



PARISH OF HILLMORTON

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

**To be held at St John the Baptist, Hillmorton
Sunday 11th May 2025 at 10.30am**

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Agenda

2025 ANNUAL MEETING OF PARISHIONERS

1. Election of Church Wardens

2025 ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

1. Apologies for absence
2. Approval of the minutes of the 2024 APCM
3. Electoral Roll Report
4. PCC Report
5. Vicar's report – with opportunity for questions
6. Financial Report and Accounts
7. Building and Fabric Report
8. Deanery Synod Report
9. Pastoral Care Report
10. Safeguarding Report

ELECTIONS AND APPOINTMENTS

11. Elections to Deanery Synod
12. Elections to the Parochial Church Council
13. Appointment of Independent Examiner
14. Any other business
15. Closing prayers

2025 APCM

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Approval of the minutes of the 2024 APCM

REPORTS

3. Electoral Roll Report – to be provided by Val Aspeling
4. PCC Report for the year ended 31st December 2024

Vicar	Rev'd Steve Gold, Houlton Vicarage, 2 Maxwell Road, Houlton CV23 1AH
Curates	Rev'd April Gold Rev'd Helen Merrigan Rev'd Anne-Marie Marsh (on leave throughout 2024)
Independent examiner	Mr Malcolm Harrison of 14a Percival Road, Rugby, CV22 5JS
Bank	HSBC, Church Street, Rugby

St. John the Baptist PCC has the responsibility of co-operating with the Vicar in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. It also has maintenance responsibilities for the Church buildings and churchyard.

Membership of the Parochial Church Council from April 2024

PCC members are either ex-officio or elected by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) in accordance with the Church Representation Rules. The PCC has the power to co-opt if necessary.

During the year, the following served as members of the PCC.

Ex-officio members:

Vicar/Chairperson	Rev'd Steve Gold
Curates	Rev'd April Gold Rev'd Helen Merrigan Rev'd Anne-Marie Marsh
Churchwardens	Judith Clucas John Merrigan Patricia Lole (deputy churchwarden)
<i>Deanery Synod Representatives</i> (4 due to size of Electoral Roll) Office runs to July 2026	Louise Bradshaw Judith Clucas Hilary Mitchell (until 21 st January 2024)

Elected members:	Joanne Isley (3 rd year)
	Bruno Hughes (3 rd year)
	Pat Lole (2 nd year)
	David Bradford (2 nd year)
	Jo Jones (1 st year)
	Peter Webb (1 st year)
	James Yates (1 st year)

The PCC met 10 times in 2024, in addition to the Annual Parochial Church Meeting on 11th April 2024.

In 2024 there were 126 names on the Electoral Roll (up from 120 in 2023). The Electoral Roll Officer was Val Aspelng.

5. Vicar's review of 2024. Rev'd Steve Gold

St John's and St Gabriel's have continued in 2024 to seek to grow in many ways; in terms of the size of our worshipping community, in terms of the depth of our knowledge and love of God and of each other - and in terms of the way our church blesses the community around us.

In 2024 we saw the size of our worshipping community (the number of people who join us regularly for worship at one or more of our services), remain stable – with higher than usual numbers of people leaving us being broadly balanced by an increase in new people joining our community. The average number of adults with us on a Sunday fell in 2024, due to number of factors, but we saw a significant number of our older members of the community finding it increasingly difficult to physically get to church for services. We have responded to this by more actively seeking to offer worship at home for those who can't join us in church, and we were delighted to commission Peter Webb to lead this ministry for us. We were also pleased that the average number of young people attending services increased again in 2024 as our St Gabriel's afternoon service continues to flourish. As a result we have the highest proportion of children and young people in our Sunday congregations of all churches in Rugby Deanery.

Our ministry at St Gabriel's CofE Academy continues to be an important part of the life of our parish. We lead collective worship in the school each week, involving around 450 children and adults. We also provide a weekly after-school group for those children who would like to learn more about Jesus, which is attended by 15 children each week. We also invest in the whole life of the school through our PCC appointed foundation governors, who are primarily responsible for helping the school to establish & maintain its Christian (and Anglican) identity and supporting the life of the school community, which is now more than 500 people. Many thanks go to Funmi Ikuomola, Georgina Newton and Judith Clucas for their work as governors.

Our missional activities within the community continue to be a blessing. Hillmorton Hub attracted a growing group who find welcome & support - and has offered a 'warm hub' during the winter months. Our baby & toddler groups in Hillmorton (Playhouse) and Houlton (Dollman Dots) continue to be very popular with young families and provide a very effective way of building relationships with young people in our community. Our coffee mornings continue to be popular monthly events. We've also continued to serve our community through the whole of life's journey, through a total of 24 baptisms (including 2 young people via immersion), 4 weddings and 26 funerals.

