join her at meetings.

3. Elections of PCC Officers and Ordinary Members

IV. Election of PCC members –

We are permitted 12 elected members. Last year this was nine but our Electoral Roll numbers have increased to 105 this year, thank you to those who have joined.

Elected membership does not include Clergy, Deanery Synod Reps or Churchwardens.

Kirsten Bayes in stepping down after a number of years and we would like to extend our thanks to Kirsten for her dedication and commitment as both a Churchwarden and PCC Member.

This year we have seven vacancies.

Two current members are re-standing – Paul Carnell and Gillian Lyne

Five new nominations have been received - Alan Tonkyn, Everette Marshall, Dianne Tavares, Anthony Vine and Paul Webster.

As the number of nominees equals the number of vacancies all are automatically elected to the PCC. Many thanks to all current members for you continuing service and we look forward to welcoming new (and returning) members to the PCC.

- V. Appoint independent examiner if necessary – Sally-Ann McDowell (Treasurer) advised the need for a formal appointment of an independent examiner to inspect the accounts. For the last two years this has been Jo Macalister and if approved is happy to continue for the coming year. Proposed by Libby Stroud. Seconded by Leslie Green. All in favour.
- VI. PCC Secretary – Sarah is happy to continue as PCC Secretary. No other nominations have been received. Proposed Sheila Cox. Seconded Janet Shield. All in favour

4. Outline of the Annual Reports:

- V. Chair of PCC Report given by Ross and given under his Vicars report. Gordon elected in March and will bring up to date since Ross. Inducted as Vice Chair at the March meeting and the main item was safeguarding. The PCC discussed and approved the safeguarding action plan. Many thanks to Gillian for her work on this. The Churchwardens updated the PCC on the interregnum process. Thanks for Chrstine and the Churchwardens for their dedication to the parish.

- VI. Warden's Report – all in annual report
- VII. Electoral Roll Update – Gillian Lyne – 19 new people were added total to 105
- VIII. Treasurer's Report
Produce two reports lay persons plus formal accounts which are inspected and uploaded to charities' commission. Last year came out making money because we only paid half our parish share and we got a legacy. March last year agreed to pay half Parish Share due to Read becoming insolvent. Read paid to end of May paid 3.5k to solicitors to deal with insolvency half a year had no rent so had half parish share. Plan is now that we will try to increase by 10% each year. St Bart's does have tenants on a temp rental agreement. Metting soon for Licence. Had two months payment from Aurora but still need to increase efforts to raise money. Energy cost went down this year. St Bart's massive gas standing charge. Our three buildings cost on average £1000 to maintain gas electric water and insurance. Because St Bs has been made good we are back to church insurance of £2.5-3k empty £22k per year Read £9k a year. Please attend the occasional services which will be held at St Bart's as it will keep low level. Francis understand we are paying utility bills to keep as a church? SAM may well be the case. Read reimbursed. At the moment we are paying and getting rent. Will licence have utility costs? LG meeting with Darren Oliver to talk about Licence. May have to go for one year licence which may require us to cover some of the cost but have an agreement with Aurora to look at this and Nancy happy to talk to us about it. SAM don't think utility bills will be as high as when Read were there £2k last January just for gas approx. £500 per month. No other questions. Will need wardens and Gordon to sign the accounts so they are formalised. Vote of thanks for the amount of thanks Sally-Ann does for the church.

5. The Year Ahead – Lynne Webb (Churchwarden)

Looking forward to the year ahead, the main thing on many people's minds will be the appointment of a new vicar. While this is obviously incredibly important, much of this process is out of our hands and depends upon the diocese making decisions. Therefore, perhaps we should be thinking about the things within the parish that we do have control over and that will stand us in good stead for the future.

In the year ahead, we have many social events planned, for example a parish day as we couldn't have a weekend this year, a summer fete with cream tea barbecue, Hymns and Pimms and many other social events that have become an important part of our parish life.

We mustn't forget, though, that our main purpose is to be a lively and welcoming worshipping community. We will be continuing with our pattern of Messy Mass and we are going to try to increase the variety of music in our Sunday worship with a hymn practice and cake afternoon coming up on the 28th of April.

The deanery is keen for us to think about the way we welcome children into our worship and we must also try to continue the good work. Ross started welcoming students to our church.

We are very blessed to have a great diversity of people attending our church, with many different countries represented amongst our number . It would be wonderful if we could see this reflected in the people who support our Sunday, worship, and also on the PCC.

We cannot ignore the fact that our finances could be in a better place so that, for example, this time next year, we can be looking forward to a parish weekend, and there is reason for some optimism, although we cannot be complacent.

I am excited by the prospect of the coming year, although this was not what any of us would have expected or wanted this time last year. This is a wonderful church and I know that all of you are keen to see us go from strength to strength.

As wardens, Janet and I are very fortunate to have Sarah, who is immensely experienced and kind, and a huge help in negotiating everything that needs to be done during an interregnum.

We are also lucky to have Christine to lead our worship at this time, and we ask you to keep her in your prayers.

6. Feedback, Questions and Any Other Business

No items of AOB provided

Questions?

- Libby – new people in St Bart's come from New Town which is St John's and St Stephen's parish. Do we need to work with St John's? CB the relationship with Aurora and St John and St Stephen's is merely one of space and most of new town happens to be in their parish but it is not a church organisation so we do not need to liaise with St John and St Stephen. Libby – why the name of St Luke's hall is being used again when St Bart's is being used again. Parish hall which it has been for a few years now how did that arise. CB if we call it the parish hall and it is advertised as being in the parish hall how do they know which parish those in the parish know this as St Luke's Church and St Luke's Hall it is much more specific and look on google maps it is on there it was a practical decision to make sure people could find it.
- Sheila Cox – thanks to Jane for building up the renting of St Luke's hall.
- John Starr what is happening about the dumped car? CB We have done everything we can and waiting on the people responsible to move it, they know they need to and we are waiting for them to sort it.
- CB - Easter Sunday (Bishop Olivia) – was so proud to be a part of this church to look out on your and other faces glancing round thinking and thanking God for you and all you give to your communities and families and future I was just full. This is a great church, and we mustn't be downhearted as we have a great future. Will end with prayer and the grace. If you feel comfortable, look around and thank God for our family and all they mean to Him and to you.

7. Closing Prayers – Christine prayed for us all and we said the Grace together.

8. Dates of PCC meetings – to be agreed by members of the PCC



ANNUAL REPORT OF THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

OF ST LUKE WITH ST BARTHOLOMEW FOR THE YEAR ENDED MAY 11, 2025

Administrative information

St Luke's and St Bartholomew's are two churches joined into one parish, situated in Reading, Berkshire. They are part of the Diocese of Oxford within the Church of England. The correspondence address is ***The Parish Office, St Luke's Church, Erleigh Road, Reading, RG1 5LU.***

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) is a charity which is registered with the Charity Commission.

Members of the PCC from the last APCM (14 April 2024) until the date this report was approved are:

The Rev'd Christine Blackman, Associate Priest
Lynne Webb, Church Warden
Janet Davis, Church Warden

Deanery Synod representatives

Hilary Jakeman

Other elected members:

Gordon Cox, Vice Chair
Leslie Green, Buildings Group lead
Sally-Ann McDowell, Treasurer and Finance Group lead
Gillian Lyne, Safeguarding Officer and Electoral Roll Officer
Paul Carnell
Ola Cassels White
Everette Marshall (Deanery Synod Representative)
Janet Shield
Dianne Tavares
Alan Tonkyn
Anthony Vine
Paul Webster

Co-opted members:

Sarah Collins (Parish Administrator and PCC Secretary)
Jane Kenyon (Hall Manager)

The PCC has met on 6 occasions since the last APCM.

Structure, governance and management

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. All eligible Church attendees are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and stand for election on the PCC.

Objectives and activities

St Luke with St Bartholomew's PCC has the responsibility of co-operating with the Vicar in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish, the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. It also has the maintenance responsibilities for the Churches of St Luke's, Erleigh Road, Reading; St Bartholomew's, London Road, Reading; and the Parish Hall, Erleigh Road, Reading.

