

**Annual Report
and
Financial Statements
of the
Parochial Church Council
of
St Helen's Witton**
(also known as Northwich PCC)

for the year ended 31 December 2024

Incumbent:

Rev Andrew Ridley

Readers

Mrs Berenice Kirwan

Mr David Drinkwater

Bank:

HSBC Bank plc, Northwich

Independent Examiner:

Mr Frank Strange

1. Reference and administration details

Charity name: Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of St Helen's Witton

Also known as: St Helen's, Northwich

Registered charity number: 1179543

Principal address: The Vicarage, 61 Church Road, Northwich, CW9 5PB

Names of the trustees who manage the charity

Trustee name	Office (if any)	Dates acted if not for whole year	Name of person (or body) entitled to appoint trustee (if any)
Andrew Ridley	Chairman		Chester Diocese
Mr Gordon Atkinson	Church warden		APCM
Mr Kenneth Moth	Church warden		APCM
Mrs Berenice Kirwan	Deanery Synod Rep		APCM
Mrs Barbara Spencer	Deanery Synod Rep		APCM
Mr Andrew Cannon	Deanery Synod Rep		APCM
Mrs Rachel Clarke			APCM
Mrs Joy Montgomery			APCM
Mrs Amelia Visscher			APCM
Mrs Jennifer Thomas			APCM
Mrs Jo Hind	Co-opted member	From 15 th May 2024	PCC
Mrs Ijeomer Alozor	Co-opted member	From 11 th June 2024	PCC
Mr Tim Finlay		Until 14 th January 2025	APCM
Mr Andrew Jeapes	Secretary & Treasurer		APCM
Mr Francis Pendlebury		From 24/4/24	APCM
Mr Michael Roberts		Until 21 st February 2024	APCM
Mr Paul Tott			APCM

APCM = Annual Parochial Church Meeting

2. Structure, governance and management

Type of governing document:	Act of Parliament: Parochial Church Councils (Powers) Measure 1956 as amended and Church Representation Rules (contained in Schedule 3 to the Synodical Government Measure 1969 as amended)
How the charity is constituted:	Parish Church Council
Trustee selection methods:	Members of the PCC are either ex-officio due to an office or appointment they hold from Chester Diocese or are elected by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting in accordance with the Church Representation Rules.

The parish consists of one church: St Helen's. The vicar also has responsibility for St John's, Lostock Gralam.

3. Aims and Objectives

Aims and purposes

The PCC of St Helen's, Witton (also known as St Helen's Northwich) has the responsibility of co-operating with the incumbent in promoting, in the ecclesiastical parish, the whole mission of the church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. It also has maintenance responsibilities for St Helen's Church, the Sexton's House and 4 houses which are rented to produce income.

Objectives and activities

When planning our activities for the year, the incumbent and the PCC have considered the Commission's guidance on public benefit and, in particular, the specific guidance on charities for the advancement of religion. We aim to enable ordinary people to live out their faith as part of our parish community. We have adopted the overall objectives:

“Serving Christ, Serving the Community”

The primary object of St Helen's Parochial Church Council is the promotion of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to the doctrine and practices of the Church of England within the ecclesiastical parish.

Reference: “The Advancement of Religion for the Public Benefit”, Crown Copyright 2008

To this end we undertake activities in the following 4 areas:

- To maintain, develop and renew public acts of worship held regularly within our church building.
- To provide pastorally-relevant religious ceremonies open to all parishioners for baptisms, weddings and funerals.
- To extend the knowledge of and education in Christian teaching to both church members and members of the parish, within our acts of worship and through specific teaching opportunities, such as, confirmation groups and Sunday schools
- To provide pastoral care to members of the church and any parishioners in need of spiritual, social or practical support.
- The PCC acts to underpin all these activities by provision of well-maintained buildings.

4. Performance & Achievements

4.1 Vicar's Report

St Helen's Church has been a place of worship since 1350. So many generations have gathered here to meet Christ in Word and Sacrament. And now we, in our time, find ourselves called to worship and serve the Living God. We are blessed with a beautiful, much-loved and well-maintained building. In the course of 2024, we tried our best to advance our Mission Statement: 'Serving Christ, Serving the Community'. As a congregation we aspire to be a joy-filled and welcoming worshipping community that cares for the visitor and the enquirer and provides friendship and fellowship on Sunday and on weekdays.

