

**HOLY CROSS  
WOODCHURCH PARISH CHURCH**

**ANNUAL REPORT  
AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
OF THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL  
2024**

**Chair**

Revd Sr Janet Arnold CA  
Rector

**Hon. Treasurer**

Mrs Wendy Deverill  
31 Yew Tree Close  
Arrowe Park  
CH49 5PA

**Hon Secretary**

Professor Christopher Tuplin  
5 Beryl Road  
Prenton  
CH 43 9RS

**Growing disciples of Christ**

“See what great love the Father has  
lavished on us, that we should be called  
children of God! And that is what we are!”  
1 John 3:1 (NIV)

**PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL MEMBERS TO SERVE DURING 2023/2024**

**RECTOR**

In Vacancy until 4 February 2024  
Rev Sr Janet Arnold (from 4 February 2024)

**CHURCHWARDENS**

Mr Roy Milne (from 28 April 2019) (Vice-Chair)  
Mr Martin Hughes (until 29 June 2023)  
Mrs Wendy Deverill (from 30 June 2023)

**LAY REPRESENTATIVE ON CHESTER DIOCESAN SYNOD**

Mr Ian McKenzie

**LAY REPRESENTATIVES ON BIRKENHEAD DEANERY SYNOD**

Mrs Jenny Davies (retires 30 June 2026)  
Ms Elan Davies (retires 30 June 2026)  
Mrs Wendy Deverill (retires 30 June 2026)

#### **ELECTED MEMBERS**

Mrs Diane Adams (retires April 2026)  
Mrs Sue Dempsey (retires April 2026)  
Mrs Jo Hipps (retires April 2026)  
Dr Roy Palmer (retires April 2026)

Mrs Pat Clark (retires April 2025)  
Mrs Sally Felix (retires April 2025)  
Mrs Barbara McKenzie (retires April 2025)  
Professor Christopher Tuplin (retires April 2025) PCC Secretary

Mrs Enid Dearden (retires April 2024)  
Mr Paul Mountford (retires April 2024)  
Mrs Sue Mountford (retires April 2024)  
Mrs Barbara Taylor (retires April 2024)

#### **CO-OPTED MEMBERS**

The Revd Canon David Felix  
The Revd Josie Tuplin

#### **IN ATTENDANCE:**

Mrs Sue Treanor (Parish Administrator)

### **INTRODUCTION**

This is the 26<sup>th</sup> Annual Report of the Woodchurch Parochial Church Council (the PCC) prepared for the purposes of the Church Accounting Regulations 1997.

Holy Cross Church, Woodchurch is part of the Diocese of Chester within the Church of England. The correspondence address is: The Parish Office c/o 20, Eltham Green, Arrowe Park CH49 5NG. The PCC is a body corporate (PCC Powers Measure 1956, Church Representation Rules 2006) and is a registered charity (number 1174003).

The PCC has the responsibility of co-operating with the Rector in promoting the parish and the whole mission of the church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical; it also has responsibilities relating to the maintenance of the parish church and churchyard, and for the Parish Community Hall and other PCC-owned property. Members of the PCC are either *ex officio* or elected by the annual parochial church meeting. There is also a limited power of co-option. The *ex officio* members are the clergy licensed to the parish, the churchwardens and the lay representatives on the Diocesan and Deanery Synods.

#### **OUR VISION STATEMENT**

In July 2019 the PCC adopted "Growing disciples of Christ" as a summary of our core purpose. Our vision is to be a welcoming, growing, all-age Christian community faithfully proclaiming the love of God in word and deed.

## **1. ELECTORAL ROLL at 21 April 2024**

At the end of December 2023 there were 129 persons on the Roll for the parish. Of these 57 were resident in the parish and 72 were non-resident. During 2023 there were four new names added and sadly there were eight persons on the roll who died during the year. When the Roll was closed before the APCM the numbers on Roll included 57 Residents in the Parish and 71 Non-residents in the parish, a total of 128.

*Ian McKenzie (Electoral Roll officer), April 2024*

## **2. PROCEEDINGS OF THE PCC AND ACTIVITIES OF THE PARISH GENERALLY**

The Parish was in vacancy for a period of slightly over twelve months in 2023-2024, from 8 January 2023 until the Institution and Induction of Revd Sr Janet Arnold CA as the new Rector of Woodchurch on 4 February 2024. That the parish came through the vacancy in good heart and excellent shape is overwhelmingly due to Revd Josie (still Assistant Curate in January 2023 and thereafter Honorary Assistant Priest), the Churchwardens (Roy Milne and Wendy Deverill), and the Parish Administrator (Sue Treanor). Their practical and strategic leadership that has kept everything working – and working very well indeed.

In ensuring that we were able to provide not only the regular Sunday and midweek services and the special services associated with Easter and Christmas but also a substantial number of Baptisms, Weddings, Funerals, Interment of Ashes and other occasional offices, Revd Josie has had invaluable assistance from Revd Canon David Felix, Revd Dr Joe Kennedy, Revd Elaine Bisson, Revd John McKae and our Reader Sue Mountford. Bishop Julie and Archdeacon Mike Gilbertson helped at Christmas and on other occasions. Canon David provided important advice in dealing with issues concerning the graveyard, as well as helping Revd Josie, the Treasurer (Wendy Deverill) and other PCC members to mount a successful planned giving appeal. The Parish Representatives (Roy Milne and Jo Hipps) played a vital role in the appointment of Revd Janet as Rector. The work of many other individuals ensured that outreach and social carried on as usual, and the congregation showed great patience and understanding throughout.

But, to reiterate, the chief credit is unquestionably due to Revd Josie, the Churchwardens and the Parish Administrator for their unstinting hard work and their ability to command the cheerful and undivided support of the entire church community.