Church attendance

The number on the Electoral Roll 11 May 2025 is 101. We continued to provide zoom links for services which were appreciated by people who were unwell or out of Reading. The average weekly in attendance in October was 65 (of which 6 were under the age of 16) at St Luke's. On Christmas Eve and Christmas Day a total of 126 people attended our services with others joining via Zoom.

As there is no regular worship at St Bartholomew's, the October average was 0. Three special services were held at St Bartholomew's in 2024 including a St Bartholomew's Day celebration (21 adults) and a family event in December (12 adults).

Vacancy

The parish has been in vacancy since March 2024 with a restriction on appointment implemented on 31 July 2024. This is due to end on 31 July 2025 at which point the PCC hopes to proceed with an appointment.

Review of the year

Churchwarden's Report 2025

As you all know, in July we began a year of restriction to enable us to try and increase the proportion of our parish share we can afford to pay to enable us to appoint a full-time vicar.

Joshua Townson, Givings Advisor, met with a small group from the PCC and this resulted in the formation of a Gratitude and Generosity group who organised a special week for the congregation in February. The week began with a Eucharist in the hall where the sermon slot was led by Rhodri Bowen, Parish Development Officer, and people were given the chance to express their views. The week ended with a very well attended and enjoyable International Meal to which members of the community were invited with the hope that they may support our church in the future.

We have participated in the diocese's focus on Children and Young People. Various members of PCC attended courses, and Katherine Aboud came to speak with those of us involved with children.

Our Christmas Fair raised more than previous years. Advertising on social media and a door distribution of leaflets also made the community aware of our Christmas services.

There has not been a Parish weekend this year but a Parish Day enabled more of our Congregation to attend a service, shared lunch and activities and the usual weekend away has been booked for September 2025 with a requested second Parish Day in June.

Our monthly Coffee Mornings have raised funds for the church and various charities and we have continued to support Bridget and Leslie with their work for Armani. Our Christmas Collections went to Support Bed for a Night and our Advent Calendar, focused on a different local charity each week.

Social events this year have included a Games Evening, Summer BBQ, Harvest Soup and Puds, Hymns and Pimm's, utilising our Community Garden whenever possible.

Aurora Group are becoming more established in St Bartholomew and after an extremely long wait we have finally received a license that should enable them to expand further. Thank you to Sarah and Leslie for chasing this up through out the two years.

We could not achieve everything that we do without our willing congregation and Clergy. We conclude this report with our gratitude and thanks to:-

Christine, our Rock, who has stood in as Associate Priest in the absence of a Vicar. She works over thirty hours a week with no salary yet is always willing to do that little bit more (even on holiday).

Francis, who supports Christine in Worship, chaired the Gratitude and Generosity Group, runs Lent Groups and Tuesday prayers and is an active member of the Toddler Team.

Ben, our Server, who does a wonderful job looking after the clergy and ensuring important notices and Banns of Marriage readings are not missed.

Sarah, Administrator, who works tirelessly in our Office helping with the day to day running of the Church, supporting Christine and many others and minuting PCC meetings. Her knowledge is invaluable.

Jane, Hall Manager, for increasing our hall bookings, making an excellent job of preparing and sanding the hall floor (saving us from using up a large chunk of our funds) and for being available to prepare the church for special services and help with Sunday Club

Sally Ann, Treasurer, for keeping an accurate and firm account of our finances, particularly this year.

Carlos, the choir and the band for providing a wonderful variety of music for our services.

Our Toddler and Sunday Club leaders for nurturing and welcoming our future generation.

Gillian, our Safeguarding Officer for overseeing everything and making sure our training is up to date.

Ola, for organising the Readings Rota and Bridget for the Coffee Rota.

Steve, for his work with sound and lights. That Christmas Star was amazing

Mary, for her endless supply of scones and her beautiful flower arranging.

Those on the Welcomer, Chalice, Coffee and Reading Rotas and for those who clean our church behind the scenes.

Gordon, our PCC Chairman and all those on the PCC for monitoring us carefully and making difficult decisions when required

Our Building's Committee and in particular Roger Cox who stepped down from physical work at the end of last year. We're sure he will be there to offer advice when we need his knowledge in the future.

You, the Congregation, for all the jobs you do behind the scenes, for supporting us financially and making us the Church we are. As Churchwardens we know that we only have to ask, and it will happen.

Janet and Lynne

PCC ANNUAL REPORT 2025. GORDON COX VICE-CHAIR.

In this report I want to outline briefly the continuing work of the PCC and about our future as a vibrant congregation.

It was just over a year ago that we welcomed the Bishop of Reading to celebrate Easter Day with us. We had recently entered the Interregnum, that period between the departure of the outgoing vicar and the arrival of a successor. Two months later we received a visit by four deanery and diocesan representatives led by Archdeacon Liz Jackson. They explained to us 'We are aware there are financial challenges, and we want to explore options around resourcing the benefice in the short to medium terms'.

On 2 July 2024 the PCC voted in favour of a 'legal 'restriction' to be put in place during which time a plan for financial stability will be determined to enable a future appointment to be made. This 'restriction' will end on July 31, 2025.

There has been considerable discussion concerning the Aurora Community Project in St Bartholomew's. We are still waiting for a signed licence from the Diocese in order for Aurora to function fully. The archdeacon apologised at our February meeting this year on behalf of the Registrar.

All these developments lie side by side with day-to-day issues. We received the good news that our Parish Weekend in Bournemouth will go ahead in September, and that we were delighted with our relatively new organist Carlos Li. Less welcome was the news that our Parish Hall floor needed urgent attention. We were so fortunate that Jane Kenyon stepped in, carried out the work herself, and now we can be proud of our beautifully polished floor. Mention should also be made of our monthly Saturday coffee mornings and our beautiful community garden, both of which attract a number of people from the community.

The PCC continues to consider important issues regarding church life, most notably on Children and Young People's Ministry. The ensuing discussion on this occasion was led by Hilary Jakeman and Lynne Webb. They focussed on our work with the Toddlers, and the Sunday Club and on hopes for the future.

We continued in dialogue with our diocesan and deanery visitors, and the archdeacon on 19 February 2025 stated 'I feel really reassured and excited about the possibilities'. That feeling of optimism was present in the Eucharist held in the Church Hall, organised by the Gratitude and Generosity Group, and led by Rhodri Bowen (Parish Development Officer) on 23 February. The chance to worship in a different environment, and to talk to each other informally about our faith and the future was inspirational. A week later we celebrated with an International Meal, attended by our multi-cultural congregation and friends, celebrating their own traditions, and sharing them with each other. We have much to thank God for.

My particular thanks to Sarah, for all she does for the PCC, to the Church Wardens and Christine for their support.

April 6, 2025.

Gordon Cox

Annual report from PCC Buildings Committee – March 2025

This year we have sadly accepted Roger Cox's resignation from the committee due to health reasons. Paul Webster's commitments have also prevented him from taking on more of Roger's regular tasks. Jane Kenyon as Hall Manager has managed to keep an eye on all three buildings but we do urgently need someone to take on the role vacated by Roger.

I am pleased to report that despite financial constraints the church has:

1. Completed the outstanding work associated with the installation of the new boilers in 2023 at St Bart's, (including the lagging of pipework and removal of unwanted materials)
2. Repair and replacement of a number of pumps on the heating systems at all three buildings
3. Upgrading of the control switch of the Hall heating system.
4. Upgrading the sound system in St Luke's
5. Completed all our statutory, annual and five yearly inspections including the Quinquennial Inspections of both churches. High level inspections were achieved using a drone.
6. Re-sited the Building manuals for all three building to the Office

We have successfully applied for and received Faculties for:

1. A licence to allow Aurora CIC to use St Bart's
2. The retention of the sound proofing of the Rood Screen at St Bart's for a further five years.
3. Repainting of the internal walls at St Bart's (work planned by Aurora)

I would like to thank Aurora for their assistance in levelling the parking area at St Bart's, tidying and clearing the ivy from the base of the external walls of St Bart's. Currently the Upper Porch room is being used to house the local radio station and the Nave provides the venue for a number of Martial Arts classes.