In 2024, numbers attending Sunday worship increased and scarcely a week went by when there wasn't someone new to welcome. There were 84 Easter communicants (exactly the same as in 2023), 102 in total (compared with 123 in 2023 and probably down as a result of Bishop Sam's visit the previous week). Christmas communicants were 91 (91), total attendance 321 (314). Usual Sunday attendance (averaged across the year) was 57 Adults (50) and 5 children (4), and the 'Worshipping Community' stood at 135, which is 7 up on 2023. All these figures are derived from

careful recording keeping - in the Register of Services and a People Register - and numbers have been submitted to the Church of England's 'Statistics for Mission' database.

We have live-streamed and recorded on YouTube virtually every Sunday morning service. There is a small, faithful following of parishioners who watch online.

Bishop Sam conducted a Service of Confirmation on Palm Sunday and Janiss, Jo, Vicki, Imogen, Matilda and Nova were confirmed. Kamsin and Annie joined Bishop Sam at the altar and were welcomed as communicants.

Bert and Keira were the only couple to be married at St Helen's in 2024. We presented them with a wedding goody bag a week or two before their wedding in November. The number of funerals in church was down (from 29 to 17) and 10 (14) funerals were conducted at crematoria. Just before Christmas we celebrated the life and commended to God's safe keeping Frank Horrocks. Grieving families were invited to a Service of Remembrance and Thanksgiving on the last Sunday in October and to the Christmas Carol Service. 27(21) children under 5 were baptised in 2024, plus 2 adults. The adults were presented with Bibles. Baptised children and their families continued to be invited to the following month's Worship Together Communion to pick up their child's baptism certificate and a Hannah Dunnett print for their child's bedroom wall.

Witton Church Walk School pupils and staff have continued to attend St Helen's for Collective Worship every fortnight during school term. WCWS had its Harvest Service, Christmas Christingle Service, Easter Service and Leavers' Service in St Helen's. Victoria Road School held its Christmas Performance in church and Rudheath Senior Academy Lower School held their Christmas Service.

The third Wednesday in the month Communion Service in the Holy Cross Chapel continued, followed by CAMEO lunch. 'Praise and Play' met weekly during term time. Seasonal occasions such as Ash Wednesday, Holy Week and Ascension Day were observed. St Helen's was well represented on Good Friday at the *Churches Together* Service at the Salvation Army Citadel, followed by an Open Air Service in Baron's Square. Fr. Paul from St Wilfrid's joined me in leading the Service at the War Memorial on Remembrance Sunday. This followed the traditional Parade Service in church.

St Helen's signed up to the Jesus Shaped People Project – 'A Whole Church Discipleship Adventure based on the life of Jesus' - in 2024. From June to December, on 15 Sundays and in 4 small groups meeting after church on Sundays, Monday afternoons, Monday evenings and Thursday evenings, we explored how Jesus connected with people, taught about God through stories rooted in real life, built a team which learnt to forgive and love; made space for God in daily life through prayer and challenged the way things are with a vision of the way things could be.

Where we go next on our 'Jesus Shaped People' Adventure is up to us. Rebecca Holland, our JSP accompanier in 2024, has a new job as Strategic Programme Manager for the Diocese's 'Together in Christ, Sharing Hope' Project. But before she left she collated all the suggestions from the JSP Suggestion Box at the back of church and fed them into an after-service discussion which produced a very practical list of Jesus Shaped things to do as individuals and as a church family in 2025.

I continue to hope and pray that as a result of our ongoing JSP discipleship adventure ('Cross Shaped Jesus' is our 2025 JSP Lent Course) the congregation will grow in confidence, vision and in engaging with the local community. And that our discipleship deepens and is more purposeful. And new members are added.

Thank you, everyone who has contributed to the worshipping, serving life of St Helen's in 2024. There is much to look forward to in 2025 with new initiatives and changes of personnel in the offing.

Andrew Ridley

4.2 Churchwardens' Report

The Church Wardens have continued to carry out their primary responsibility of supporting the Vicar throughout the year. Regular meetings, have been held in order to help develop the mission of the Church and to progress administrative and maintenance matters. In terms of the Church building and facilities the last 12 months has again been a busy period.

Volunteers

Various calls have been made over the year for additional volunteers to help with the many essential tasks. These include Side persons / welcomers and servery volunteers on Sunday mornings and also volunteers for Saturday morning duties. Thursday Place of Welcome now has a strong group of volunteers, many of whom are not Church members. However, there are still only two Church member volunteers who share the task of opening / closing and coordinating all the various Thursday activities. These include Place of Welcome, the MIND bereavement counselling group and the Cheshire West and Chester Lets Talk initiative.

