

**HOLY CROSS
WOODCHURCH PARISH CHURCH**

registered charity number 1174003

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



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)

HOLY CROSS PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL MEMBERS DURING 2024

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS:

RECTOR

In vacancy until 4 February 2024
 Revd Sister Janet Arnold CA -from 4 February 2024 (chair)

CHURCHWARDENS

Mr Roy Milne (from 28 April 2019) (Vice-Chair)
 Mrs Wendy Deverill (1st term April 2026)

CLERGY MEMBER ON CHESTER DIOCESAN SYNOD

Revd Sister Janet Arnold CA (from September 2024)

LAY MEMBER ON CHESTER DIOCESAN SYNOD

Mr Ian McKenzie

LAY REPRESENTATIVES ON BIRKENHEAD DEANERY SYNOD

Mrs Jenny Davies (term ends 30 June 2026)
 Ms Elian Davies (term ends 30 June 2026)
 Mrs Wendy Deverill (term ends 30 June 2026)

ELECTED MEMBERS

Secretary

Professor Christopher Tuplin (term ends April 2025)

Safeguarding Officer

Mr Paul Mountford (term ended 2024, new term ends April 2027)
 Mrs Sue Dempsey (resigned March 2024)
 Mrs Jo Hipps (term ends April 2026)
 Dr Roy Palmer (term ends April 2026)

Mrs Pat Clark (term ends April 2025)
 Mrs Sally Felix (term ends April 2025)
 Mrs Barbara McKenzie (term ends April 2025)

Mrs Enid Dearden (term ended 2024, new term ends April 2027)
 Mrs Sue Mountford (term ended 2024, new term ends April 2027)
 Mrs Barbara Taylor (term ended April 2024)

CO-OPTED MEMBERS:

The Revd Canon David Felix
 The Revd Josie Tuplin

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mrs Sue Treanor (Parish Administrator)

BANK:

Barclays Bank

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER:

Tony Endean

Accounts approved by the PCC on 9 March 2025 and signed on its behalf by:

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Revd Sister Janet Arnold CA (Chairperson)

Professor Christopher Tuplin (Secretary)

Objectives and Activities

This is the 27th Annual Report of Woodchurch Parochial Church Council (the PCC) which has the responsibility of co-operating with the Rector, the Reverend Sister Janet Arnold CA, in promoting the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social, and ecumenical, in the ecclesiastical parish of Holy Cross Woodchurch, Chester Diocese, within the Church of England. The PCC also has responsibilities relating to the maintenance of the parish church and churchyard, 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 members and representatives on the Diocesan and Deanery Synods. The PCC is also spiritually responsible for the maintenance of the church. 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 is committed to enabling as many as possible to worship at our church and to become part of our parish community at Holy Cross. The PCC maintains an overview of worship throughout the parish and makes suggestions on how our services and social occasions can involve the many groups that live within our parish. Our services and worship put faith into practice through prayer, scripture, sacrament and music, sending us out for service and mission in the community and world. Through the Occasional Offices we listen to the needs of the community and share with them the Good News of God's love made personal through Jesus. Also, through prayerful support and activities such as baptism and funeral ministry, hospitality, Messy Church, school services, school visits and leading collective worship, we work with local schools, particularly the Church primary school and we aim to reach out to unchurched members of the community.

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. Our verse for 2024 was: "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.

Public benefit

The trustees of the PCC are aware of the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit in 'The Advancement of Religion for the Public Benefit' and have had regard to it in their administration of the Charity. The trustees believe that, by promoting the work of the Church of England in the Ecclesiastical Parish of Holy Cross, Woodchurch, the PCC helps to promote the whole mission of the Church by following Christ and growing disciples in Christ, through vocation, discipleship, and evangelism, and that in doing so it provides a benefit to the public.

Worship Services

The worship service pattern at Holy Cross Church during 2024 has centred on the principal eucharistic service at 10am Sunday mornings with music led by organists (Suzy Chapman and Gill Locke) and a robed choir. There are also eucharistic services at 8am on Sundays and at 10am on Wednesdays. The first Sunday in the month 10am Eucharist has been shortened and made more 'All Age' friendly during 2024. In addition, Holy Cross has hosted a monthly Sunday Choral Evensong service from St. Saviour's (whilst they are in vacancy). There has been the re-introduction of healing prayer offered during the fourth Sunday principal service, led by clergy

and lay persons. Printed sheets have been provided for children on the theme of the lectionary readings which are followed at Holy Cross. This year the focus has been on the Old Testament and gospel Bible readings. The churchmanship of Holy Cross is catholic and traditional in style. During Lent a series of 8am Thursday morning eucharists were held, followed by a welcome breakfast. There have been fewer occasional offices at Holy Cross this year with a decrease in the number of Baptisms: 28 baptisms (less than 1 year = 13; ages 1-4 = 6; ages 5-10 = 4; ages 11-17 = 2; Adult = 3). Only 3 weddings and 12 funerals were held in church, with 4 additional funerals at Landican Cemetery only and 6 interment of ashes in the churchyard. The drop in numbers coming for baptism may be in part due to the drop in the local birth rate which is now affecting next year's school intake.