Whether or not in vacancy the PCC does its best to represent the congregations and the wider community in which it serves. As a team, it has discussed and voted on things that sustain and improve the church's capacity to spread the Gospel, as well as more day-to-day things such as paying bills, maintaining the church fabric or managing the graveyard. All required positions were filled in elections at the 2023 Annual Meetings. Christopher Tuplin replaced Sue Mountford as PCC Secretary in May 2024. The PCC is immensely grateful to Mrs Mountford for her long service in this role. There have been seven PCC meetings since then, as well as five Standing Committee meetings. We have been extremely fortunate to be able to deal with matters of church and community business when required. Fundraising has continued but is still not back to pre-pandemic lockdown levels. An appeal for members of the congregation to review their planned giving did, however, produce a very generous response. Christmas and Summer Coach trips, a Christmas Fair and a Christmas concert (Adam Lacey) were held over the course of the last 12 months.

### Our Vision Statement

Our verse for 2024 is "See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!" (1 John 3:1). As such, may we continue to discern what God is calling us to do in our church and wider community to reach all whom we wish to know of the Good News Jesus offers to everyone.

*Christopher Tuplin (PCC Secretary), April 2024*

### 3. THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31<sup>st</sup> DECEMBER 2023

#### Summary Balance Sheet as at 31st December 2023

	2023 £	2022 £
<b>Current Assets</b>		
Cash at Barclays Bank	18,640	17,775
Shares at CCLA	51,868	46,729
Short term deposits (CCLA)	27,259	34,353
	<b>97,767</b>	<b>98,857</b>
<b>Funds</b>		
Unrestricted funds in current account	751	12,424
Unrestricted funds in CCLA	4,224	11,887
Restricted funds at Barclays Bank	17,889	5,351
Restricted Funds in CCLA	23,035	22,466
Shares in CCLA	51,868	46,729
<b>Total Funds</b>	<b>97,767</b>	<b>98,857</b>

The finance summary above shows that there are restricted funds of £40,924 and unrestricted funds of £56,843. (*For more detail see the certificated accounts, available as a separate document.*) We opened a Deposit account with Barclays in August 2023 to separate the restricted and designated funds from our general funds, which are used for our normal running costs.

The amount received from Planned Giving continued to decrease during the first eight months of 2023, and on Generosity Sunday we asked each member of the congregation to review their giving. The response was immediate, and our receipts from planned giving have increased by approximately 25%, with some additional generous one-off donations. My thanks go to everyone who was able to respond to the appeal, and also to those of you who filled in new Gift-Aid declarations.

Our fundraising in 2023 has been both enjoyable and successful; Ian McKenzie arranged two coach trips this year as well as the Adam Lacey concert which was enjoyed by many of us, despite falling on the evening of what was possibly the worst weather of the year. We had a coffee morning in June which raised over £670, and thanks go to everyone who helped with the organisation and running of these events, as well as to all who supported them. The Christmas Fair was well supported and raised almost £1300, to which £750 was added (in next years' figures) by Barclays Bank from their charitable giving to causes supported by retired staff. Thanks go to everyone who helped with the organisation and running of the fair, and to Lilian Peers for securing the funding from Barclays. The 10th Anniversary Tower of Light was as popular as ever; we added new lights in the trees, on the Tower and along the path into church, and work was undertaken to update the electricity supply to the Lych Gate and the Tower and the lights above the choir stalls in church. Even after this expenditure the Tower of Light raised more than £1300, and huge thanks go to Sue and Andy Treanor for all their hard work, and to all those who helped them.

We have been fortunate that our costs for gas and electricity for both the Church and the Halls were fixed before the energy crisis; these contracts will continue until the end of 2024. The price of oil fell in 2023 from its height in Autumn 2022 so our expenditure on utilities for 2023 was very similar to that for 2022.

Hirings of the Parish Community Hall and the Jubilee Rooms have generated a profit of almost £4000 this year.

We transferred £8000 from our CCLA funds into our current account; this reversed the transfer that had been made in 2022 and meant that Holy Cross has been able to fully meet all outgoings this year, including the Parish Share.

I would like to record my thanks to Pat Clark for her help while I have found my feet as Treasurer and for continuing as Payroll Officer, to Sue Treanor for her efficiency and support, and to everyone at Holy Cross for their generosity this year.

***Wendy Deverill (Treasurer), April 2024***

#### **4. THE FABRIC, GOODS AND ORNAMENTS OF THE PARISH CHURCH**

The following is a summary, in chronological order, of work done on the fabric of the church during 2023. It is a mixture of maintenance and improvement works. Because it is a listed building, many of the works meet the criteria enabling VAT to be reclaimed from HMRC.

- 17/01/23 and 26/01/23. H G Vess Security Systems Ltd. Church intruder alarm service. £215. VAT £43. TOTAL £258
- 26/01/23. Wk Arboriculture. Removal of mature lime tree and yew tree. £1,200 (No VAT)
- 21/02/23. Island Electrical. Replaced exploding spotlight in middle aisle. £85 (No VAT)
- 07/02/23. Tony Parsons. Cleaned church gutters and drains. Noted 6 slipped tiles and provided photos. £135 (No VAT)
- 21/02/23. E-Bound. Roof alarm annual service and maintenance. £ 336.00, VAT £67.20, TOTAL £403.20. (Note: the date given on the invoice 01/01/23.)
- 22/03/23. Tony Parsons. Replaced and reset missing slates. £148 (No VAT)
- 13/04/23. Celtic Fire Security. Fire extinguisher etc., inspection and service, including some replacement of extinguishers for Church, Parish Hall and Jubilee Rooms. £304.00, VAT £60.80, TOTAL £364.80
- 04/05/23. Wk Arboriculture. Removal of unsuitable/unsafe trees in churchyard. £2,900 (No VAT)
- 15/05/23. E-Bound. Call out to replace Redcare with BT Redcare. Replaced data aerial and data cable due to signal issue. £542, VAT £108.50, TOTAL £651.00
- 31/08/23. PAS Sound Engineering. Two new lapel series 5000 microphones and leads, including postage. £62.30, VAT 12.46, TOTAL £74.76.
- 16/10/23. Grosvenor Heating. Servicing the boiler and replacing the flexible hose. £165.00, VAT £33.00. TOTAL 198.00
- 01/12/23. H G Vess Security Systems Ltd. Church intruder alarm service. £225. VAT £45. TOTAL £270
- 06/12/23. Hammac Electrical Ltd. Upgrade to church wiring to include 2 new spotlights over Choir Pews. £858, VAT £173 VAT. TOTAL £1038

No major repairs or improvements were undertaken this year. However, as noted elsewhere in this document, there are major problems with the state of the churchyard perimeter wall. When this can eventually be dealt with it will be a major expense.