The Church Wardens are most grateful for all those volunteers who have, for many years, contributed lots of time each week to support the needs of St Helen's and indeed for those who have more recently stepped forward to help. Nonetheless we would like to encourage every church member to consider how they might further support the various needs that the Church has. For example, just a couple of hours cleaning each month, helping behind the servery once every couple of months, this type of help would be much appreciated. There are lots of other opportunities that members might want to offer help with. In addition, it is in doing these things that bonds and greater fellowship develops.

Inventory

We are grateful for the work that Ann and Frank have carried out to update the Church inventory records. The previous document was hand written some years ago and has been annotated many times to the point where it was difficult to follow. Ann and Frank have re typed the majority of the detailed records to create a modern useable document. The Inventory for 2025 has been completed and we expect a visit by the Archdeacon to check this at some time.

Roof - Repair already complete and future plans

Re-roofing and renewal of flashings to the aisle and vestry roofs is complete. Biannual checks of gutters and downpipes have been carried out. Whilst the main nave and chancel roof is sound and watertight a condition survey has been carried out. Costs for its eventual repair or replacement are currently being prepared to assist with forward planning and grant applications.

Servery

Leaks from the sink outlet and drain have been diagnosed and remedied.

Tower room

Work has been ongoing to develop this project and to meet points raised by the Chester Diocese Advisory Committee (DAC). We are expecting full approval during April 2025 and we will then implement the scheme.

Car Park

We are assembling supporting information in the form of a survey of all church users to demonstrate the need for a car park. We are also collecting letters of support from advocates (for example our MP). This will then be included in a formal planning application to create a car park. We already have consent for the widening of the east gate.

Food Hygiene

Volunteers have made excellent progress in establishing robust working practices and completing further training. An official inspection by Cheshire West and Chester resulted in a Food Hygiene rating of 4 with 5 the highest score. For comparison there are local commercial catering businesses that have Food Hygiene ratings of less than 4.

Organ

Work has continued at a much slower pace than was anticipated. However the original work remains within the agreed budget. Additional work to replace very old electrical systems associated with the main organ blower was authorised and has been completed.

Grounds

Work to maintain the Church grounds continues with help by volunteer teams. There have been a number of positive comments from both Church members and members of the public about the improved condition of our Church grounds.

Sextons House

This property was eventually sold free of any conditions related to St Helen's Church

Various improvements

Additional lighting has been added in the area above the space between the organ and the cupboards and toilet entrance. This was requested by the flower team who carry out much of their voluntary work in that area.

A handrail for the ramp has been designed and the architect is seeking a local metalworker to make and install this.

The external lights that is fitted to the building was checked, new lamps fitted and others repaired.

The burner nodes on the gas fired boiler have been replaced as have the two motors that drive the warm air into church. One of these new motors subsequently caught fire. The damage to the motor was such that any evidence as to why it caught fire was lost. The motor was replaced and appears to be working well. Over the very cold weeks around late December and January the boiler was working many hours each day and appeared to function well.

There was a mechanical failure of the sump pump that operated to keep the cellar area, and boiler, free from flooding. The pump has been replaced with no further issues. Excessive ground water had been leaching into the cellar area. The ground level drains and gullies have been inspected and no issues found other than the need to ensure the ground level gullies are kept clear of debris.

PA System

The control boxes and associated electrical wiring for the PA system was located in the rear choir stall behind the pulpit. The original installation involved many extension leads and trailing wires. Access to turn these on and off was difficult, not least for older volunteers, and the many trailing wires was considered a fire risk. The PCC decided to have all this relocated. And properly housed. It is now much safer and easier to use located in the corner behind the computer streaming workstation.

GA, and KM, churchwardens

4.3 Place of welcome & 4C's

Place of Welcome 2025

Place of Welcome on Thursdays continues to go from strength to strength, with between 50 and 60 attending each week, many staying for lunch. These include members of the MIND bereavement group, volunteers from Grozone, asylum seekers, casual visitors, and regulars from the parish. Passing walkers and visitors to Northwich take the opportunity to pop in while the church is open, many most stopping for a drink and chat with volunteers. The unconditional welcome and conversations are such an important part of what is offered. For some homemade soup is their only hot meal or chance to eat with company. Visitors come to 'Lets Talk Northwich', present from 11.30 – 1.30pm and obtain advice on a range of issues, see [Let's Talk Northwich | Cheshire West and Chester Council](#). New people come each week, some becoming regulars due to the warmth and welcome of the Place of Welcome community. Saying grace before the meal is an expected and accepted part of sharing together, initiated by one of our guests.