Activity Reports on the Life of the Parish 2023-2024

1. THE PCC; Structure, Governance and Management

The PCC is a Body Corporate established by the Church of England (PCC Powers Measure 1956, and the Church Representation Rules 2006) and is a Charity registered with the Charity Commission. The PCC is governed by the Parochial Church Council Powers Measure (1956) as amended that came into effect on 2nd January 1957 and the Church Representation Rules (contained in Schedule 3 to the Synodical Government Measure 1969 as amended).

The method of appointment of the PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. The Council at Holy Cross comprises the Incumbent, the Churchwardens, those elected to the Deanery Synod, and other members who are elected at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting by those on the Electoral Roll. Members of the congregation are encouraged to join the Electoral Roll. Congregation members are encouraged and supported to take on new roles and to stand for election to the PCC.

PCC REPORT

The previous two PCC reports, particularly the most recent, have been marked by the references to the vacancy which ran from January 2023 to February 2024. Since 4 February 2024 this issue has thankfully gone away.

Elections at the 2024 APCM left PCC with three vacancies but the co-option of Revd Josie Tuplin and Revd Canon David Felix added strength to the committee. There were seven PCC meetings in 2024, at which (as usual) a wide range of matters of concern to the church and community was discussed. There has fortunately been rather less need for talk about the graveyard or the boundary wall than in some recent years. A new Health and Safety Officer has been appointed and issues around Safeguarding training are being addressed. Fundraising remains a concern, but the Christmas trip took place, as did a Christmas Fair.

Christopher Tuplin (PCC Secretary), January 2024

2. THE ELECTORAL ROLL

At the end of December 2024 there were 129 persons on the Electoral Roll of the parish. Of these 52 were resident in the parish (40%) and 77 were non-resident (60%). During 2024 six new names were added to the Roll, and six church members on the Roll sadly passed away, leaving the total on Roll unchanged from December 2023.

The Diocese requires that a new Electoral Roll be prepared before the 2025 Annual Parish Church Meeting by the end of May. This means that for 28 days prior to that the Roll will be closed for additions or amendments.

Ian McKenzie (Electoral Roll Officer), December 2024

3. THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 DECEMBER 2023

Financial Statements for the Year Ending 31 December 2024

SUMMARY BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31ST DECEMBER 2024

	2024	2023
	£	£
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash at Barclays Bank	23,815	18,640
Shares at CCLA	53,800	51,868
Short term deposits (CCLA)	28,796	27,259
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	106,411	97,767
FUNDS		
Unrestricted funds in current account	1702	751
Restricted Funds in current account	841	
Unrestricted funds in deposit account	13,265	
Restricted Funds in deposit account	8,007	17,889
Unrestricted funds in CCLA	19,664	4,224
Restricted Funds in CCLA	9,132	23,035
Shares in CCLA	53,800	51,868
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TOTAL FUNDS	106,411	97,767

Restricted and designated funds are kept in our deposit account to separate them from our general funds, which are used for our normal running costs and which are kept in our current account. Restricted Funds are those where the donor has specified the use of the donation; designated funds are those where the PCC has decided what a specific amount of money e.g. fund-raising, will be used for.

Our income from planned giving has been relatively stable throughout 2024, at around £3500 each month, and we have received some generous one-off donations. My thanks go to everyone who gives to our church in whatever way, as we could not manage without any of you.

Our fundraising in 2024 has been both enjoyable and successful, although reduced owing to Ian McKenzie's period of ill health. We are delighted that he is making a good recovery and look forward to more social events in 2025. A coach trip was arranged to Boundary Mill and Barton Grange garden centre, which was thoroughly enjoyed by all who took part. The Christmas Fair was very well supported and raised almost £2000, to which £750 was added 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 sale of calendars made using old photographs of the Church and Woodchurch Village raised £250.

The Tower of Light service was, as always, very popular not just with our regular congregation but also others from the wider community. The total raised was very nearly £2500. I would like to thank Sue Treanor who first conceived this service eleven years ago and who works so hard every year to make it such a success.

Hirings of the Parish Community Hall and the Jubilee Rooms have generated a profit of almost £4500 this year, which is a little more than last year. The number of children's parties and hire to family groups has increased, but of course the associated heating costs have risen also. Our fixed price gas and electricity contracts finished at the beginning of December 2024 and the new contracts are inevitably more expensive.