Thanks to the work of the Sadler family and friends the churchyard won a Green Flag Award in 2022. This award was renewed in July 2023 and is advertised by a flag on the church tower. The Green Flag Award® scheme, which recognises and rewards well managed parks and green spaces and sets the benchmark standard for the management of recreational outdoor spaces across the United Kingdom and around the world, is managed by *Keep Britain Tidy* under license from the UK Government (Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities).

***Roy Palmer (on behalf of Fabric Committee), April 2024***

#### **5. BIRKENHEAD DEANERY SYNOD**

Holy Cross is one of the ten parishes that make up the Birkenhead Deanery. Elected to represent our parish at the APCM in April 2023 to serve on the Deanery Synod for the three-year period 2023 – 2026 were Jenny Davies, Elian Davies and Wendy Deverill. Ian McKenzie (also from Holy Cross) is the Deanery Secretary.

The synod meets three times a year at a different parish in the deanery. In February 2023 the meeting was at St. Saviour's Oxtun when the guest speaker before the business meeting was Bishop Julie (Bishop of Birkenhead). She declared "If you aren't angry then you are not paying attention" and added "Well, Birkenhead Deanery churches, are you paying attention?" She then gave a very upbeat, robust response to her question.

The meeting in June last year was at St. Catherine's Tranmere when the speaker was Rev. Dr Stephen Torr who spoke to Synod about the need for Lament in church life. He stressed that lament should feature regularly in our worship as it opens up a space where those who are hurting can recover, and those who are wounded can find healing and wholeness.

The guest speaker at the October meeting was Revd Debbie Wilkinson. She was appointed last year as the Mission Lead for the Wirral Waters development across the Birkenhead and Wallasey docklands where there will eventually be some 12,000 homes and all the infrastructure needed to support the project. Debbie is also an Associate Minister at the Priory Parish in Birkenhead which is closely involved in the development. She gave a detailed overview of the development and of her evolving role and that of the Church of England in the project.

*(If anyone would like to read the transcript of any of those talks please contact Ian McKenzie.)*

One of the functions of the Deanery's Standing Committee is to manage The Birkenhead Church Aid Society, which was established over 100 years ago to support clergy and lay members of Birkenhead parishes as they trained for the ministry or as Lay Workers or Pastoral Workers. The Society still makes grants towards the purchase of books and study material to members of parishes in the deanery who are in these categories.

***Ian McKenzie (Deanery Synod representative), April 2024***

## **6. SAFEGUARDING**

### **6.1 Safeguarding Concerns**

There have been no safeguarding referrals or concerns raised with the Safeguarding Officer during 2023

### **6.2 Agreement with Offenders**

Offenders who become known to the Church and who pose a risk to children or adults at risk and who wish to take part in activities or Church worship should enter into an agreement which should be reviewed on a regular basis. During 2023, the Safeguarding Officer was not informed of any new or recent offenders who require such agreements.

### **6.3 Current DBS Registration and Safeguarding Training**

*Disclosure and Barring Service - Thirtyone:Eight* (formerly Churches' Child Protection and Advisory Service) is the appointed safeguarding partner for the Diocese of Chester.

Several DBS applications have been processed by *Thirtyone:Eight*. There are still a number outstanding.

Some PCC members have completed their safeguarding training online and others attended the in-person training organised by the Diocese. There are still some training modules to be completed.

Chester Diocese require DBS checks and Safeguarding training for all PCC members. Anyone has questions or queries about completing DBS or safeguarding training should contact the Safeguarding Officer (Paul Mountford).

In all safeguarding correspondence please use the designated safeguarding email address: [safeguarding@holycrosswoodchurch.co.uk](mailto:safeguarding@holycrosswoodchurch.co.uk)

### **6.4 Safeguarding Statement**

The PCC continues to comply with its duty under section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016, i.e. the duty to have due regard to House of Bishops' guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.

***Paul Mountford (Safeguarding Officer), April 2024***

## **7. CHURCHWARDEN'S REPORT**

I write this on behalf of both churchwardens. I am most grateful to Wendy Deverill for joining me in carrying out this role.

## 1. Parish Church and surrounds

**Tasks undertaken by the Churchwardens** (1) Work to ensure the approaches in and around the Church, Car Park and Parish Hall are kept tidy. (2) Regular checks on the consumption of heating oil and ordering / delivery as required. (3) Reading and submitting gas, electric and water meter readings. (4) Removal and storage of Christmas Trees and assistance with Tower of Lights. (5) Making and decorating of the Easter Cross which was also used for Remembrance celebrations. (6) Stewarding duties during 8am, 10am Sunday and Wednesday Worship, baptisms and funerals. We also attended school Christmas productions. (7) Recommendation of Social distancing and hand sanitisation measures.

**Graveyard** (1) Many hours were spent involving Revd Josie, Sue Treanor and Canon David in dealing with a complaint regarding the already approved installation of an oversize headstone in the cremated remains section of the graveyard. This was eventually resolved by the complainant withdrawing his complaint. (2) A faculty was submitted and approved for setting aside an area at the Pool Lane end of the graveyard for the burial of cremated remains. Problems arose because this area also contains re-buried remains from the area of the North Aisle extension built in the early 1960s. Careful measurements had to be undertaken to determine the exact location from an architect's drawing and a visit to the Cheshire Archives in Chester. (3) As a reward for their hard work, Rob Sadler and his family and friends were once again awarded a Green Flag Community award. Our application for 2024 has already been submitted.