The volunteer team operate like a well-oiled machine gliding round each other in the server to serve drinks, make soup, prepare food and clear up, with set up and take down running equally smoothly. We are grateful to Gordon and Andrew Jeapes for opening-up and closing; to Christine for weekly shopping and to Andrew, Christine, Berenice, Angela and Barbara for making a great variety of soups. Bob, Keith, Ian and Jude are committed to set up, serving and clearing each week and we are grateful to the many others who assist and listen. Place of Welcome is only possible due to the willing service of volunteers, generous with their time and skills, and through the financial support of grants obtained by Gordon.

Barbara Moth

4Cs: Coffee, Cake, Company, Conversation

Every Saturday morning, between 10am and 12noon, hospitality is provided by regular volunteers and this is an important way in which St Helen's Church is in contact with our community. Paul and Lesley Tott have stepped back from volunteering after many years and we are immensely grateful to them for all their hard work. We pleased that others have been willing to do more on a regular basis, notably Dorothy Bostock, Barbara Jones. We have about 20 regular attenders but have been pleased to welcome a range of visitors from within the town and further afield. Good coffee and home-made cake are provided every week as well as a warm welcome. The atmosphere is further enhanced by the three talented flower arrangers and the equally talented knit and natter group! 4C's also plays a role in fund raising for the PCC nominated charities and during 2024, nearly £3,000 has been raised for: the Samaritans (£793) Christian Aid (£641) Cheshire Young Carers (£923) and the Children's Society (£608).

Andrew Jeapes

4.4 Praise & Play & Sunday Creche

Praise and Play continues to meet on a Friday morning between 9.30am and 11.00am and is slowly growing in numbers. We are in regular contact with 15 families.

The morning is specially prepared for pre-school children and their parents or carers and starts with a short service lasting about 10 minutes, during which we sing a couple of songs, listen to a story and say a short prayer. After the service there is a craft activity linked to the theme of the worship for the children and a chance to have a drink and a snack, recently toast or toasted teacakes, and for parents to enjoy a chat whilst the children play. There is no charge for "Praise and Play".

Topics explored this year during the worship session include;

- Finding out about God with Teddy Horsley when we learned about and celebrated Easter, Pentecost and Trinity Sunday. Teddy Horsley stories helped us to explore some of the Jesus Shaped People topics.
- God made a colourful world
- Getting ready for and celebrating Christmas and Epiphany
- God knows all about me
- Stories Jesus told

We would like to thank Angela Atkinson, Jennifer Thomas, Chris Davies and Vicki Ikin for all their help and support in welcoming and chatting to parents and providing the refreshments. We are always looking for more Church members to help and support this outreach initiative. Anyone is welcome to come along to join in with the worship and find out how you could help.

The Sunday Morning Creche meets every Sunday morning apart from the first Sunday in the month when there is a Worship Together Communion Service. The creche meets in the lower vestry during the first part of the service. The children join the rest of the congregation during the offertory hymn.

The creche is for pre-school children accompanied by a parent or carer. There is a space for the children to play, a Bible story is shared, often a simple version of the Gospel reading for the day, and the children can take part in a simple art or craft activity linked to the story.

The children attending the creche used the Jesus Shaped People readings and activities during the summer and autumn terms.

4.5 Sunday Club

Sunday club have continued to meet in the upper vestry on the 2nd and 3rd Sunday of the month during term time. We still continue to use the Godly Play scheme of teaching stories from the bible following the Church's year. We were also asked by Rev Andrew Ridley to consider using the Jesus-Shaped People (JSP) resources available to young people in this last year. We began with JSP 'follow me' the 15 week course for children and young people where we have been able to plan in some JSP sessions. The on-line resource materials have been easy to use and give great suggestions of activities we can include at age appropriate levels. The children have enjoyed the JSP sessions and we have had some thought provoking questions and fun activities.

We continue to have between 2 and 4 children attend on a regular basis and we actively ask all new families if they would like to attend Sunday Club if their children are old enough to attend. We also hope to follow the JSP Lent course for young people in the future months.

I would like to thank Ruth and Amelia for their continued support and help with running Sunday Club.