Our income in 2024 has exceeded our expenditure, and Holy Cross has been able to meet all our commitments in full, including the Parish Share. We do not have a large surplus and we must not be complacent, but we continue to make ends meet and have not needed to use any of our reserves.

I would like to record my thanks to everyone at Holy Cross for their generosity this year.

Wendy Deverill (Treasurer), January 2025

4. THE CHURCH WARDENS' REPORT

2024 started with the Parish still in a Vacancy and, although Revd Sr Janet Arnold CA had been appointed as the new Rector of Holy Cross, her Induction was not held until 4 February. Once the newly appointed Rector had taken up residency in the Rectory our agreement with the diocese to undertake a "duty of care" role ended.

Throughout the vacancy we owe our grateful thanks to Revd Josie and all of the various visiting clergy for their continued spiritual guidance. We also wish to thank our PCC Secretary Christopher for tremendous work with the arrangements for the Induction Service.

Throughout the year we have between ourselves continued to ensure the approaches in and around the Church, Car Park and Parish Community Hall are kept safe and tidy. Temporary repairs were needed to potholes in the car park, and we have also dealt with repairs and updating to the noticeboard and numerous service engineer visits as well as gas, electric and water meter readings and out-of-hours security call-outs to the Church. We have, on occasion, helped at funerals and have also been involved with the Meadowside School Christmas service, the parish's Easter, Remembrance Day and All Souls services and the Christmas decoration of the church.

We spent many hours updating the Parish Terrier in preparation for the Archdeacon's Inspection which was held in June as well as attending his Visitation service on the same evening for which we travelled to Christleton.

In September the annual Heritage Open Day was very successful and, as well as viewing displays of information about the church and old photographs, visitors were taken up the church tower. Twelve of the photographs on display have been used by Wendy in the production of a 2025 calendar.

We were pleased to appoint Janette Hamlet as our cleaner for both the church and hall buildings but sadly she has recently decided to retire. A replacement has been found and Joyce Duggan has already taken up her duties.

In addition to our duties as Wardens in church we have also been acting as caretaker for both halls. We have been unsuccessful in finding anyone prepared to undertake this role which entails opening and closing either building when hired out for celebrations.

We have regularly attended Standing Committee and PCC Meetings and on occasion been asked to chair them. We have also attended several meetings in the Rectory.

Recently we had the electrical circuits checked and certified and had a Portable Appliances test done for all three buildings, as well as for the office equipment used by the Parish Administrator. We took the opportunity, as suggested by the church architect when undertaking the quinquennial insurance inspection report, to upgrade the church lighting levels.

We have both undertaken safeguarding training in accordance with diocesan requirements.

Sadly, due to an incident late in 2023 Rob Sadler was late in returning in 2024 to attend to the graveyard grass cutting and in view of unseasonable weather thereafter it was never fully completed. A complaint was received regarding ivy growing down the boundary wall and obstructing the pavement in Pool Lane. This was removed by both of us. The guttering channels along the roof and the downspout drains have all be cleared.

The lack of funds has prevented any movement on the repairs needed to the boundary wall and during the winter storm the roofing felt has been blown off part of the Jubilee Room.

We are pleased to announce that the new area set-aside for the Interment of Cremated Remains is now available.

In closing I would like to take this opportunity of thanking Wendy for all of her time and availability in sharing our duties which she undertakes in addition to being our Treasurer.

In April 2025 I will have completed my six years as your Warden and will be retiring. I take this opportunity to thank you all, PCC Members and Congregation with the hope that I have served you justly and well.

Roy Milne and Wendy Deveril (Churchwardens), January 2025

5. HALLS REPORTS

Parish Community Hall.

As Wardens we still attend to opening and closing the hall before and after functions. Children's Birthday Parties are still very popular. A rather hurried re-arrangement was needed during the school summer holidays to accommodate the Whizz Kids holiday club. We have welcomed on several occasions groups of Indian families for celebration events and during the General Election a couple of electioneering meeting were held.

The Craft Club is still proving to be very popular to Parish life and a successful Christmas Fair was organised and well attended as was the Tower of Light. Meadowside Community Café is proving very popular since their summer vacation.

Sadly, the Community Choir *Voices in the Woods* has disbanded and no replacement booking has yet been found.

We have attended at service engineer visits and Wirral Borough Council Pest Control still visits. Cleaning duties are now undertaken by a newly appointed cleaner.

Roy Milne (Halls Manager), January 2025

Jubilee Rooms.

The AA, NA, bereavement counselling, a local Housing Resident's group and Elian Davies (Wellbeing) as our regular user groups have recently been joined by a new community choir *The Jubilee Singers*. On occasions a group of Indian gentlemen have used the facility for meetings. Both the Junior Majorettes group and the Indian Children's learning group have not returned.