Ongoing and uncompleted works include:

1. Relocation of storage in the Hall.
2. Provision of an accessible toilet directly to garden users. (Budget price £6,500)
3. Post repairs to the community garden boundary
4. Water ingress in the Turner Room (awaiting gutter repair)

For much of the year Roger Cox has project managed and in many cases, undertaking the tasks involved in maintaining and refurbishing our three properties. We again owe him a huge thank you.

The Buildings Committee would also like to thank Sarah and Jane for the day to day management of the Hall and the Church.

May I conclude this report by thanking all members of the congregation who have assisted the Buildings Committee in maintaining the fabric of our buildings.

**Leslie Green,
Chair of the Buildings Committee
March 2025**

Finance

Treasurer's Report

This report is based on the final accounts produced by the treasurer directly using the accounting software.

At the summary level, in 2024 our income was greater than our expenditure.

INCOME

Total Income was about £120,000 (compared to £125,000 in 2023 and £116,000 in 2022).

Income from donors, collections and gift aid

In 2024, we received about £41,000 via the bank (compared with £39,700 in 2023 and £43,600 in 2022). The gift aid recovered from giving and one off donations (for tax year 2023-2024) was just under £16,300 (in 2023 this was about £11,000). There were additional donations via the contactless device and the hole in the wall plus other generous donations amounting to about £10,000.

Income from buildings rent (hall and churches):

In 2024, income from building rent was about £37,100 (compared with £37,500 in 2023 and £34,350 in 2022). Hall income in 2024 was £18,900 compared to £15,500 in 2023 which is improving. We do pay a hall manager, however the hall manager also looks after St Bartholomew's as well as general buildings oversight. During 2024, we had an informal agreement with a new tenant in St Bartholomew's but due to a delay in the diocese finalising a licence agreement we have not been able to obtain as much rent as we would have liked nor have we been able to charge for utilities. By the time of the APCM in 2025, I am hopeful this will have been resolved as in February, we were only awaiting DAC approval and the bishop of Oxford's signature on the agreement. I therefore expect us to be in a better financial situation in 2025.

Other income:

Coffee mornings occurred regularly in 2024 and about £3,200 was raised for various charities at these events, about half of which went to the church. As agreement in the Autumn was made that the coffee morning would pay standard rent for three hours with the remainder of the funds going to a charity. Only one fair was held in 2024 and we raised about £1,500. There was about £430 for weddings and funerals. Our investments and interest on those investments made £10,300 in 2024. In 2023, this figure was £7,800.

EXPENDITURE

Total expenditure was about £107,800 (compared to £114,000 in 2023 and £161,300 in 2022). This amount was slightly more than 2023 if we exclude the legacy we received in 2023 but was only possible due to us being in recovery (ie we are on a reduced parish share. We were paying 50% in 2023 so in 2024 we were paying 62.5%).

Utilities and insurance (excluding water)

Insurance in the two churches (and hall) reduced to us no longer paying landlord insurance in St Bartholomew's to £10,600 from £15,900 in 2023.

Electricity in the two churches was about £3,500 which is about £890 less than the previous year. This is due to lower utility prices as usage was about the same.

Gas in the two churches was about £8,350 which is about £1,000 more than 2023. Once we are able to charge our tenants in St Bartholomew's for use we should be in a better financial position.

Hall gas was about £4,200 so considerably lower than in 2023 (£7,000), and this was due to lower gas prices. In 2023, electricity was about £1,500 compared to about £2,000 in 2023.

Charitable giving:

Our plan continues to be to donate to some local charities regularly and then do one off fundraising for others throughout the year. From our coffee mornings and other charitable events, we managed to give about £6,000 to charities which is higher than 2023 (£4,900) and 2022 (£4,600).

Parish Share:

Our Parish share was £26,500 in 2024 compared to £26,700 in 2023. Even though we were paying a larger percentage in 2024, we did not receive the rebate from 2023 as we were not able to pay our full share portion. As we were able to pay the full portion of what we anticipated in 2024 we will be eligible for a rebate in 2025.

Parish Administrator and Hall Manager:

As we now pay both a parish administrator and a hall manager the combined salaries (including pension, tax and national insurance where appropriate) were just under £20,000 compared to £15,900 in 2023 (note we increased the salaries in April 2023 to be more competitive). As we are without an incumbent the parish administrator is vital to keep the parish going and the hall manager is doing a sterling job in obtaining new lettings for the hall. We have a few highly profitable tenants which is excellent and we are expecting the licence to be fully executed for St Bartholomew's so we expect to be in a better financial position.

BALANCE OF FUNDS

Our usable funds have increased from last year to £55,400. These were £43,200 in 2023, £33,866 in 2022 and £86,700 in 2021.

We do also have some "untouchable" funds, which were valued at £296,221 on 31 Dec 2024 compared to £289,500 on 31 Dec 2023. These are the Lawrence Bequest, the Curacy fund, the Schoolrooms fund, and the Cockburn Bequest.

Reserves Policy

The reserves policy was not discussed in 2023, however our accounts show that we still meet the reserves policy as set in 2011.

The reserves policy is still to maintain reserves of at least £5,000 per building for emergency maintenance to the buildings. The maximum amount to be held in reserves was agreed to be £100,000, although we could potentially hold more if the PCC determined there was a valid reason for doing so.

All reserves are held as funds invested with the Central Board of Finance of the Church of England for the time being.

Finance Committee

The finance committee has not met in 2024 as the plan was to do so once the licence was finalised and at the time of writing this, we are still awaiting the fully executed licence. However it is likely that the committee will have met before the APCM to ensure the finances are reviewed. If anyone has an interest in joining, please do let me know.

Sally-Ann McDowell
Treasurer

Safeguarding report 2025

Mark 12:30-31 (ESV) “And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ The second is this: ‘You shall love your neighbour as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”

Safeguarding has been much in the news recently but for all the wrong reasons. In consequence there has been much debate around the issues. It is important to emphasise that safeguarding is the responsibility of everyone in the congregation and not just those who have specific roles with children, vulnerable adults or are members of the PCC.

We need to strive to create and maintain a safe environment for everyone and a culture where everyone is aware and alert to behaviours and attitudes that are contrary to the two great commandments above. Central to this is acquiring the necessary skills and knowledge to ensure that the safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults is an essential part of who we are as Christians.

‘We also need to understand safeguarding as a theological essential, rooted in the nature and love of God and demonstrated in behaviour, attitudes and language that give equal value to everyone.’¹

Here at St Luke with St Bartholomew many have recently redone their safeguarding training and DBS checks as is required every three years. A few new people have also been DBS checked and have undertaken some training. I have appreciated those who have commented positively on this training and have recognised its value.

I would encourage anyone who would like to do a safeguarding training module to ask me for the details. This training is not just for those who have a particular role in church.

I sincerely hope, however, that we can move away from box ticking and recognise the importance of safeguarding in creating a safe environment where all are valued equally.

“The true measure of any society can be found in how it treats its most vulnerable members.” - Thomas Jefferson / Mahatma Gandhi

The PCC recently reviewed a number of policies including the main Safeguarding Policy and those that need to be displayed in the church and Parish Hall.

I have continued to use the Diocesan Safeguarding Dashboard to keep tabs on what needs to be done and to draw up an Action Plan. This is to be presented to the PCC on 8th April. At the point of writing this report we are on level 3 of the dashboard and have made 92% progress towards completing all its requirements. This should increase to 95% after the PCC has approved the Action Plan on 8th April.

I would like to record my thanks to Jenny Page for all her hard work verifying documents for DBS checks and to all who have undertaken safeguarding training during this last year.

Gillian Lyne
Safeguarding Officer

APCM 2025 Clergy Report

Our spiritual life is often referred to as a journey, sometimes the path is smooth and easy sometimes there are mountains we must climb. I think St Luke's is in a mountaineering phase at the moment, so this is a chance to stop and draw breath, to recognise the challenges ahead but also to celebrate all the achievements of the past year

The Headlines (This is all you need to read)

1. At the last APCM Ross had only just left and we were starting the process of preparing to appoint a replacement. A meeting with the Archdeacon and Area Dean made it clear we would not be allowed to do that unless we improved our financial situation, and we have worked hard on this with considerable success and hope to be able to advertise for a 0.75% post in the summer.