**Boundary Wall** Discussions with Curtin's (Civil Engineers) to produce a design and specification for the proposed supports which are required to be submitted by the DAC for acceptance have stalled due to disagreement about the adequacy of the support design suggested by Wirral MBC who have already had a similar design accepted by the DAC and installed at St Hilary's Church in Wallasey. Our consultant, eager to progress action has now decided to leave the project because he is about to retire and because we have advised him that lack of funding means that we do not feel it appropriate at this time to seek quotations from suitable contractors.

## 2. Other matters

**Vacancy** During the period 9 January 2023 to 4 February 2024 the parish was in a vacancy and under the responsibility of the Churchwardens.

Following Revd Christine's departure, the Wardens agreed with the Archdeacon and Buildings Manager to undertake a duty of care by regular visits to the Rectory. This finished when Revd Janet took occupancy.

With the help of others our Parish Profile and other paperwork required to support our advertisement for a new Rector was completed. Following a PCC meeting Jo Hipps and Roy Milne were elected as Parish Representatives and, along with the Archdeacon, Rural Dean and a representative from the Patronage Board, conducted interviews on two occasions, in July and September. An offer was made in September which Revd Sister Janet Arnold CA accepted and eventually a date of 4 February 2024 was agreed for her Institution and Induction by the Bishop of Chester and the Archdeacon respectively.

Making the arrangements for a service of Institution and Induction is not a straightforward business, and our sincere thanks go to our PCC Secretary, Christopher Tuplin, and to Ian McKenzie and Sue Treanor for their help in dealing with the complexities. We also thank our organists and augmented choir, the flower arranging team and the congregation caterers for the music, floral displays and refreshments provided for the service on 4 February.

We also wish to record our thanks to Rev Josie, Canon David, Revd John, the Rural Dean, Elaine Bissen, Sue Mountford and Elian Davies for all their assistance in leading our worship and

in providing pastoral care during the vacancy. We are very grateful to all members of the congregation for their consideration throughout the vacancy.

**Quinquennial Inspection** This was undertaken in September, and we have also attended at regular service engineer visits.

**Church property** A complete review of two legally required documents (the Terrier and Logbook) has been undertaken with the help of Tony Lunam and Roy Palmer in readiness for today's APCM also for a Church Inspection by the Archdeacon on 14 May 2024.

**Safeguarding** We have both undertaken Safeguarding Training as required by the Diocese.

**Cleaning and caretaker duties** After the resignation of our cleaner / caretaker, her duties were undertaken by both of the Wardens, including opening and closing of the Hall / Jubilee Room when required for one-off hirings. A replacement cleaner has now been appointed and continues with her duties.

***Roy Milne (Churchwarden), April 2024***

## **8. HALL MANAGER'S REPORT**

Hirings for the Parish Community Hall continue to be stable but sadly we have lost one group. Children's Birthday Parties are still very popular, and we have attracted a couple of occasional users. The recently formed Craft Club is proving to be a very popular and well attended addition to Parish life and attendance at the Meadows Community Café is increasing.

The heating system of the PCH is fully controlled by the boiler timer programmer and the settings adjusted as per seasonal demands. Hand sanitisation measures are still being recommended. Wirral Borough Council Pest Control continue with their regular attendance. I have also attended at service engineer visits. Obsolete smoke detector heads have recently been replaced in the building.

Existing users of the Jubilee Rooms (AA, NA, bereavement counselling, a local Housing Resident's group, Elian Davies (Wellbeing) and Open-the-Book) have now been joined by a Junior Majorette's group and an Indian Children learning group.

The roof to the rear of the building is still in need of being replaced. The heating system is fully controlled by the boiler timer programmer and the settings adjusted as per seasonal demands.

***Roy Milne (Halls Manager), April 2024***

## **9. PARISH LEADERSHIP TEAM**

Throughout the vacancy in 2023 the Parish Leadership Team, Revd Josie Tuplin (Honorary Assistant Priest), Sue Mountford (Reader) and Sue Treanor (Parish Administrator) – continued to meet, usually on Monday mornings, to pray together, share in conversation around the life of the parish. The Parish Leadership Team oversees worship, pastoral care, adult discipleship, mission with new generations and outreach. Members of the team work with the churchwardens and the PCC subcommittees to develop some of these aspects of the life of the parish and the team reports regularly to the PCC.

***Revd Josie Tuplin (Hon. Assistant Priest), April 2024***

## **10. WORSHIPING LIFE**



## 10.1 Church Services

During the vacancy, we were able to continue offering services of Holy Communion at 8am and 10am on Sunday mornings and a 10am Holy Communion service on Wednesdays. There was much to celebrate as we welcomed the Revd John McKay (retired priest with PTO) and Ms Elian Davies (formerly a local Methodist Preacher) to the existing team of Revd Josie, Revd David and Mrs Sue Mountford (Licensed Reader). Our Rural Dean, Revd Dr Joe Kennedy, and the Revd Elaine Bisson, both from Oxton, were very generous in regularly leading our worship and preaching, and we are also grateful to Bishop Julie, Archdeacon Mike Gilbertson and Canon Ron Iveson for their contributions to our worshipping life. Some changes were required, however, and, with the start of the vacancy in January, Sunday evening services were suspended for the time being. We are very grateful to all who contribute to our weekly pattern of worship. Numbers attending worship fluctuate week by week but most weeks around 70 people have joined in Sunday worship at one service or another and 10-15 on Wednesday mornings.