The roof over the north side of the building is in need of major repairs/replacement.

Roy Milne (Halls Manager), January 2025

6. THE FABRIC, GOODS AND ORNAMENTS OF THE PARISH CHURCH

The Parish Terrier has been updated this year in readiness for the Archdeacon's Inspection. The current situation is reported in that document.

Roy Milne and Wendy Deveril (Churchwardens), January 2025

7. 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 for the three year period 2023 – 2026 were Jenny Davies, Elian Davies and Wendy Deverill. Also on the synod from Holy Cross is Ian McKenzie, who is the Deanery Secretary. The synod meets three times a year at a different parish in the deanery. On 12 February 2024 the meeting was at St. Paul with St. Luke Tranmere when the guest speaker before the business meeting was Katy Herrera, the Families, Children and Youth Advisor for the Chester Diocese, whose presentation was entitled "Growing Faith": this is a movement (involving churches, schools and households working together) that exists to change the culture of the Church of England so that everyone instinctively puts children, young people and families at the heart of mission and ministry in the church.

It was announced in early June that our Rural Dean, Revd Dr Joe Kennedy had been appointed Bishop of Burnley in the Blackburn diocese. Joe had been the vicar of St. Saviour's Oxtown since 2011 and rural Dean since 2021.

The next meeting on 13 June was at St. Peter's Church Rock Ferry, when the guest speaker was Revd Peter Froggatt (Diocesan Director for Outreach), who described a new outreach course being prepared for parishes in the diocese. It is broken down into three sections: (i) Sharing God's life, (ii) Sharing your life and (iii) Sharing your faith. (A copy of the full text of the talk, and the talks at the other deanery meetings, can be obtained from Ian McKenzie.)

Elections to the Diocesan Synod from the deanery resulted in the appointment of Revd Keith Addenbrooke, Revd Sr Janet Arnold, Revd Matt Graham and Revd James Terry to the House of Clergy and Tony Endean (St. Oswald's), Ian McKenzie (Holy Cross) and Martin Smith (St. Catherine's) to the House of Laity.

The last meeting of the year was held at Holy Cross on 24 October and was chaired by Revd Paul Bentley from the Priory Parish, the newly appointed Rural Dean for the Birkenhead Deanery. The guest speakers were Revd Canon Simon Chesters (Diocesan Director of Ministry) and his deputy Revd Jenny Bridgman. They described their work, which covers a range of activities seeking to encourage, equip and develop the calling of all God's people while supporting those in a wide variety of lay and ordained ministries.

Ian McKenzie (Deanery Synod Secretary), December 2024

8. THE BIRKENHEAD CHURCH AID SOCIETY was established over 100 years ago to support clergy and lay members of churches in the Birkenhead Deanery area as they trained for the ministry or as Lay Readers or Pastoral Workers. These days the society is managed by the Deanery Standing Committee and makes grants for the purchase of books and course materials to members of parishes in the deanery who are in training. Its funding comes from investment interest and donations when needed from the parishes in the deanery.

Ian McKenzie (Deanery Synod Secretary), December 2024

9. SAFEGUARDING

All members of the PCC at Holy Cross have a current DBS and have undergone Safeguarding training.

A Safeguarding Policy has been drafted, currently awaiting approval from incumbent and the PCC. An action plan will follow.

There have been no cases that have required intervention from the Diocese.

Paul Mountford (Safeguarding Officer), January 2025

10. PARISH MINISTRY TEAM

Holy Cross is blessed to have a team of lay and ordained members led by the Rector, Revd Sr Janet Arnold CA, capably supported by Revd Josie Tuplin (Honorary Assistant Priest), Sue Mountford (Reader) and Sue Treanor (Parish Administrator). They have met as a team on Monday mornings (in person or via zoom) following Morning Prayer to share in conversation around the life of the parish. The Parish Ministry Team oversees worship, pastoral care, adult discipleship and mission and outreach in the parish. Members of the team work with the incumbent, churchwardens and the PCC to share in leading worship and preaching and to offer pastoral and administrative support in the life of the parish. They provide regular updates and reports on this work for the PCC. Revd Canon David Felix (Honorary Assistant Priest) also leads worship regularly and supports the team. Revd John McKae, having started the year at Holy Cross and given support during the vacancy, decided to move to another parish to offer support during their vacancy. Holy Cross is a busy parish and the work shared across the team is invaluable.

Revd Sister Janet Arnold CA (Rector), December 2024

11. READER UPDATE FOR 2024.

I have enjoyed another year of serving God and all who attend worship at Holy Cross. I have preached on Sundays at 8am and 10am services. I also led at the Last Hour at the Cross on Good Friday and, with my reader colleague from St Saviour's, led choral evensong in October.