2. Despite these challenges (or maybe because of them) the church has flourished as a worshipping community, and we have

- a) Continued with a variety of worship styles and tried out new and innovative ideas
- b) Seen a substantial increase on the number of people attending our Church
- c) Increased our provision for children on Sundays
- d) Welcomed more children into our Parish Family
- e) Encouraged people to deepen their faith including an extra Lent Group and a Prayer meeting on top of our midweek communion services
- f) Offered a variety of special services at Christmas and Easter and have increased attendance at both.

In other reports you will hear that our income from giving has substantially increased, the Electoral Roll has over 100 people on it and a busy programme of social events has continued.

We may not be where God wants us to be yet, but we are well on the way with His help, and we can look forward to an exciting future.

We should use this time of vacancy to explore new ideas and grow together as the presence of God in this place, and all our successes are only possible because of the commitment of our congregation working together to be the Body of Christ in this place.

Thank you to everyone who contributes by welcoming people, making coffee, cleaning, doing the washing, reading, singing, playing instruments, doing the flowers, running Sunday club, being our server, administering the chalice and all the other jobs that get done and even I don't notice.

Especial thanks to:

Steve for his help with crazy schemes like the giant star;
Francis for starting Tuesday prayers, taking services and always being a source of support;
The Wardens, Janet and Lynne, for taking on the huge responsibility of a vacancy;
Jane who not only manages the Hall but does so much "backstage" to make services happen;
Sarah whose immense knowledge and unending patience and enthusiasm keep me going;
and finally, to all of you, the members of our Church who have made my life so easy over the past year.

Thank you for trusting me to lead our worship and care for you. It has been a privilege and a joy.

The Detail (if you want to know more)

1. As most of you know, the Parish was put “into restriction” last July which meant the appointment of a new incumbent was put on hold for 12 months. This was very disappointing, but St Luke’s is not easily discouraged, and we bounced back with a busy schedule of worship and social events, increasing our provision for children and beginning some new fund-raising initiatives.

Several people have asked me why we appear to have suddenly gone from being in a stable financial situation, to being unable to pay our Parish Share and therefore appoint a new incumbent.

The brutal truth is that our financial position has been precarious for some time. We have been digging into our reserves for several years and in 2022 we realised we were not going to be able to pay our share. The Deanery accepted this and put us onto a “recovery plan” which reduced our commitment to 50% of the normal allocation, rising by 10% each year. We have been successfully meeting this figure. The plan was that we would eventually be able to afford the full share and had he stayed it would have been Ross who led this process. However, our unexpected plunge into Vacancy left us in the difficult position of wanting to advertise for a post which we did not have the financial capacity to support.

It would have been easy for this to have caused the Parish to lose heart and give up, but instead it had led to an amazing amount of energy enthusiasm and effort to ensure we don’t just survive, we flourish.

The Warden’s report explains the many ways in which people have worked hard to raise funds, and our treasurer will tell you how much giving has already gone up.

Following a meeting to think about giving, a group to focus on Gratitude and Generosity was formed which has proved invaluable in taking us forward, inviting Rhodri, organising the International Meal and more. Many thanks to all the members.

Despite our financial needs, we continued being generous and for Advent we adopted Gratitude and Generosity as our theme, having an advent calendar (beautifully painted by Jane) and a weekly focus on one area for which we should be thankful. People brought gifts in response to God’s generosity and we donated gift to Cirdic, Bed for the night and the Food bank as well as financially supporting our work with children and young people.

However, we need to always have in mind that. We are not “St Luke’s plc” we are followers of Christ, and although we are called to be custodians and stewards of the inheritance gifted to us by past generations and wise managers of our current resources, we are so much more. We are called to be a community that worships the living God and acts as his hands and heart in our community, sharing the Good news of his kingdom. Without prayer and worship, we are just a social club in a fancy building!

2a) We have continued with a variety of worship styles and tried out new and innovative ideas

Our Sunday services are made much more enjoyable by the contribution of our Choir and Organist, Carlos. They work tirelessly week on week and their Commitment is much appreciated. They have been incredibly open minded in increasing the variety of music in our services and I want to thank them for never saying no!

Monthly messy masses have continued, and children of all ages have enjoyed singing and playing percussion instruments. These services are very varied and last year included bread making, racing toy cars, making bird feeders and musical instruments.

Huge thanks are due to the band for their musical contribution and Steve for operating the technology and aiding and abetting me with schemes like the giant star.

We celebrated St Barts Day at St Bartholomew's Church with an informal service and it was lovely to be back in the building and to see it being well loved and used by Aurora.

Our pattern of occasional services at St Barts continued with our Christmas celebration with Thomas the Cat and a Palm Sunday service with the Passion.

Of course, we marked all the other major festivals and celebrations: Harvest festival (followed by soup and puds), St Luke's Day (taken beautifully by Francis), All Saints, All Souls and Remembrance Sunday.

The Gratitude and Generosity Group invited Rhodri Bowen (the Parish Development Advisor) to join us for a session looking at our successes and hopes for the future. I was unsure how people would take to my suggestion that we move the whole service to the Church Hall and have our discussions as part of the service, but it proved remarkably successful and has produced some exciting ideas for the future. It is a credit to the whole church that we are not afraid to do something so different and innovative occasionally.

2b) We have seen a substantial increase on the number of people attending our Church

I hear time and time again from visitors that they have found the church to be welcoming and full of joy – let's not rest our laurels but it is encouraging that people have found the love to Christ to be a reality in our worship.

The number people attending Church is not the only measure of success that matters but it is good to note that from April – November 2024 the average attendance on a Sunday is up by 18% on the same period in 2023.

2c) We have increased our provision for children on Sundays

The Diocesan focus this year has been on children, young people and families and we have worked hard to increase both their engagement in our worship in Church and our provision of learning opportunities specifically for them.

We have added an extra Sunday Club each month and we have provided activities for them to do when they are in Church for the whole service. Seeing them busy at their table at the front of church is a real joy.

Sunday Club is undoubtedly their favourite event and recently they have made chocolate bark to give away, decorated bottles and candles, and, of course, learned about their faith and prayed together.

Thank you to Lynne, Jenny and Jane for their commitment and enthusiasm for this vital work.

2d) We have welcomed more children into our Parish Family

We all realise that we need to nurture the next generation of Christian and we are very fortunate to have a growing number of children and young people involved with the church. Family life is very busy these days but There are now 20+ children who attend our worship when they are able to, and they bring their families with them.

We have also seen more than twice as many children Baptised this year than last, with both awareness of the Church through publicity and contact through our Toddler group encouraging parents to ask to have their children baptised.

2e) We have encouraged people to deepen their faith including an extra Lent Group and a Prayer meeting on top of our midweek communion services

The bedrock of a church is the regular prayer of its members. I know prayer happens in people's homes, but it is good to come together and feel the support of the community. Our weekday communion services continue Tuesdays and Thursdays and Francis has started Prayers for our Parish at noon on Tuesday which is also well attended.

This year we have three lent groups (one more than last year), and they have all followed the “Story of Scripture” course provided by the diocese. It’s encouraging to see more people engaging in small group study.

As well as our regular worship, we have explored God’s love for us in a Parish Day at Pentecost (because we didn’t have a Parish weekend last year). This was great fun, and it was wonderful to be able to include people for whom a weekend away is too much of a commitment. Although we are having a weekend away this year, we will repeat the Pentecost Parish day.

2f) We offered a variety of special services at Christmas and Easter and have increased attendance at both.

Christmas was a time of great joy, and we had a lovely Carol service at which our choir were supported by extra singers from the congregation and some friends and family members. The variety of music was wide, and several visitors said they wished the service had been longer! It was lovely to have the opportunity to see the choir able to shine.

Our Crib service was partly in the garden and partly in Church and from my point of view that was an enjoyable compromise. An angel led us into church and the star (thanks again Steve) got an audible gasp from the children sitting with me at the front.