Rachel Clarke.

4.6 Choir

The choir continues to lead the congregation in the singing of hymns. During practice on Thursday evenings we tackle more challenging music to help improve our sight reading. At the moment, we are enjoying Herbert Sumsion's Magnificat. Sumsion had a very distinct style which endears him to singers and listeners alike. We are willing to find an occasion when we might introduce this and other anthems to our worship.

In the meantime, we welcome new members. We rehearse on Thursday evenings between 7.15pm and 8.15 pm, in the vestry. If you would like to come along to a practice, please speak to David Nangreave or another choir member, as very occasionally we need to cancel choir practice.

4.7 Bell Ringers

We are an active group of bell-ringers, who ring regularly for the Sunday services and practise on Monday evenings. It was with great sadness that we rang half muffled for the funeral of Frank Horrocks. Frank, who passed away on 8th December 2024, had been a loyal member of the band for many years and we will miss him greatly. Again, we will be ringing with demonstrations for the summer Tea at the Tower events. We are grateful for the support of visiting ringers from local towers but we are open to receive new recruits .

4.8 Parish Recorder's Report

The planned giving in the Parish continued with a Weekly Thanksgiving Envelope scheme, Yellow Envelopes, individual Standing Orders arranged through the bank, Contactless Payments, Open Plate donations and Annual Gifts.

Our Annual review for 2024 was distributed in Dec 24 together with thanks from Rev. Andrew Ridley to all regular givers and a renewal of pledge forms for 2025. A full set of Thanksgiving envelopes was issued in Jan 25 for the period Jan 2025 to Dec 2025.

The following shows the profile of giving and donations received for 2024 (Jan to Dec) compared to January to December of 2023.

	2024		2023	
Weekly Donation Value	No of donors	% of total	No of donors	% of total
less than £5	21	40%	18	37%
£5 - £10	15	28%	7	15%
£10 - £20	6	11%	12	25%
£20 - £30	4	8%	3	6%
£30 - £100	7	13%	7	15%
over £100	0	0%	1	2%
Total	53		48	

		Total Donations		Total Donations
Weekly Envelopes	5	1,150	7	£2213
Standing Orders	38	30,929	36	£28,667
Annual Gifts	-	-	5	£1,035
Yellow Envelopes	11	2,220	13	£11,498
		£34,299		£43,413
SCDS (including contactless)		£8083		£7567
Grand Total		£42382		£50980

Special Projects Last year numerous members of the congregation, (plus other donors NOT included here) gave to special projects such as the church clock, stained glass cleaning and towards the new church organ (as reflected in 2023 figures- see the yellow envelopes). Some members & non-members have continued to give towards these projects in 2024. This is greatly appreciated.

Contactless & Open Plate - The amount given has increased from £7567 to £8083. Thank you to everyone who gives in this way.

For the tax year purposes

In the tax year 2023/24-

During the tax year 2023/24, Regular Gift Aid Giving and Giving for Special Projects, totalled £39453.63 enabling us to claim £9863.42 for the parish on this sum.

A further £2000 was claimed on donations made through the Small Cash Donations scheme, (those donations made via contactless, open plate and other donations), plus £191.91 in interest, so a total of £12055.33 for the parish.

In the tax year 2022/2023

In the tax year 2022/23, we claimed £8323.50 Gift Aid on £33294 of Regular gifts and Weekly Gift Aid giving.

A further £1791.25 was claimed on donations made through the SCDS, plus £99.84 in interest, so a total of £10,214.59 for the parish.

4.9 Safeguarding

During 2024, no matters of concern were reported to either the Parish Safeguarding Officer(PSO) or the PCC. We have reviewed and published our safeguarding policy and continued with progress in training of appropriate volunteers and of DBS clearances. We are grateful for the work of Michael Roberts, who unfortunately had to resigned as PSO due to ill health and are pleased to welcome Mrs Lesley Moss as our new PSO.

4.10 Health & Safety Report

During the year 2024-25 the following UNOR reportable incidents have occurred:

Level 1 1
Level 2 2
Level 3 5

Level 3) Near miss incident/Observed Hazard: This is an incident or observed hazard/behaviour that could have resulted in an injury or damage to property if nothing was done about it. An example could be a damaged electrical socket or a spill of water that is not cleared up.