I completed year 5 of reader training in April and received my degree from Chester University at a ceremony held on 8 November 2024 at Chester Cathedral.

I continue to be thankful for the love and support I receive from everyone at Holy Cross Church.

Susan Mountford (Reader), December 2024

12. PASTORAL CARE

Revds Janet and Josie work alongside visitors from within the congregation to offer pastoral visits for members of the congregation at home, in hospital and in sheltered homes or nursing care. Revd Janet has managed to visit at least 70 members of the congregation in their homes at least once this year and sometimes as many as three church members in hospital at one time. Home Communion was offered before Easter and Christmas and on request to those who have been unable to get to church, which sadly has been an increasing number. Pastoral care is also offered within the parish community, to offer a listening ear and prayer or, on a number of occasions, to pray around someone's house. It is a real privilege to be able to minister in this way. There are also caring members of the congregation who regularly phone those who are sick or unwell, which is invaluable.

Revd Sister Janet Arnold CA (Rector), December 2024

13. ADULT DISCIPLESHIP

The **START! course** was run for 6 weeks in July and August of this year and although two members started, only one completed the course. It is hoped to run the course on an irregular basis. The lady who completed the START! course has continued to develop her faith through Bible reading and discipleship sheets which Revd Janet has been working through with her. Hopefully another series of START! will begin in the new year. This is an excellent course and Bernie Gallivan and I have really enjoyed running it.

Revd Sister Janet Arnold CA (Rector), December 2024

Zoom Bible Study began during the first lockdown in 2020 and continues to flourish. There are currently 13 members ranging in age from mid-thirties to early-nineties who gather on Tuesday evenings to explore the relevance of the Bible in our daily lives and end the evening with a service of Compline. Highlights of 2024 include the story of Joseph in Genesis, the first 5 chapters of Revelation and the Book of Proverbs. We are currently about a third of the way through the Gospel of John. New members and visitors are always welcome.

Revd Josie Tuplin (Hon. Assistant Priest), January 2025

14. SOCIAL AND FUND-RAISING ACTIVITIES

In the continued absence of a Social and Fund Raising Committee of the PCC there were fewer activities than in previous years but things did start again from September onwards. On the weekend of Holy Cross Day the parish again supported the Wirral Heritage event when, like many Wirral buildings and sites, we welcomed many visitors to explore our ancient parish church and grounds. On 27 September members of the church hosted the now annual Coffee Morning in aid of MacMillan Cancer Support and raised a fantastic £765 for the charity.

The weeks leading up to the end of 2024 were a busy and enjoyable time with planned Social and Fund Raising events. On Friday 15 November there was the annual pre-Christmas Shopping coach trip to Boundary Mill at Colne in Lancashire followed by a visit to Barton Grange Garden Centre.

On 23 November our Christmas Fair was held in the Parish Community Hall. It was well supported by the local community, and very pleasing to our Treasurer was the record amount raised. Then on 1 December the "Tower of Light" was switched on following a well attended service in church. The event was organised again by Sue Treanor (our Parish Administrator) with her husband Andy

and their band of helpers, who put on a great display, with lights mounted on the church tower that were visible across the parish and from Oxtown and Prenton. The "Switch On" was followed by mulled wine, mince pies and other refreshments in the hall, and many families took the opportunity to put their remembrances on the Christmas Tree in church and make generous donations to church as well.

Ian McKenzie, December 2024

15. MOTHERS UNION

Mothers' Union meets on the second Tuesday of the month at 2pm in the Community Parish Hall. We have had 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 Mothers' Union Diocesan projects at home and abroad with donations and Prayers.

Jenny Davies, December 2024

16. CRAFT CLUB

The Craft Club meets Monday afternoons 2-4pm fortnightly in the warm, welcoming space of the Parish and Community Hall and is open to everyone, including those who don't attend church. It offers a friendly atmosphere where people can enjoy a good natter while creating handmade items for seasonal fundraising at Easter and Christmas. During 2024 we made cream egg Easter mice, poppies for display on Remembrance Sunday and Christmas crafts for the fair to raise funds for Church. The club also supports charitable causes, for example making children's jumpers for Ukraine: over 35 jumpers have been made by our Craft Club this year and sent to Ukraine. Craft Club is all about bringing the community together to craft, chat and make a difference.

Sue Treanor (Parish Administrator), January 2025

17. COMMUNITY CAFÉ

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. This enables them to gain useful work experience and develop their social skills. They are a delightful group of young people whose friendliness and enthusiasm are what make the café so special. The work of the Café in providing opportunities for young people and a warm space for members of the community to meet was recognised by a grant from the Evolve Wirral Fund in 2024.