Francis took a beautiful midnight Mass service (thanks again Francis) and Christmas morning was relaxed and joyful.

Although the number of people in church is not a measure of our success as a church it is encouraging that numbers at our Christmas services were overall 12% higher than last year.

Our Holy Week and Easter Services followed the same pattern as last year. We started our Palm Sunday Service in the Hall and processed into church. We had evening services during first days of holy week with a lovely Maundy Thursday Commemoration of the Last Supper which ended with a watch of prayer in the garden.

In 2024 we held a rather different service on Good Friday morning which was less formal with music, images, the option of activity, meditation and prayer. This was a new departure and proved popular and will be repeated this year. However, we also had a traditional watch of prayer before the Cross in the afternoon, to offer different ways to engage in worship.

On Easter morning we lit the Easter fire and had a joyful service including three baptisms.

Conclusion

I said at the start that a spiritual journey had be like a climb up a mountain. The peak can sometimes seem a long way off, but when that happens, we need to stop and see just how far we have already come.

Over the next few months we will be continuing the work started with Rhodri to collect everyone’s ideas and collate them in our “Parish Profile” Once that is complete it should highlight our priorities for the future and from there we can create a “person specification “ and job description which will, God willing, allow us to advertise for a new incumbent who will be able to lead us on the next steps of our pilgrimage.

We do not yet know what that might look like, but I am confident that God has great things in store for us.

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him (Romans 8 28)

Christine

Sunday Club Report

In September last year we decided that it would be a good idea to increase our Sunday Club provision from one Sunday per month to two.

This means that we meet on the first and third Sundays, on the second Sunday there is Messy Mass and on the remaining Sunday there are activities for the children to do at their table at the front of Church. (It was a deliberate decision not to have Sunday Club every week as we wanted children to become familiar with the rhythm of a normal Sunday)

As you know the Diocese has had a focus on work with children, young people and families (CYPF) and so we invited Kathryn Aboud (Discipleship Enabler) to visit the Sunday club team and others who are involved with work with CYPF. She was very encouraging and reminded us that it takes time for faith to develop, and we should not be downhearted when family activities keep children away from Church.

The children start in church and during the first hymn they go into the Hall, returning in time to receive a blessing and “show and tell” about their activities.

We begin with a song and prayers and then we do activities based on one of the readings for the day, usually the Gospel.

Sometimes there is a story to tell or act out, sometimes we will hear Jesus’ teaching and apply the lessons to our own lives.

There is then a chance to let off steam with a game that relates to our learning and finally we all join in doing a craft activity.

There are about 20 children who have attended over the past year but on an average Sunday there will be around 6 in attendance.

There will be at least one leader and one helper (who have appropriate Safeguarding training) present each week. We are very blessed to have Jenny and Lynne acting as the leaders and Jane who is there every week helping the children do their activities, setting up, putting away and giving continuity for the children. (If they are unable to be there, another appropriately Safeguarding trained person will step in). The children also enjoy visits from Perrie the dog who gets very spoiled and stands in as various animals in the stories.

Our thanks are due to Jane, Jenny and Lynne for all their hard work – the children always have a great time.

Christine

Pastoral Care Team Report March 2025

The Pastoral Care Team and other supportive parishioners, have offered Care and Support to members of the congregation. The Team consists of Christine Blackman, Mary Evans, Everette Marshall and myself, Sheila Cox. We meet monthly to discuss the possible needs of parishioners. Some of our parishioners are now housebound but are still very interested in the activities of our Church. I'd like to thank the team for their support and for keeping contact with parishioners who cannot get out to church or to social events.

Shopping support is available to those who need this form of help. Parish members can ask their fellow friends for lifts if required.

The teas for Senior Citizens continue to be held every other month. Thank you to the hosts and those who supply refreshments. New hosts have recently come forward to offer their homes for afternoon teas.

Sheila Cox - Pastoral Care Leader



Hall Report



By hosting more community events, like the art exhibitions, the Hall has raised the profile of the church in the local area and enabled people to see what a beautiful space we have to offer. The increased footfall has meant more bookings and even new regular hirers. We continue to enjoy the loyalty of our longstanding users.



Through church fundraising over the Christmas period, we were able to be part of a group of churches supporting Bed for the Night during the winter months, a scheme which has now finished.



More community events are planned for this coming year, so please look out for details and come along!

Jane Kenyon

St Luke's Toddler Group

Over the year 2024 the church Toddler Group met 41 times on a Wednesday morning in the hall on Erleigh Road, and twice in the church. In the year 70 families attended the group, some almost every Wednesday, others occasionally. We have an average of 18 children at every meeting. We take a break only for 2 weeks at Christmas and Easter, and for 5 weeks in the summer.

We publicise church activities at the Group meetings. It has been a great joy recently to see 2 children who attend the Group baptised in church, and a young lady who comes to the Group has arranged to be married in October in church to her long-term partner, the father of her children.

Our Christmas party is always very popular. All but one of the 21 children at the party in December came into church & joined in with Christine's lovely act of worship. We gave every child a Christmas book & a balloon to take home. We have an Easter book & an Easter egg for every child to take on 2 April this year.

The Group is a major part of the church's service to the local community. It is noticeable that the majority of adults who bring along their little ones, walk to the hall, because they live locally. It is also noticeable that we very rarely go out, to church, the Co-Op or the bus stop, without meeting someone that we know from Toddler Group!

The wonderful group who prepared information to display in the hall for the Week of Generosity, came to the Toddler Group and asked people for comments:

"Love coming to Toddler Group – very friendly & welcoming. Great opportunity for adults to socialise & children to play with others. Lots of lovely toys & activities & we really enjoy the singing." "A great group to come to!" "Lovely place to be where everyone is pleased to see you".

We are so grateful that someone from our team of coffee makers turns up each week, to care for us – Janet D., Shelagh, Elizabeth, Libby & Bridget.

Janet S., John, Francis, Hilary

Monthly Coffee Morning

A fund-raising coffee morning is held in the parish hall, in Erleigh Road, on 9 Saturdays in the year, from 11 am – 12 noon on the first Saturday of the month.

There is no coffee morning in January, nor in August, and the December one is usually combined with the church Christmas Fair.

The coffee morning is part of the church's outreach into the neighbourhood. A number of people who attend are not church members, but they contribute generously to the total raised (and help with the clearing up afterwards!)

Over the year from April 2024 - March 2025 we sent :

£140 to CIRDIC

£125 to Christian Aid. This was added to the whole church's gift to Christian Aid

£118 to REinspired

£160 to Open Doors. This includes extra donations

£206 to Mencap

£235 and £210 to Medical Aid to Palestinians. Two coffee mornings. The totals include extra donations from neighbours.

£460 to the Chocolatada. This includes many extra donations.

£180 to Church Action on Poverty

In addition to all these gifts, we have raised over £800 for St. Luke's.

Over the next few months we shall be fundraising for ReInspired, Christian Aid, the Red Cross, and Christian Community Action, with, as ever, a contribution to church funds also.

Hilary Jakeman

House Group/ Evening Lent Group report 2025

The House Group meets in the evening once a month at the Tonkyns' house and consists of nine regular members and two additional members who join us when possible.

The House Group year began with an interesting 'one-off' session in May in which Francis invited us to discuss the three Bible readings on which he would be preaching on the Sunday after our meeting. These were Acts 10: 44-48 (in which Gentiles hear the Good News), 1 John 5: 1-6 (in which John argues that faith in Jesus Christ, 'who came by water and blood', conquers the world), and John 15: 9-17 (in which Jesus describes himself as the 'True Vine' and gives his new commandment of love).

In June and July we spent time discussing liturgy, focusing first on worship in more general terms, and then looking in more detail at key elements in our own Eucharist service, which is the basis of our weekly Sunday worship. We looked at the value and nature of worship, as seen, for example in Jewish practice in the Old Testament. We discussed the respective merits of formal, as against more 'freestyle' worship, and also the role of elements such as symbols, repetition and body language in worship. Francis led our discussion on the Eucharist service, and we examined, in particular, the Kyrie, the Gloria, the Creed, the Sanctus and the Agnus Dei.