The usual range of extra services took place in Lent and Advent. On Sunday May 7<sup>th</sup>, we celebrated the Coronation of King Charles and Queen Camilla with a joyful service in church, at which the choir (augmented by several volunteers) sang a special anthem: *The Mountains Shall Bring Peace*. This was followed by a lunch party in the Parish Community Hall and the gift of chocolate crowns made by the Craft Club. There were also special services for Corpus Christi, Remembrance and All Souls (the latter two again very well attended by people for the wider community), as well as a Pet Service. The Sunday morning service on 2 July was dedicated to the people of Ukraine and the choir sang John Rutter's anthem *A Ukrainian Prayer*. To mark International Women's Day all the music at the Sunday morning service on 5 March was written by women. Adult attendance at Christmas services is now above pre-Covid levels, and the Carol Service and Christmas Eve Eucharist both attracted an encouraging number of members of the wider community.

## 10.2 Baptisms, Confirmation, Weddings and Funerals

During 2023 we welcomed many families to church to share in significant life events

Baptisms: 27 children (13 below the age of 1, 13 aged 1-10, 1 aged 11-17). All families bringing children for baptism took part in a one-hour session of baptism preparation some weeks before their baptism service and were encouraged to attend Sunday services and Messy Church.

Confirmation: In October 2023, we welcomed Bishop Julie to Holy Cross for a Confirmation service for one adult and one young person. It was a delight to welcome Bishop Julie, the candidates and their families and friends for a very special occasion.

Weddings: 4 plus 2 Renewals of Vows. The annual Marriage Preparation Day (reinstated post-Covid in 2022) was enjoyed by the couples who attended and many also comment on how much they enjoyed their wedding services in church.

Funerals: Clergy continue to visit the bereaved and to officiate at funerals both in church and at Landican Crematorium and Frankby Cemetery.

- Church and burial in churchyard: 4
- Church with burial at Frankby: 2
- Church and Landican: 16
- Landican only: 3
- Burial of Ashes: 9

***Revd Josie Tuplin (Hon. Assistant Priest), Sue Treanor (Parish Administrator), April 2024***

## 11. ADULT DISCIPLESHIP

The Holy Cross Bible Study Group has been meeting on Zoom for nearly four years now and we continue to attract new members. Material studied in 2023 included the whole of the *Acts of the Apostles*, the opening chapters of *Revelation*, and the story of Joseph in the Old Testament. In Lent we explored the Bishop of Chester's book *Clinging to the Cross*. The group meets on Tuesdays at 8 p.m. and we are always delighted to welcome visitors and new members.

In addition to the Bible Study group, Revd Josie prepared one adult and one young person for confirmation exploring the teachings of the Christian faith, relationship with God and commitment through the lens of the Confirmation promises.

***Revd Josie Tuplin (Hon. Assistant Priest), April 2024***

## **12. PASTORAL CARE**

During 2023, we missed the wonderful contribution made by our Pastoral Worker, Jan Lupton, who retired at the beginning of the year after many years of faithful and loving service. Members of the Leadership Team have continued to visit people at home and in hospital and take communion to parishioners at home and in nursing homes, but with reduced capacity. Sadly, it has been difficult to do as much regular (non-emergency) home visiting as we should like. Particularly in the early months of the 2023, we lost a considerable number of faithful members of our congregation, many of whom had been very ill for some time. As the year went on, the need for a team of lay people to assist with home communions became increasingly obvious. We are grateful to those who have agreed to take on this ministry and have now received DBS clearance. When the relevant safeguarding training has been completed, they will be trained by clergy and deployed during 2024. We should also continue to recognise the importance of the informal pastoral care faithfully provided to one another and to neighbours by members of the congregation.

***Revd Josie Tuplin (Hon. Assistant Priest), April 2024***

## **13. MISSION WITH NEW GENERATIONS**

In 2023, Holy Cross Woodchurch Parish church continued to have a good relationship with Woodchurch CE Primary school parishioners serving as school governors and clergy making visits to school by invitation as often as possible. We also welcomed school into church on a monthly basis for special services, which were well attended not only by the children but also by their families. At these services, members of the congregation provided coffee and a warm welcome to families. We also have built on our excellent links with Meadowside Special School, where Revd Josie is a co-opted governor. It was a delight to welcome Meadowside pupils into church for their Christmas service for the first time since the onset of the Pandemic. Senior pupils also provide catering for our Community Café. After a long break due to Covid, 5<sup>th</sup> Birkenhead Scouts are now flourishing once more and it has been a pleasure to welcome their representatives to a range of services over the course of the year.

At the end of 2023 we were all saddened by the sudden death of Mrs Diane Adams. Diane was passionately committed to outreach in general and to mission to new generations in particular. She was the energetic and cheerful driving force behind both the *Open the Book* team and our *Messy Church* and her loss is a real blow to our work with new generations. Under Diane's leadership, the *Open the Book* team was expanded and was able to lead fortnightly assemblies at Woodchurch CE Primary and Fender Primary throughout 2023, bringing the Bible to local children and their teachers. *Messy Church* has continued to meet monthly and to thrive. It provides a wonderful opportunity for children, along with their parents and carers, to enjoy creative activities, worship songs and Bible stories, and to share a simple meal together. Average attendance at Messy Church is upwards of 18 children and 22 adults. We enjoyed a very well-attended *Messy Easter* on Good Friday.

We hope that all of our services are family friendly, and we have a children's activity table available in church with resources appropriate for different ages and based on the Gospel reading of the day. We are very grateful to Mrs Sally Felix for her work in overseeing and improving this resource. The first Sunday of the month is a designated all-age service, and it has been good to welcome children from the Church School Junior Choir (trained by our organist Gill Locke) to take part in that service. The annual Christingle Service and Crib service were both joyful family occasions, with the Crib Service in particular attracting a very encouraging number of young families.—

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***Revd Josie Tuplin (Hon. Assistant Priest), April 2024***

## **14. OUTREACH AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

The Outreach and Community Engagement Team is currently promoting three projects in the parish, a Community Café, Craft Club and an initiative to welcome people who move onto the Woodchurch Estate.