Revd Josie Tuplin (Hon. Assistant Priest), January 2025

18. MESSY CHURCH UPDATE FOR 2024.

Messy Church has been held once a month throughout the year, except for August. We have a planning meeting, usually two weeks before, when we decide theme and crafts and plan the service. We focused on stories from the Old Testament for a while and then returned to Remembrance in November.

The number of children along with their carer(s) does vary from month to month. The lowest has been 6, due to a school parents' evening the same day. The most we have had has been 19. Over the last 12 months the numbers have averaged out to 11 children each month.

Messy Church continues to be enjoyed by all who attend, children and adults alike. The crafts are always well constructed and well thought out for that month's theme. Engagement in the service is positive and the tea always goes down a treat!

Our volunteers are amazing and I'm so thankful for the commitment they make to this ministry – for their time, their craft ideas and their help in the services. If anyone would like to join our team you would be very welcome. Please speak to any one of us. Thank you.

Susan Mountford (Administrator for Messy Church), January 2025

19. OPEN THE BOOK

During 2024 the ministry of the Open the Book team has been suspended. This was due in part to the sad and sudden death of leader Diane Adams in December 2023. The team had been leading Collective Worship in Woodchurch, Holy Cross Church of England and Fender Primary Schools in alternate weeks. The Open the Book charity has produced a new set of guidelines. There is a charge for membership and groups are required to use a new book. New books will need to be purchased and membership of the organisation restarted before the team can begin work again. This is an enjoyable and fun way to communicate the Bible in primary schools and is an opportunity it would be sad to miss. After a break during 2024, it is hoped that the team will restart in 2025 and we are always looking for new members to join our team.

Revd Sr. Janet Arnold CA (Rector), December 2024

20. CHOIR

This year we may note the introduction of the Celtic Alleluia in April, the reintroduction of the Gradual hymn, the choir's contribution to the Induction service in February and the 15 or so anthems the choir sang during 10am service in the course of the year. Because the conditions set by the departing incumbent at St Saviours resulted in the cancellation of Choral Evensong services there for the duration of the vacancy, our organist Gill Locke and members of the choir co-operated with the St Saviours choir in mounting such services at Holy Cross in June, July, September and October, and will continue to do so in 2025 so long as the St Saviours vacancy lasts.

Christopher Tuplin (Choir master), January 2025

21. SCHOOLS LINKS

Holy Cross Primary School

Our church school has been in to church for eleven services this year and Barbara and Jenny have supported with refreshments for the parents when they arrive early. After chatting with children who couldn't hear or see anything in church services because of lack of clear microphone use, pillars obscuring the view or just quiet children's voices, it was decided for most school services to bring only one Key Stage in at a time. This has worked well and the interaction with children has increased. Class groups have also visited the church to learn about Baptism and the Church building. Revd Janet has led school collective worship, visited lessons, enjoyed chatting with the children over lunch, and taught year 5 and 6 pupils Bible Explorer Old Testament lessons. Revd Janet led a morning for staff in September during their inset day. The school has become part of the Chester Diocesan Academy Trust and a new Governing body is being set up. Julie Davies has been acting headteacher and Laura Jones her deputy for the entire year, and executive heads (both of them head teachers of Church of England Primary schools) have been put in place by the diocese to offer support.

Gilbrook Special School

Pupils from Gilbrook School, along with their teachers, have visited Holy Cross Church a number of times bearing seasonal artwork for display – crosses at Easter and poppies for Remembrance Day. A class made a church visit and learned about Baptism, Holy Communion and church worship. Revd Janet visited the school for the Remembrance Service and Christmas collective worship and bake sale. She was shown around the school and farm and met with staff. It has been good to begin to build relationships here.

Fender Primary School

The regular contact with Fender Primary School has been through the Open the Book team over the last few years. Sadly, we have not been able to offer this resource during 2024 but hope to re-start soon. There is a new headteacher at the school and we look forward to getting to know him and the school better in 2025.

Woodchurch High School

Over the last year Revd Janet has visited the chaplaincy team, taken part in Easter Assemblies for the whole school and attended Prayer Meetings when possible. Now that the prayer meetings have moved to a Wednesday morning, it is much more difficult to attend them, as they clash with Wednesday Holy Communion services in church. Revds Josie and Janet also welcomed a class of year 7 pupils into the church as they explored church music, robes, baptism and holy communion. Revd Janet attended at event at the High School when Archbishop Stephen Cottrell visited. It was also good to display an art exhibition of work by year 6 children in church: the High School worked with year 6 pupils from our church primary school to produce this work.

Revd. Sr. Janet Arnold CA (Rector), December 2024

Meadowside Special School.