After our summer break in August, our next set of 5 sessions from December to January was based on the York course 'Caring for Creation' which examined our Christian duty in relation to looking after God's world. We examined such questions as: do humans simply have domination over the natural world, or does our pre-eminent position imply also responsibility for it? We frequently revisited the various ways in which humans are damaging the environment, and asked whether Christians should take part in demonstrations and even civil disobedience to express our concerns. In addition, we pondered on the respective roles of individuals and government in limiting environmental harms. We noted that it is often the poorest communities who suffer from human-induced climate change and environmental pollution. We looked at Biblical injunctions against greed and selfishness which should guide us in this area. On a more positive note, we examined practical steps which can be taken here and in other countries to reduce the harmful effects of human actions on the environment. We also looked at how we should face the future: with guilt and shame, or also with hope and confidence in our faith?

We concluded our pre-Lent discussions with another interesting one-off session, led by Shelagh entitled 'Hopefulness and Gratitude'. In this Shelagh invited us first to consider all the ways in which life for humans around the world has vastly improved during the last 100 years, and especially since World War 2, with regard to such things as life expectancy, food and famine, literacy, and child health. We noted particular causes for optimism arising from scientific and technological advances in healthcare, food production and environmental protection. We concluded by looking at a range of Bible passages urging us to be grateful for what we have been given and to be hopeful rather than despairing.

As has been customary in recent years, the House Group divided into two groups for Lent: a daytime group, led by Francis and Hilary Jakeman, and an evening group, led this year by Dianne Tavares and Gillian Lyne, and hosted by Leslie and Bridget Green with another additional member. (A third Lent group was led by Christine Blackman in church after Sunday services.) All three groups have been following the 6-session online Diocesan course 'The Story of Scripture' presented by the Rev. Andy Angel. The course looks at a sequence of themes from the Bible: Creation, Covenant, Prophecy, the Gospel and Mission.

At the time of writing, groups have studied the first two sessions. We have considered questions such as how creation is described in various places in the Bible, the ways in which our sense of being created by God affects our view of ourselves, and the responses which creation - especially our special places - stirs in us. We considered the different covenants between God and the people of Israel described in the Old Testament, and discussed the differences between a covenant - a promise-based and enduring offer in spite of sin - and a contract - legalistic and breakable. We spent time looking at the Ten Commandments and at how they divide into our duty towards God and towards our fellow-human beings.

Alan Tonkyn

On behalf of the members of the House Group, Francis Jakeman extends thanks to Alan for organising and hosting.

The Week of Gratitude and Generosity

Last summer we were told that St Luke's needed to increase its regular income by £25K/annum if we wished to appoint a new vicar full-time. This seemed like an impossible challenge to most people, but Christine nevertheless called a meeting in September to address that challenge. Given that we can't rely on a significant income from St Bart's, and that most of any income from the hall is needed for maintenance, it quickly became obvious that the only possible solution was for the congregation itself to raise the regular income required.

Most suggestions at the meeting were for one-off fund-raising events. However, it was felt that such events raised people's morale, but not the need for increased regular income. One suggestion, however, did seem promising: namely, to have a Special Week focusing on gratitude and generosity. Five members of the congregation agreed to organise it. One of them, Gillian Lyne, arranged for Joshua Townson, the Diocesan Generous Giving Advisor to talk to us in November. He made it clear that before you can have a stewardship programme, which is the only effective way of raising regular income, you need to have a level of buy-in from the congregation. The Church members need to feel they have a stake in the future of St Luke's, a say in how it develops, and the opportunity to contribute to its success.

The five of us went away to consider what could be done. What emerged was a way of raising the profile of St Luke's, first among the congregation, and then among the local community. We noted how many worthwhile activities our Church supports, many of which the congregation is largely unaware. So, Gillian and Ola created a wonderful collection of photographs and quotes from those involved in these activities which was displayed around the walls of our hall. They were on show during the two events which formed the basis of the Week.

The first involved Rhodri Bowen, the diocesan Parish Development Adviser. He came to the Sunday service on 23rd February which was held in our hall. During the service, in which we sat round tables café style, he led us in exploring a passage of scripture, recording aspects of our common life for which we are grateful, and looking ahead to how we would like our Church to be in 5 years' time.

Holding this exploration within worship gave it a spiritual atmosphere, while encouraging participation. The massive collection of post-it notes that were brought up to the front testify

to people's delight in being consulted and involved. All the ideas have been recorded and will be brought back to the congregation to explore further in June.

For our second event we supplied the congregation with invitation cards encouraging them to invite friends and contacts to an International Meal on Saturday 1st March. We asked for contributions of food from different ethnic backgrounds. These were coordinated and received by Shelagh and Alan Tonkyn, while numbers expected continued to rise!

In the end we used all our tables and chairs to accommodate the 90 people attending, of which 18 were children. Francis acted as compere inviting people to answer a quiz based on the display around the walls. To our surprise, about half of those attending were not people who worship at St Luke's. This demonstrated the high regard in which St Luke's is held in the neighbourhood.



We believe that these two events, underpinned by our prayers, have significantly increased our confidence as a congregation. We now know that we can collaborate theologically and come up with loads of reflections on post-it notes! We know that we have lots of good ideas as to how St Luke might develop; and finally, we know that people in the community do appreciate us as a church and are grateful that we are here. This means that we can be proud of being members of St Luke's!

The five of us are aware that we failed to achieve our original brief, namely to raise our Church's regular income. Nevertheless, we believe that the experience of the Week of Gratitude and Generosity has given us all the confidence we need to tackle the challenge we face. The only realistic way of raising our income to the level needed for a full-time vicar is by having a Stewardship Programme. For a programme to produce the desired result in the timescale required would mean holding it in the early Autumn. Joshua Townson has confirmed his desire to help us run such a programme, and so we have recommended to the P.C.C. that they accept that challenge on behalf of St Luke's.

We are aware that there is never a good time to ask people for money! But in our view the need for it is now so obvious to all of us who wish St Luke's not just to survive, but to thrive, that we need to strike while the iron is hot! In the meantime, we would like to thank all of you who attended the Week and helped to make it the great success it was.

Alan & Shelagh Tonkyn, Francis Jakeman, Gillian, Lyne, Ola Cassels White.

Erleigh Road Community Garden

We've been busy in the garden over the winter with the Thursday morning sessions continuing throughout the colder months. We've been working on improving the structure of the garden by laying more wood chip on the paths, edging some of the borders by weaving willow along hazel stakes and clearing the back of the garden to create a new seating and planting area. We've also started seed sowing and are nurturing fruit tree and grape cuttings in the greenhouse.



Winter fruit tree pruning session January 2025



Summer in the garden 2024

We have recently set up as an unincorporated charitable organisation which means we now have four Trustees overseeing the garden and our own bank account to make it easier to apply for grants and fundraise going forward.

Activate Learning continues to fund the Thursday morning and after school sessions but they don't now fund any weekend or holiday sessions. Luckily we have managed to find some funding to be able to restart the Saturday sessions which is good news especially as things start to get busier as the weather warms up!



Planting potatoes after school club
March 2025



It's Your Neighbourhood Gold award

Last year we won Gold again in the It's Your Neighbourhood awards which is a lovely reflection of all the time and effort all our community gardeners put in. We held some successful plant and cream tea sales and are hoping to hold some more this year too as well as talks and workshops.

Saturday sessions are open to anyone and run from 2-3.30pm during term time, Thursdays sessions are on from 10-11.30am and the after school club runs on Fridays from 3-4.30pm.

For more information, please contact Naomi at garden@redlandsparish.org.uk

Naomi German



Wreath making workshop

Deanery Synod

It is always a great pleasure to go to the Deanery Synod meetings and chat to members of other churches across the Deanery. When we are invited to talk about what is happening in our various churches, there are always lows mentioned as well as highs. People can offer solutions from their own experience or borrow good ideas to use in their own church.