*Community Café* is a joint venture with our neighbours at Meadowside Special School. We meet in the Parish Hall on Wednesday afternoons in term time. A team of senior students from Meadowside work in the kitchen, serve hot drinks and cake, and clean and tidy the kitchen and hall at the end of the afternoon. Their efficiency, good humour and friendliness are what make the café so special and it provides a warm and welcoming space in which to relax and meet friends. It also enables the young people to gain important work experience and has been recognised by *Involve North West* as providing a valuable resource for the local community where social isolation and poverty are key challenges.

Our scheme to welcome new residents with a potted plant, a card and a (now updated) leaflet about church activities continues. Work on establishing a nature trail in the churchyard is nearly complete. We hope that this will be a valuable amenity for local schools and families and will encourage greater knowledge and love for God's creation.

Craft Club, which meets twice a month in the Parish Community Hall, is now a well-established outreach activity and has already attracted a large number of people who are not regular members of the congregation. The Christmas Angels initiative, which involved leaving over two hundred knitted or crocheted angels hanging in trees and bushes around the parish together with a Christmas message was warmly received in the community, as was the flower-covered Easter cross in the porch and the annual decoration of both porch and churchyard with poppies for Remembrance.

In 2023, the annual *Tower of Light* service at the beginning of Advent reached its tenth anniversary. It was unfortunate that it coincided with very poor weather and numbers were somewhat down, but it did attract a large number of members of the community, both to the service and to refreshments afterwards. It was good to remember our departed loved ones in the company of many of our neighbours from the wider community and to see the (newly refurbished and extended) lights shining in the darkness of the Christmas period.

***Revd Josie Tuplin (Hon. Assistant Priest), April 2024***

## **15. READER REPORT**

I am now coming to the end of year 5 of Post-licensing Reader Training. I am so grateful to all at Holy Cross for your continued encouragement and support. As many of you will be aware, I have been given opportunities to lead services and to share with you some of my thoughts on our Bible readings and I have been so grateful for those opportunities. My hope is that you have found some of those thoughts and reflections helpful.

I am also very grateful for the opportunities I was given to lead and preach at Christmas 2023 and recently at Easter tide. I would also like to thank the Revds Josie, David and John for their support whilst we were in vacancy.

With thanks again for all your prayers and support.

***Susan Mountford, April 2024***

## **16. SOCIAL AND FUND-RAISING ACTIVITIES**

In the absence of both a Social and a Fund-Raising sub-committee of the PCC. in recent times there was less activity than usual in the first half of 2023. In June, however, we had "Beryl's Coffee Morning", which successfully raised funds for church use, and then in August the annual Mystery Coach trip saw a full coach party descend on Lytham for a good day out. At the end of September the MacMillan Cancer Support Coffee Morning raised £865.

The weeks leading up to the end of 2023 were a busy and hopefully an enjoyable time for us all as we approached Christmas with a variety of different events both social and fund raising. On November 24th we had our now annual Pre-Christmas shopping trip to Boundary Mill at Colne and the Barton Grange Garden Centre with its fabulous Christmas displays. On 2 December our Christmas Fair was held in the Parish Community Hall: many thanks are due to Sue Dempsey who organised another successful event. Sunday 3 December marked the tenth anniversary of the *Tower of Light* organised by Sue Treanor. She and Andy, and their band of helpers, put on a great display, with the lights mounted on the tower being visible in many parts of the parish as well as in Oxton and Prenton. The service was followed by mulled wine, mince pies and other refreshments, and many families took the opportunity to put their remembrances on the Christmas tree and make generous donations to church as well. And lastly on Saturday 10 December we had the Adam Lacey Christmas Concert in church, when his selection of music from the West End and other shows in which he had appeared was much enjoyed.

***Ian McKenzie April 2024***

## **17. MOTHERS UNION**

Mothers' Union meets on the second Tuesday of the month at 2 p.m. in the Community Parish Hall. We have a varied programme of speakers and events during the year. All are welcome to join us at our meetings. At Holy Cross our branch continues to support the Mothers' Union at home and abroad with prayer and donations.

***Jenny Davies, April 2024***

## **18. OPEN THE BOOK**

Our Open the Book team goes into Woodchurch Church of England and Fender Primary Schools in alternate weeks. Open the Book shares and brings to life Bible stories for children. We have had a short break following the sudden death of our coordinator Diane Adams and are now looking forward to restarting later in 2024. We are always looking for new members to join our team.

***Jenny Davies, April 2024***

## **19. A FINAL FEW WORDS**

2023 has been a year of many challenges, not least being in vacancy. The loss of so many very dear members of our congregation has also been the source of much sadness this year. We were also, of course, sad to see Revd Christine leave us in the New Year but we were pleased to have the opportunity to rejoice with her and pray for her new ministry as she was inducted as Vicar of Goostrey in January. After a long vacancy, we were delighted to hear of the appointment of an old friend, Revd Sister Janet Arnold CA, as our new Rector, and we pray for her as she settles back in among us. Her Institution and Induction on 4 February 2024 was a wonderfully joyful occasion and we look forward to this new season in our life together, as a community which seeks to grow in faith, and also in number as others come to put their trust in Jesus, all of which is summed up in our vision statement, "growing disciples of Christ". We recognise that we are called to proclaim the love of God in the love we extend to others. We acknowledge, particularly as we move into a new season in the life of our church, that it is only by placing ourselves in God's hands that we can be salt and light to one another and our wider community. And we pray that 2024 will see us going forward, not in our own strength, but in the power of the Holy Spirit and in accordance with God's purposes for this place.