Our links with Meadowside Special School, where Revd Josie is now Chair of Governors, continue to develop and flourish. Throughout 2024, we continued to work with students from the school in our Community Café and, in December, we were delighted to welcome the whole school and their families into Church for their wonderful annual re-telling of the Christmas story.

Revd Josie Tuplin (Hon. Assistant Priest), January 2025

A FINAL FEW WORDS

It is good to be back at Holy Cross and living in Woodchurch parish again. The licensing service on 4 February was meticulously planned here at Woodchurch, beautiful flowers filled the church, the organist and choir had been practising and led the varied worship with distinction, and the buffet tables of refreshments were groaning – what a lovely welcome back. Thank you to all who worked so hard to make it a lovely occasion: it really was special, thank you! A huge thank you to Revd Josie who led the church during the vacancy so ably, supported by Revds David, John and Gordon, and also to Wendy and Roy as Churchwardens, who kept things going in terms of the buildings, halls and in so many other ways. Each one gave so generously of their time and energy, thank you.

I know that God has called me back here to Holy Cross, Woodchurch and I look forward to working alongside the ministry team, churchwardens, PCC and members of the church and the community as we seek to serve God and make him known in this parish and beyond. It has been good to meet my new colleagues on the ministry team (and I'm so grateful for Sue Treanor's continued work and ministry) and Deacon Ellie at the Methodist Church. I look forward to us doing more together ecumenically.

Since the Rural Dean Revd Dr Joe Kennedy left St Saviours Church in June to become the Bishop of Burnley, both Revd Josie and I have been supporting the churchwardens in Oxtun and leading services of Holy Communion, Weddings and the occasional funeral.

I have had the privilege of visiting over seventy church members in their homes during 2024: thank you to so many who have welcomed me so warmly. There have been many visits to those at Arrowe Park Hospital too during 2024. I do not know if I will ever complete visiting all those on the church electoral roll, but I shall try.

Yes, there are challenges ahead at Holy Cross Church and joys along the way. We are sad that beloved members of the congregation are now worshipping with the angels in glory; we miss them, but we also rejoice at new faces and members in the congregation.

There is so much going on in this parish, particularly with the large number of schools we are blessed with on the estate. We have amazing opportunities, so please continue to pray that we make the most of these opportunities for mission and faith sharing. We hold to our vision statement, "Growing disciples of Christ", as we are each called to proclaim in word and deed the love of God, his transforming forgiveness and healing in our lives as we reach out to others.

Revd Sister Janet Arnold CA (Rector) January 2025

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF WOODHURCH, HOLY CROSS

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT

	Note	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total 2024	Total 2023
RECEIPTS					
Voluntary Receipts:					
Planned Giving Gift Aid		37503		37503	28,920
Planned Giving Not Gift Aid		6,319		6,319	8,000
Collections at Services		0		0	0
All other giving a)		8,212	3,748	11,960	13,569
Gift Aid Recovered		9,972		9,972	9,755
		62,006	3,748	65,754	60,244
Other Voluntary Income					
Grants and					
Legacies			836	836	0
Flowers			1,380	1,380	830
Activities for Generating Funds					
b)		5,797	3,533	9,330	9,106
		5,797	5,749	11,546	9,936
Investment Income					
Bank Interest		87		87	98
Dividends (CBF Investment Fund)		705		705	695
		792		792	793
Income from other sources					
Wedding and Funeral Fees		5,263	8,549	13,812	17,027
Lettings		12,306		12,306	10,190
Refunds (inc VAT)		843		843	1,031
From CCLA funds		0		0	8,150
From Deposit account			1,571	1,571	2,941
From No 2 account					0
		18,412	10,120	28,532	39,339
Total receipts		87,007	19,617	106,624	110,313

PAYMENTS	Note	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total 2024	Total 2023
Church Activities					
Parish Share		39,466		39,466	37,587
Diocesan Fees			2,620	2,620	2,096
Mission and Charitable Giving					
		39,466	2,620	42,086	39,683
Salaries and Honoraria					
Parish Administrator		14,604		14,604	14,097
Retired Clergy			1,590	1,590	2,286
Verger			700	700	850
Gravedigger			2,225	2,225	2,375
Organists		3,930	955	4,885	5,729
Bell Ringers			365	365	500
Funeral admin/flowers			352	352	500
		18,534	6,187	24,721	26,337
Running Expenses					
Rectory Utilities/Council Tax		2,739		2,739	1,355
Incumbent Expenses		599		599	0
Mission and Evangelism to Children			578	578	426
Sundry Expenses		987		987	857
Insurance		3,268		3,268	6,434
Other expenses	c)	3,191		3,191	2,245
Repairs and Maintenance		3,674		3,674	4,740
Service Requisites		1,352		1,352	1,944
Flowers		1,135		1,135	1,294
Admin		673		673	499
Churchyard Upkeep		0		0	4,179
Church utilities		4,325		4,325	5,891
		21,943	578	22,521	29,866
Cost of Trading					
PCH & JR Utilities		3,929		3,929	3,483
PCH & JR Maintenance		3,897		3,897	2,872
		7,826	0	7,826	6,355
Fundraising					
Cost of Fundraising			1,187	1,187	2,350
100 Club Prizes			925	925	1,120
			2,112	2,112	3,470
Other Outgoings					
Audit Fee		900		900	840
Surveys		0		0	0
Transfers to Deposit Account			4,787	4,787	20,664
		900	4,787	5,687	21,504
Total Payments		88,669	16,284	104,953	127,214
Excess of Receipts over payments		-1,662	3,333	1,671	-16,902
Net transfers between funds				-3,216	
				-1,545	