Level 2) Incident that caused damage to property or a minor injury requiring first aid: This is an incident that would have caused injury had there been a person in the wrong place at the wrong time or a minor injury not requiring professional medical attention. An example of this could be an overloaded electrical socket or a minor lighting fire. Level 1) Incident that led to a more severe injury requiring first aid/emergency services call out/RIDDOR report: Any incident that requires an emergency services call out is the highest level of UNOR.

Incidents

Incidents are rated according to the severity or potential for harm that could arise from the incident. Following each reported incident or near miss, an evaluation of the incident and the events leading up to the incident are undertaken by the H&S Officer and other members of the PCC if required. The investigation will result in a number of recommendations being made to the PCC.

Of the above incidents, one was rated as a level 1 and resulted in injuries being sustained by a parishioner that required medical help.

The level 2 and 3 incidents were near misses, with the potential to cause injury or damage. The most serious of which was related to a fire in the boiler room with potential to cause injury to persons and significant damage to the building.

Once again, can I ask that you let me know if you have seen anything that you consider to be a hazard or an unsafe event occur. There are forms available in the vestry and these are checked regularly.

All of the above incidents have resulted in recommendations being made to the PCC or the persons involved. The list of recommendations is available if required.

Policies and Risk Assessments

All H&S policies and risk assessments are up to date but are reviewed following reported incidents to confirm their adequacy and updated if necessary. Weekly monitoring of the defibrillator and condition of the carpets is undertaken and recorded in the H&S File.

4.11 Northwich & District Churches Together (NDCT)

NDCT meet quarterly when we plan for the year ahead. There were Lent courses at the Methodist Outreach Centre, St Wilfrid's, Holy Trinity Castle and our own Jesus Shaped People course, so plenty of choice for all our congregations. Good Friday Walk of Witness met at the Salvation Army Citadel at 11.00am followed by a walk through town highlighting the Easter message, finishing at the Salvation Army for refreshments. The songs of Praise afternoon held at Winnington Rec in July was well attended and enjoyed by all. Christmas cards were distributed in November at the Switching on of the Christmas Lights and also at the December Artisan Market where we had a stall. The cards gave the times and dates of all the NDCT Christmas services and events. Once again NDCT lit up their churches during Advent. In January a Bring & Share lunch was held at Holy Trinity followed by the service for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

Joy Montgomery

4.12 CAMEO

We have had a good attendance this year in spite of some bad weather. Everyone meets together for the monthly Midday Communion Service with an enjoyable Bring & Share lunch to follow. As usual we went out for a summer lunch and also at the beginning of December. During Lent we have a Bread and Cheese lunch. We would welcome anyone who is of retirement age to join us. May I stress that the Midweek Communion service is for everyone and not just CAMEO members.

Joy Montgomery

5.Financial Review

The financial statement of the PCC has been prepared in accordance with the Charity Commission requirements for England and Wales and is shown in tabular form at the end of this report.

Unrestricted funds

The bedrock of our income is the regular offerings made by standing order and these have increased by about 6%. Some of our other giving, although smaller in total, has increased by a greater percentage. Our income was greatly boosted by the sale of the Sexton's House and this money has been set aside for further development of facilities in church. A consequence of that sale is that we have a reduced income from rental property, although this has been offset for 2024 by increased interest on money in the bank. It is also of note that in 2024, we have benefitted from a legacy of £17,963, refund of VAT of £3,265 and grants of £1,820.

Our expenses have also risen, due to inflation. We continued to make our contribution towards the vicar's salary, and this remains our largest single cost. Encouragingly, our heating costs fell markedly. We had no major building projects but we spent about double on maintenance and minor repairs. We have also been able to continue to support local & national charities through Saturday's 4C's and Tea at the Tower.

Restricted funds

In 2024 we received grants towards Place of Welcome of £7060. Donations and fund-raising for the organ totalled £3708. We had a legacy of £500 for work on the roof. Expenditure has been primarily on the organ (£25,928) a final payment on the clock (£2275) and on Place of Welcome (£3034).

The organ fund stands at £3,7741, which is sufficient to complete the installation but an additional amount of perhaps £2500 will be required for cosmetic work on the console and surround.