It has been a particular pleasure in this last year to know about Bishop Steven's emphasis on work with children & young people. St. Luke's was able to complete the questionnaire in good time last May, giving information on this topic, and we have heard at meetings about the spread of work across the Deanery. All churches are urged to keep up their efforts and increase their contact with children, young people & families.

Below is a summary of the 2024 Deanery Synod meetings provided by the Secretary Richard Canning.

February Meeting at St Catherine's Church, Tilehurst.

A proposal to re-introduce a Deanery Membership Fee of £27 per person was approved. This is to cover expenses, refreshments/entertainment, cost of hosting meetings, website costs and any other general running costs.

There was a breakout into small groups to discuss how things are going in each parish, missional needs and opportunities, and where we want to be in the next few years.

Kathryn Aboud, the Berkshire Discipleship Enabler and Youth Ministry specialist, talked about the Reading Youth Hub proposal from our bishops to put children, young people and families at the centre of a more Christ-like church. This will involve discerning, training and supporting paid youth workers and youth work volunteers.

The Area Dean, Revd Mike Smith, said Synod will discuss the published prayers of Love and Faith when full pastoral guidance is issued later this spring, focusing on how we flourish in disagreement.

June Meeting at Greyfriars Church, Reading.

19 benefices have produced Children & Young People and Families (CYPF) baseline data. The next step is for each benefice to submit a summary of its own particular direction of travel over the next three to five years by early autumn - the Leadership Team will collate all the responses and help benefices work together.

Preparation of the new Mission Action Plan has started by reviewing financial trends, the range of churchmanship across the Deanery, and determining the condition, use and geographical location of the Building Stock.

Revd Mike Smith (Area Dean, CTM), Revd Andrew Bond (Minster), Revd Chris Leslie (PTO), and Fr Desmond Banister (PTO), Alan Cross (Greyfriars), John Missenden (Greyfriars), Joan Walker (Reading Gateway), Peter Stratton (Caversham Thameside) and Mark Burton (Emmer Green & Caversham Park St Barnabas) were elected to serve on the 2024/27 Diocesan Synod.

The Initial Recommendation for the 2025 Draft Deanery Parish Share Scheme was presented, based on an average increase of 4.75% with a floor of 3.25% and a cap of 6.25%. Holy Trinity Church is to be allocated a Parish Share and had undertaken to pay a full allocation.

Joanna Laynesmith (St John & St Stephen) said her parish has just achieved a gold EcoChurch award from A Rocha. This is the first gold award in the Oxford Diocese.

September Meeting at St Mary Magdalen Church, Tilehurst.

The initial recommendation for allocation of 2025 Parish Share was approved subject to final ratification at the November meeting.

The Area Dean, Revd Mike Smith, presented the Children, Young People and Families (CYPF) baseline summary, which gives cause to be optimistic – 18 out of 20 benefices do church based pre-school work, and 16 out of 20 do church-based work with primary and secondary schools, involving a total of 304 volunteers. It was noted that this is an opportunity to work together, share CYPF ministry, share youth ministers and stop competing with each other. These ideas will be included in the updated Mission Action Plan and benefices are urged to email the Area Dean or the Secretary with other ideas, which must include CYPF.

Kathryn Aboud, the Berkshire Discipleship Enabler for Oxford Diocese, recommended talking to Youth Mentors, circulating details of CYPF events, and setting up a directory of people involved in CYPF work. She explained the Axis apprentice scheme saying that the Diocese is preparing a bid to the National Church to fund the training of Youth Ministers (YMs) for 2 years. Under the scheme, benefices will be expected to contribute to the cost of a youth work apprentice.

The Deanery would be asked to meet the cost of releasing time for a number of existing senior youth workers to act as mentors, at an expected cost of £2,000 per mentor per year, and the apprentices would be paid a realistic salary to allow them to devote all their time to this training and live in Reading.

Benefices were urged to contact the Area Dean to express support for this apprentice scheme, and whether they could afford to make a contribution.

November Meeting at St James Church, Woodley.

Mark Humphriss, Diocesan Secretary, and Andrew Anderson-Gear, Director of Mission and Ministry, attended to explain the removal of the Axis youth apprenticeship scheme from the Diocesan bid for national church funding. A lively exchange of views was shared following which the Diocese committed to working closely with the Deanery to see if any of the proposal could be saved.

The Synod ratified the 2025 parish shares for each parish, the 2025 deanery budget and membership fees for 2025. It agreed to cease the Quinquennial Inspection Scheme.

The Synod heard from Joanna Laynesmith of St John with St Stephen Church about the awarding of their Gold Eco-Church award - she encouraged each parish to continue their environmental work and offered to give advice.

The Synod received a report about the recent Estates Ministry conference and the plans for a Diocesan network

Hilary Jakeman

World Day of Prayer

Several members of St. Luke's congregation attended the World Day of Prayer service held, this year, at the Methodist Church on Queen's Rd. It is extraordinary to think that on the same day – 7 March 2025 – people were meeting to pray together all across the world. The order of service was written by women in the Cook Islands. I had to get the atlas down, to find out where they are! It was a very satisfying event, and gave us information about the lives of Cook Islanders, so different in their setting but so similar in their concerns.

We already know that next year's World Day of Prayer will be held on Friday 6 March, 2026, with the order of service being written by women in Nigeria.

Hilary Jakeman

ReadiFood, Reading Food Bank

Members of St. Luke's contribute very generously to the Reading Food Bank, and their gifts are always received with gratitude.

Items needed are, as ever, tins and packets of food, but people also need toiletries for adults & children, plus nappies and other items for the care of babies. A few treats are also welcome!

There are tubs at the back of St Luke's Church for donations to be left. We are grateful to Hilary and Francis Jakeman for regularly delivering your gifts to the food bank.

St Luke with St Bartholomew, Reading

End of Year Financial Statements

Year ending 31 Dec 2024

Introduction

The accounts have been produced directly from the accounting system (Finance Co-ordinator online) and are rounding up rather than showing only the pound.

Statement of Financial Activities

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds	Total funds	Prior year total funds
Income and endowments from:					
Donations and legacies	69,374	-	-	69,374	72,788
Income from charitable activities	19,328	-	-	19,328	16,449
Other trading activities	3,218	-	-	3,218	4,491
Investments	19,260	-	9,199	28,459	31,382
Total income	111,179	-	9,199	120,378	125,110
Expenditure on:					
Expenditure on charitable activities	98,081	105	9,199	107,385	113,733
Other expenditure	300	-	-	300	275
Total expenditure	98,381	105	9,199	107,685	114,008
Net income / (expenditure) resources before transfer	12,798	(105)	-	12,693	11,102
Other recognised gains / losses					
Gains on revaluation, fixed assets, charity's own use	-	-	6,732	6,732	20,870
Net movement in funds	12,798	(105)	6,732	19,425	31,971
Total funds brought forward	28,225	413	280,234	308,871	276,900
Total funds carried forward	41,023	308	286,966	328,296	308,871

Represented by**Unrestricted**

General fund	41,023	-	-	41,023	28,225
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Restricted

Administrator	-	496	-	496	761
Parish Weekend	-	(189)	-	(189)	(349)

Endowment

Cockburn Bequest	-	-	155,019	155,019	151,544
Curacy Fund	-	-	8,909	8,909	8,715
Lawrence Bequest	-	-	24,915	24,915	24,048
Schoolrooms Fund	-	-	98,122	98,122	95,927

Total funds	41,023	308	286,966	328,296	308,871
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Balance Sheet detailed

Class and code	Description	As at 31/12/2024	As at 31/12/2023
Fixed assets			
	Schoolrooms Fund	98,122	95,926
	Cockburn Bequest	155,292	151,817
	Lawrence Bequest	34,136	33,269
	Curacy Fund	8,671	8,477
	Total Fixed assets	296,221	289,489
Current assets			
	NatWest St Lukes	8,842	11,793
	NatWest Hall	5,966	5,204
	Lloyds St Barts	8,248	2,050
	CCLA (CBF) St Lukes deposit account	22,943	15,187
	CCLA (CBF) St Barts deposit account	2,162	2,053
	CCLA (CBF) Hall deposit account	2,422	2,299
	Cash in hand	240	144
	Accounts Receivable	4,616	4,486
	Total Current assets	55,438	43,217
Liabilities			
	Accounts Payable	23,363	23,835
	Total Liabilities	23,363	23,835
	Net Asset surplus (deficit)	328,296	308,871
Reserves			
	Excess/(deficit) to date	12,693	(272,112)
	Starting balances	335,085	586,327
	Gains/(losses) on investment assets	(26,213)	(26,213)
	Gains/(losses) on investment assets	6,732	20,870
	Total Reserves	328,296	308,871
	Represented by Funds		
	General (Unrestricted)	41,023	28,225
	Restricted	308	413
	Endowment	286,966	280,234
	Total	328,296	308,871

PARISH OF ST LUKE WITH ST BARTHOLOMEW, READING

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

ACCOUNTING POLICIES

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations 1997 to 2001 together with applicable accounting standards and the Charities SORP (FRS 102).