Cash in bank account at 1st January 2024	18,640
Interest on Deposit account	289
Cash in bank accounts at 31st December 2024	23,815

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF WOODHURCH, HOLY CROSS

FURTHER ANALYSIS OF RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNTS

	Note	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total 2024	Total 2023
RECEIPTS					
a) All Other Giving					
Donations		8,212	3,227	11,439	12,451
Admin		0		0	140
Wall Fund			521	521	978
		8,212	3,748	11,960	13,569
b) Activities for Generating Funds					
Fund Raising Activities		4,762		4,762	8,522
100 Club		935	935	1,870	2,129
Tower of Light			2,598	2,598	2,873
		5,697	3,533	9,230	13,523
PAYMENTS					
c) Other Expenses					
Organ & Piano Maintenance		310		310	155
Bank Charges		594		594	590
Music Licences		949		949	551
Photocopier		1,338		1,338	950
		3,191		3,191	2,245

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF WOODHURCH, HOLY CROSS

STATEMENTS OF ASSETS & LIABILITIES FOR YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

		Unrestricted	Restricted	Total 2024	Total 2023
Cash Funds					
	Barclays Current Account	1838	705	2543	872
	Barclays Deposit Account		21272	21272	17768
	Total	1838	21977	23815	18640
CCLA Funds					
	CBF Deposit Fund	4447		4447	4224
	Hayward Trust		1364	1364	1295
	Sanctuary Fund		4273	4273	4057
	Youth Fund		1445	1445	1372
	Enhancement Fund		2050	2050	1946
	Rector & Churchwarden's Fund	15217		15217	14365
	Total	19664	9132	28796	27259
Debtors					
	Nil				
Investments		Reserve Fund	Churchyard Fund	Total value	Total value
		Number	Value (£)	Number	Value (£)
		443	27809	1124	25991
				53800	51868

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF WOODHURCH, HOLY CROSS

**DESIGNATED FUNDS HELD IN DEPOSIT ACCOUNT
FOR YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024**

	2024	2023
Sunday School Fund	500	500
Donkey Fund	100	100
Chester Grant	239	385
Wall Fund	2850	2213
Discretionary Fund (those in need)	1667	1667
Bell Fund	190	145
Choir Fund	1200	110
Tower of Light	4541	3225
Craft Club	152	152
Childrens Work	1000	0
Churchyard Fund	400	
Wedding Fees	100	589
Trf from Current account	8000	8000
Interest paid	333	44
Total in deposit account	21272	17130

**DESIGNATED FUNDS HELD IN CURRENT ACCOUNT
FOR YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024**

Churchyard Fund	0	50
Messy Church	-136	71
Wall Fund	841	0
Total in current account	705	121

Grand Total	21977	17251
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**INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT
TO THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF
HOLY CROSS, WOODCHURCH - 0110**

This report on the financial statements of the PCC for the year ended 31st December 2024, is in respect of an examination carried out in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations 2006 ("The Regulations") and section 43 of the Charities Act 1993 ("the Act").

Respective responsibilities of the PCC and examiner

As members of the PCC you are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements; you consider that the audit requirement of the Regulations and section 43(2) of the Act do not apply. It is my responsibility to issue this report on those financial statements in accordance with the terms of the Regulations.

Basis of this report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 43(7)(b) of the Act and to be found in the Church guidance, 2006 edition. That examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the PCC and a comparison of the financial statements with those records. It also includes considering any unusual items or disclosures in the financial statements and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the view by the financial statements.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

- (1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements

- . to keep accounting records in accordance with section 41 of the Act; and to prepare
- . financial statements which accord with the accounting records and comply with the
- . requirements of the Act and the Regulations

have not been met; or

- (2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the financial statements to be reached.

A Endean
4th February 2025