The trustees' policy on reserves:

As a PCC, we are well aware of the forthcoming challenges in terms of repair and maintenance of the church building and of meeting our aspirations to develop the growth and ministry of the church. Equally, we do currently hold significant assets (cash, investments and buildings) which we need to manage effectively for the best outcome for St Helen's Church. Our saleable property portfolio as at Dec 2024 is valued at approximately £535,200. A reserve policy clearly will help with our future funding strategy. In the light of the foregoing background, the PCC agreed a revised reserve policy as follows:-

Reserves Policy for St Helen's (Witton) Northwich

What:

The following risks are addressed

1. Loss of three months income from residential properties, say £6,000.
2. Decline in planned giving and collections (annual), say £18,000.
3. Unforeseen eventuality (say building or services failure), say £36,000.

TOTAL CASH RESERVE £60,000

Why:

These reserves are held to cover significant unexpected reduction in income or unexpected and unplanned urgent expenditure. However, the PCC will also need to take action to remedy deficits in its funding over the longer term and to rebuild the reserve whenever it is called upon.

When can these reserves be used:

Money held in reserve can only be allocated by the Parochial Church Council. If an urgent response is required an emergency PCC will be called.

Review:

The PCC will review the reserves policy annually, as recommended by the Charity Commission, in sufficient time to present the revised policy to the Annual Parish Church Meeting.

6. Declaration

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees.

Signature(s)		
Full name(s)	Andrew Jeapes	Andrew Ridley
Position	Secretary of PCC	Chairman
Date	26-3-25	26-3-25

Receipt and Payments Account from 1st January 2024 to 31st December 2024

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds	Total funds	Last year
A1 Receipts	To the nearest £				
Voluntary income	61,545	3,002		64,547	61,689
Tax Receipt	12,055			12,055	18,513
Income from events & activities	12,784	1,207		13,990	11,685
Income from investments	9,893			9,893	7,414
Income from rental properties	29,449			29,449	32,311
Grants	1,820	7,060		8,880	13,990
Other Income	4,067			4,067	50,557
Sub-total (Gross income for A1)	131,614	11,268		142,882	196,160
A2 Asset & Investment Sales (see table)					
Sale of Sexton's House	153,424			153,424	
Total Receipts	285,038	11,268		296,306	196,160

A3 Payments

Missionary & charitable grants	5,263			5,263	3,724
Church-related:					
Ministry & worship	49,861	680		50,540	46,971
Events	4,305	1,785		6,090	2,263
Building running costs	22,077	281		22,358	27,478
Minor repairs & maintenance	16,121	1,368		17,489	8,529
Costs of rental properties	2,716			2,716	7,449
Admin & IT	2,617	101		2,718	2,807
Sub total church-related	97,697	4,214		101,911	95,857
Major works & repairs	10,078	27,703		37,781	88,201
Sub-total A3 Payments	113,038	31,916		144,954	187,783

A4 Asset & investment Purchases

Costs of sale of Sexton's House	713			713	
Sub-total A4	713			713	
Total Payments	113,751	31,916		145,667	187,783
Nett of receipts/(payments)	171,287	-20,648		150,639	8,378
A5 Transfer between funds					
A6 Cash funds 31 st December 2023	96,512	70,886		167,397	159,019
Cash funds at 31st December 2024	267,798	50,237		318,036	167,397

Section B Statement of Assets and Liabilities at the Year End

		Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds	
B1 Cash Funds					
Cash at bank		267,798	50,237		
Total cash funds		267,798	50,237		
B2 Other Monetary Assets		Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)	
CBF Institute		Unrestricted		42,060	
CBF Witton Sunday School Fund		Restricted		24,884	
Total				66,944	
B3 Investment assets					
Cornerstones (Sexton's House)		Unrestricted	Sold		
8 St Chads Fields		Unrestricted	115,200		
17 Hollybank Close		Unrestricted	150,000		
16, St Chads Fields		Unrestricted	130,000		
1 Scholars Rise		Unrestricted	140,000		
		Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)	
B4 Assets retained for charity's own use					
		Fund to which liability belongs	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)	
B5 Liabilities	Organ refurbishment	Restricted	40,000	31/07/25	
	Outstanding fees	Unrestricted	275	31/03/25	

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of St Helen's Witton, Parochial Church Council

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the **St Helen's Witton, Parochial Church Council** (the Trust) for the year ended 31 December 2024.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees of the Trust you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act'). I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination 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.

I see that my previous recommendation that formal expenses claim form is introduced which details the claimants name, the item of each expenditure in terms of description, date and cost and the date of the claim has been mostly implemented and I would like to see this continue.

Signed:



Name: Frank Strange

Address Westerhow, Waste Lane, Cuddington, Northwich Cheshire CW8 2TD

Date: 25th April 2025