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention as modified by the annual revaluation of listed investments to market value.

Funds

General funds 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. Funds designated for a particular purpose by the PCC are also unrestricted.

The accounts include all transactions, assets and liabilities for which the PCC is responsible in law. They do not include the accounts of church groups that owe their main affiliation to another body nor those that are informal gatherings of Church members.

Incoming Resources

Voluntary income and capital sources:

- Collections are recognised when received by or on behalf of the PCC.
- Planned giving receivable under covenant is recognised only when received.
- Income Tax recoverable on covenants or gift aid donations is recognised when the income is recognised.
- Grants and legacies to the PCC are accounted for as soon as the PCC is notified of its legal entitlement and the amount due.
- Income from fund raising events is accounted for net of incidental expenses.

Other ordinary income:

- Rental income from the letting of church premises is recognised when the rental is due.

Income from investments:

- Dividends and interest are accounted for when receivable. Tax recoverable on such income is recognised in the same accounting year.

Resources used

Grants:

- Grants and donations are accounted for when paid over, or when awarded, if that award creates a binding obligation on the PCC.

Activities directly relating to the work of the Church:

- The diocesan quota or parish share is accounted for when payable.

Fixed assets

Consecrated land and buildings and movable church furnishings:

- Consecrated and beneficed property is excluded from the accounts by s.10 (2)(b) of the Charities Act 2011.
- No value is placed on movable church furnishings held by the churchwardens on special trust for the PCC and which require a faculty for disposal since the PCC considers this to be inalienable property. All expenditure incurred during the year on consecrated or benefice buildings and movable church furnishings, whether maintenance or improvement, is written off as expenditure in the SOFA and separately disclosed.

Investments:

- Investments are stated at market valuation.

Current assets:

- Short-term deposits include cash held on deposit either with the CBF Church of England Funds or at the bank.

Analysis of income and expenditure

					Total	
	Unrestricted	Designated	Restricted	Endowment	This year	Last year
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM:						
Donations and legacies						
Gift Aid - Bank	40,872	-	-	-	40,872	38,494
Other planned giving	850	-	-	-	850	1,750
Loose plate collections	1,031	-	-	-	1,031	622
One-off Gift Aid gifts	4,818	-	-	-	4,818	1,180
Donations appeals etc	8,323	-	-	-	8,323	7,684
Tax recoverable on Gift Aid	11,469	-	-	-	11,469	10,895
Legacies	-	-	-	-	-	8,293
Non-recurring one-off grants	-	-	-	-	-	2,500
Other funds generated	2,011	-	-	-	2,011	1,369
Donations and legacies Totals	69,374	-	-	-	69,374	72,788
Income from charitable activities						
Fees for weddings and funerals	428	-	-	-	428	865
Church hall lettings - objectives	18,900	-	-	-	18,900	15,584
Income from charitable activities Totals	19,328	-	-	-	19,328	16,449
Other trading activities						
Rummage sales etc	-	-	-	-	-	1,982
Bookstall sales - fund raising	3,184	-	-	-	3,184	2,510
Church hall lettings - fund raising	34	-	-	-	34	-
Other trading activities Totals	3,218	-	-	-	3,218	4,491
Investments						
Dividends	-	-	-	9,199	9,199	8,986
Bank and building society interest	1,110	-	-	-	1,110	514

Rent from lands or buildings	18,150	-	-	-	18,150	21,882
Investments Totals	19,260	-	-	9,199	28,459	31,382
Income and endowments	111,179	-	-	9,199	120,378	125,110
Grand totals						

EXPENDITURE ON:

Expenditure on charitable activities

Giving to missionary societies	1,779	-	-	-	1,779	1,650
Giving - relief and development agencies	235	-	-	-	235	-
Home mission	3,011	-	-	-	3,011	2,426
Secular charities	970	-	-	-	970	795
Ministry parish share etc	17,522	-	-	8,964	26,485	26,667
Assistant staff costs	2,678	-	-	-	2,678	2,903
Salary of parish administrator	19,964	-	-	-	19,964	15,855
Working expenses of incumbent	(50)	-	-	-	(50)	-
Education	-	-	-	-	-	75
Parish training and mission	-	-	(160)	-	(160)	(5)
Church running - insurance	10,570	-	-	-	10,570	15,921
Church office - telephone	1,391	-	-	-	1,391	1,216
Organ / piano tuning	533	-	-	-	533	-
Church maintenance	10,559	-	-	-	10,559	2,632
Cleaning	1,514	-	-	-	1,514	1,099
Upkeep of services	2,152	-	-	235	2,387	3,781
Upkeep of churchyard	2,745	-	-	-	2,745	9,848
Administration	1,140	-	265	-	1,405	5,429
Church running - electric	3,510	-	-	-	3,510	4,394
Church running - gas	8,353	-	-	-	8,353	7,249
Church running - water	559	-	-	-	559	480
Hall running - electricity	1,468	-	-	-	1,468	1,986
Hall running - gas	4,210	-	-	-	4,210	6,995
Hall running - maintenance	2,774	-	-	-	2,774	2,215
Hall running - water	495	-	-	-	495	122

Expenditure on charitable activities Totals	98,081	-	105	9,199	107,385	113,733
Other expenditure						
Governance costs examination/audit fee	300	-	-	-	300	275
Other expenditure Totals	300	-	-	-	300	275
Expenditure Grand totals	98,381	-	105	9,199	107,685	114,008

FIXED ASSETS FOR USE BY THE PCC

INVESTMENT ASSETS

Investments held by the Central Board of Finance – Investment units.

Cost at 31 December 2024 was £64,633 (market value £296,221) and at 31 December 2023 £64,633 (market value £289,489).

ANALYSIS OF NET ASSETS BY FUND

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Endowment Funds	Total
Fixed assets and investment	-	-	296,221	296,221
Current assets	55,438	-	-	55,438
Current liabilities	(23,363)	-	-	(23,363)
Fund balance	£19,382	-	£296,221	£315,603

See note below for identification of funds.

LIABILITIES: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2024	2023
Accruals and deferred income	£19,382	£23,835
	=====	=====

FUND DETAILS

The endowment fund comprises the Church School Rooms Fund, Curacy Fund, Lawrence and Cockburn Bequests.

This report dated 27 Feb 2025:

Approved by the Parochial Church Council on 11 May 2025 2025
and signed on its behalf by:

L Webb

S. J. J. J.

Gally & Kell

Gord, Co



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**

The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of St Luke with St Bartholomew Reading

**On accounts for the year
ended**

31-12-2024

**Charity no
(if any)**

1158694

Set out on pages

See accompanying Annual Report and Financial Statements

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31/12/2024.

**Responsibilities and
basis of report**

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.

**Independent
examiner's statement**

The charity's gross income exceeded £250,000 and I am qualified to undertake the examination by being a qualified member of Association of Accounting Technicians.

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:

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

** Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.*

Signed:

Date: 22/2/2025

Name:

Jo McAllister

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

Licenced Accountant; Association of Accounting Technicians.
Member:20024190

Address:	4 Danvers Close
	Thatcham, Berkshire
	RG19 3XT

Section B**Disclosure**

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight material 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.