***Revd Josie Tuplin (Hon. Assistant Priest), April 2024***

**HOLY CROSS,  
WOODCHURCH PARISH CHURCH  
ANNUAL REPORT  
AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
OF THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL  
2023**

**Chair**  
Revd Sister Janet Arnold CA  
The Rectory,  
Church Lane,  
Woodchurch CH49 7LS

**Growing disciples of Christ**

**John 1:3**

***See what great love the Father has lavished on us,  
that we shall be called children of God! And that is  
what we are!***

# THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31<sup>st</sup> DECEMBER 2023

## SUMMARY BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31ST DECEMBER 2023

	2023	2022
	£	£
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
Cash at Barclays Bank	18,640	17,775
Shares at CCLA	51,868	46,729
Short term deposits (CCLA)	27,259	34,353
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	<b>97,767</b>	<b>98,857</b>
<b>FUNDS</b>		
Unrestricted funds in current account	751	12,424
Unrestricted funds in CCLA	4,224	11,887
Restricted funds at Barclays Bank	17,889	5,351
Restricted Funds in CCLA	23,035	22,466
Shares in CCLA	51,868	46,729
<b>TOTAL FUNDS</b>	<b>97,767</b>	<b>98,857</b>

The finance summary above shows that there are restricted funds of £40,924 and unrestricted funds of £56,843. We opened a Deposit account with Barclays in August 2023 to separate the restricted and designated funds from our general funds, which are used for our normal running costs.

The amount received from planned giving continued to decrease during the first eight months of 2023, and on Generosity Sunday we asked each member of the congregation to review their giving. The response was immediate, and our receipts from planned giving have increased by approximately 25%, with some additional generous one-off donations. My thanks go to everyone who was able to respond to the appeal, and also to those of you who filled in new Gift-Aid declarations.

Our fundraising in 2023 has been both enjoyable and successful; Ian McKenzie arranged two coach trips this year as well as the Adam Lacey concert which was enjoyed by many of us, despite falling on the evening of what was possibly the worst weather of the year. We had a coffee morning in June which raised over £670, and thanks go to everyone who helped with the organisation and running of these events, as well as to all who supported them. The Christmas Fair was well supported and raised almost £1300, to which £750 was added (in next years' figures) by Barclays Bank from their charitable giving to causes supported by retired staff. Thanks go to everyone who helped with the organisation and running of the fair, and to Lilian Peers for securing the funding from Barclays. The 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Tower of Light was as popular as ever; we added new lights in the trees, on the Tower and along the path into church, and work was undertaken to update the electricity supply to the Lych Gate and the Tower and the lights above the choir stalls in church. Even after this expenditure the Tower of Light raised more than £1300, and huge thanks go to Sue and Andy Treanor for all their hard work, and to all those who helped them.

We have been fortunate that our costs for gas and electricity for both the Church and the Halls were fixed before the energy crisis; these contracts will continue until the end of 2024. The price of oil fell in 2023 from its height in Autumn 2022 so our expenditure on utilities for 2023 was very similar to that for 2022.

Hirings of the Parish Community Hall and the Jubilee Rooms have generated a profit of almost £4000 this year.

We transferred £8000 from our CCLA funds into our current account; this reversed the transfer that had been made in 2022 and meant that Holy Cross has been able to fully meet all outgoings this year, including the Parish Share.

I would like to record my thanks to Pat Clark for her help while I have found my feet as Treasurer and for continuing as Payroll Officer; to Sue Treanor for her efficiency and support, and to everyone at Holy Cross for their generosity this year.

Wendy Deverill, Treasurer

**Please see audited accounts as separate documents at end.**

## **Independent examiner's report to the trustees of Holy Cross Church, Woodchurch**

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of Holy Cross Church, Woodchurch for the year ended 31 December 2023.

### **Responsibilities and basis of report**

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

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

### **Independent examiner's statement**

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

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

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

Suzanne Draper FCCA ACA

SB&P

Chartered Accountants

Oriel House

2-8 Oriel Road

Bootle

Liverpool

Merseyside

L20 7EP

Date: .....



**PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF WOODHURCH, HOLY CROSS**

**FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023**

**RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT**

	Note	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total 2023	Total 2022
<b>RECEIPTS</b>					
Voluntary Receipts:					
Planned Giving Gift Aid		28,920		28,920	31,610
Planned Giving Not Gift Aid		8,000		8,000	9,622
Collections at Services		0		0	181
All other giving	*	8,426	5,143	13,569	12,486
Gift Aid Recovered		9,755		9,755	9,964
		<b>55,101</b>	<b>5,143</b>	<b>60,244</b>	<b>63,863</b>
Other Voluntary Income					
Grants and Legacies					1,882
Flowers			830	830	805
Activities for Generation *		5,170	3,937	9,106	9,734
		<b>5,170</b>	<b>4,767</b>	<b>9,937</b>	<b>12,421</b>
Investment Income					
Bank Interest		98		98	156
Dividends (CBF Investment Fund)		695		695	691
		<b>792</b>		<b>792</b>	<b>847</b>
Income from other sources					
Wedding and Funeral Fees		6,735	10,291	17,027	23,171
Lettings		10,190		10,190	10,516
Refunds (inc VAT)		1,031		1,031	2,114
From CCLA funds		8,150		8,150	1,000
From Deposit account			2,941	2,941	
From No 2 account					8,167
		<b>26,107</b>	<b>13,232</b>	<b>39,339</b>	<b>44,968</b>
<b>Total receipts</b>		<b>87,170</b>	<b>23,143</b>	<b>110,312</b>	<b>122,099</b>

**PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF WOODHURCH, HOLY CROSS**

**FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023**

**PAYMENTS**

Church Activities				
Parish Share	37,587		37,587	36,492
Diocesan Fees		2,096	2,096	4,830
Mission and Charitable Giving				2,931
	<b>37,587</b>	<b>2,096</b>	<b>39,683</b>	<b>44,253</b>
Salaries and Honoraria				
Parish Administrator	14,097		14,097	13,302
Retired Clergy		2,286	2,286	
Verger		850	850	1,000
Gravedigger		2,375	2,375	2,850
Organists	4,424	1,305	5,729	5,630
Bell Ringers		500	500	507
Funeral admin/flowers		500	500	1,651
	<b>18,521</b>	<b>7,816</b>	<b>26,337</b>	<b>24,940</b>
Running Expenses				
Rectory Utilities/Council Tax	1,355		1,355	2,967
Mission and Evangelism to Children		426	426	0
Sundry Expenses	857		857	4,501
Insurance	6,434		6,434	6,021
Other expenses *	2,245		2,245	3,309
Repairs and Maintenance	4,740		4,740	2,903
Service Requisites		1,944	1,944	700
Flowers	1,294		1,294	970
Admin	499		499	795
Churchyard Upkeep	4,179		4,179	208
Church utilities	5,891		5,891	6,188
	<b>27,496</b>	<b>2,370</b>	<b>29,866</b>	<b>28,562</b>
Cost of Trading				
PCH & JR Utilities	3,483		3,483	3,216
PCH & JR Maintenance	2,872		2,872	3,408
	<b>6,355</b>		<b>6,355</b>	<b>6,624</b>
Fundraising				
Cost of Fundraising		2,350	2,350	1,478
100 Club Prizes		1,120	1,120	1,141
		<b>3,470</b>	<b>3,470</b>	<b>2,619</b>
Other Outgoings				
Audit Fee	840		840	250
Surveys				8,790
Transfers to Deposit Account		20,664	20,664	8,000
	<b>840</b>	<b>20,664</b>	<b>21,504</b>	<b>17,040</b>
<b>Total Payments</b>	<b>90,799</b>	<b>36,415</b>	<b>127,215</b>	<b>124,038</b>
<b>Excess of Receipts over payments</b>	<b>-3,630</b>	<b>-13,273</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-16,902</b>
<b>Cash in bank account at 1st January 2023</b>			<b>17,775</b>	
<b>Interest on Deposit account</b>			<b>45</b>	
<b>Cash in bank accounts at 31st December 2023</b>			<b>18,640</b>	

**PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF WOODHURCH, HOLY CROSS**

**FURTHER ANALYSIS OF RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNTS**

	Note	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total 2023	Total 2022
<b>RECEIPTS</b>					
a) All Other Giving					
Donations		8,286	4,165	12,451	10,789
Admin		140		140	210
Wall Fund			978	978	1,487
		<b>8,426</b>	<b>5,143</b>	<b>13,569</b>	<b>12,486</b>
b) Activities for Generating Funds					
Fund Raising Activities		4,105		4,105	8,522
100 Club		1,064	1,064	2,129	1,162
Tower of Light			2,873	2,873	-
Chaurchyard fund					50
		<b>5,170</b>	<b>3,937</b>	<b>9,107</b>	<b>9,734</b>
<b>PAYMENTS</b>					
c) Other Expenses					
Organ & Piano Maintenance		155		155	652
Bank Charges		590		590	600
Music Licences		551		551	642
Photocopier		950		950	1,336
Choir					80
		<b>2,245</b>		<b>2,245</b>	<b>3,310</b>

**PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF WOODHURCH, HOLY CROSS**

**STATEMENTS OF ASSETS & LIABILITIES FOR YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023**

	<b>Unrestricted</b>	<b>Restricted</b>	<b>Total 2023</b>	<b>Total 2022</b>
<b>Cash Funds</b>				
Barclays Current Account	872		872	17775
Barclays Deposit Account		17768	17768	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>872</b>	<b>17768</b>	<b>18640</b>	<b>17775</b>
<b>CCLA Funds</b>				
CBF Deposit Fund		4224	4224	11887
Hayward Trust		1295	1295	1255
Sanctuary Fund		4057	4057	3931
Youth Fund		1372	1372	2299
Enhancement Fund		1946	1946	1886
Rector & Churchwarden's Fund		14365	14365	12950
Bell Fund		0	0	58
Sound System Fund		0	0	87
<b>Total</b>		<b>27259</b>	<b>27259</b>	<b>34353</b>
<b>Total</b>			<b>45899</b>	<b>52128</b>

Notes: The Bell and Sound System Funds which held £87 and £58 respectively were closed with the balances transferred to Barclays  
£1000 was taken from the Youth Fund and transferred to the R&CW Fund to reimburse the payment to the Scouts

**Debtors**

Nil

<b>Investments</b>	<b>Reserve Fund</b>		<b>Churchyard Fund</b>		<b>Total value</b>	<b>Total value</b>
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Value (£)</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Value (£)</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>
	443	26459	1124	25409	51868	46729

**PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF WOODHURCH, HOLY CROSS**

**DESIGNATED FUNDS IN DEPOSIT ACCOUNT FOR YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023**

	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>
Sunday School Fund	500	500
Donkey Fund	100	100
Chester Grant	385	385
Wall Fund	2,850	2,213
Discretionary Fund (those in need)	1,667	1,667
Bell Fund	145	100
Choir Fund	110	190
Tower of Light	3,225	-
Craft Club	152	-
Wedding 5/5/2024	589	-
Trf from Current account	8,000	-
Interest paid	45	-
<b>Total in deposit account</b>	<b>17,768</b>	<b>5,155</b>

**DESIGNATED FUNDS IN CURRENT ACCOUNT  
FOR YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023**

Churchyard Fund	50	50
Messy Church	71	146
<b>Total in current account</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>196</b>
 <b>Grand Total</b>	 <b>17,889</b>	 <b>5,351</b>

### **Independent examiner's report to the trustees of Holy Cross Church, Woodchurch**

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of Holy Cross Church, Woodchurch for the year ended 31 December 2023.

#### **Responsibilities and basis of report**

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#### **Independent examiner's statement**

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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.

Suzanne Draper FCCA ACA

SB&P

Chartered Accountants

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Liverpool

Merseyside

L20 7EP

Date: .....