I continue to be hugely grateful for the way in which ministry and mission in our churches is shared so widely across our parish. In particular I would like to take the opportunity to thank our churchwardens Judith Clucas, John Merrigan and Pat Lole ; our treasurer Phil Clucas, our Parish Safeguarding Officer Jo Isley, the headteacher of St Gabriel's Andy Taylor (and his staff) and our administrator, Paula Mayfield – for all their contributions to the life of our church communities. In addition, I'd like to thank the teams who support all of our church and community groups so faithfully – without whom we would not be able to do what we do. We have a fantastic team to work amongst, bringing positivity and collaboration to all aspects of church and school life.

Can I also thank everyone who contributed to preaching and leading our services in 2024; in particular Rev'd Ted Lyons, John Merrigan and Peter Webb for their preaching, and Helen & John Merrigan, Pat Lole, and Rachel Knight for offering their musical gifts. We look forward to encouraging our community to continue growing in their gifts in preaching and leading worship.

The finances of the parish continue to be challenging. The costs of ministry and of running our buildings has continued to increase significantly more quickly than our income, and our underlying

deficit in 2024 was around £18,000. Although this compares favourably with our budget we cannot continue to operate indefinitely with a deficit as our reserves decrease. In 2025 we will continue to seek to return our finances to sustainable levels, with a challenge to both reduce our costs and also find ways to continue to grow our income.

Finally, thank you for your enduring love for each other. Thank you for your enduring patience with my many weaknesses – I cannot tell you how grateful I am for that. Thank you for your love of God and the parish he's called us to serve and bless together. I look forward to what God will do among us on the year ahead.

May the peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord; and the blessing of God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always.

6. Presentation of the Financial Report and Accounts – Phil Clucas

I took over responsibility for St John the Baptist & St Gabriel's finances in January 2024 from Claire Hughes. I am not an accountant but I'm quite good with numbers and I have overseen the budget of the Harris Church of England High School (now Harris Church of England Academy) for a number of years before I retired.

When I took over as treasurer our expenditure was greater than our income, which was slightly worrying, however we had some reserves (Over £50,000). God challenges us all to use what we have to do what He wants us to do. So, during the course of the year I have been quite circumspect about payments, not paying until the last minute as well as asking the question, 'Do we really need this'? & 'Are there other suppliers'?

However during the course of the year we had to transfer £30,000 from deposit into our current account. We do need to understand that whilst our expenditure was down in 2024 from 2023 our income was also down consequently our deficit of income v expenditure was only just over £17,808 rather than the 2023 deficit of over £41,517. We cannot afford a deficit in 2025. The PCC have made some budget decisions for 2025 which should bring us nearer to a zero deficit.

Income & Expenditure Balances

	2024	2023
Statement of Accounts Income	£106,416	£117,027
Statement of Accounts Expenditure	£124,225	£158,544
Balance of Income - Expenditure	-£17,808	-£41,517

To give some idea of where our income comes from the table below shows income as percent of total. We maybe need to ask, 'How can we increase these any or all of these percentages'?

Item	2024	2023
Income from Donors	70%	66%
Community Activities - Contactless & Cash	4%	6%
Wedding and Funerals	13%	6%
Other	11%	15%
Bank Interest and Dividends	1%	2%
Grants received	1%	5%

During the year I have tried to use less of the personal and more of the corporate ie establishing an generic email for the treasurer – treasurer@stjohnhillmorton.org.uk and moving away from personal addresses to our business addresses as well as not using personal bank cards. This should mean that when the treasurer role is passed on all the details will be in one place. I have also tried to bring all our accounts with other organisations eg HMRC for Gift Aid into one place.

We are stewards of the world God has created and as such we need to look after our little part of it and we ALL have a part in that. Going forward we need to challenge ourselves to have the resources needed to do God's work in our community. Currently we need more resources to carry out the work we are involved in or we need to discern from God a different direction. So I ask you to prayerfully reflect on what God is calling us to do in the Parish of Hillmorton through the church of St John the Baptist & St Gabriel's Houlton.

GENERAL FUND INCOME

	2024		2023	
Income from Donors				
Planned Giving	£47,688		£47,213	
Collections	£6,257		£4,428	
Contactless giving - church	£2,600		£621	
Gift Aid Claimed	£453	£56,998	£10,049	£62,311
Income from Children and Family	£3,695	£3,695	£5,885	£5,885
Wedding and Funerals				
Fees (gross 2024, net 2023)	£10,605		£5,289	
Donations at services	£0	£10,605		£5,289
Other				
Newsletter Advertising	£5,100		£1,790	
Donations	£3,904		£9,356	
Legacies	£0		£300	
Other	£1,676	£10,680	£2,336	£13,782
Bank Interest and Dividends				
Deposit account at CCLA	£2,458		£1,197	
COIF Dividends & Langton income	£504	£2,962	£441	£1,639
Grants received				
Grants received	£714	£714	£5,000	£5,000
TOTAL ST JOHNS AND ST GABRIELS INCOME		£85,654		£93,906
ROGERS HALL - Income	£20,174	£20,174	£22,841	£22,841
DEANERY - Income	£588	£588	£0	£0
TOTAL GENERAL FUND INCOME		£106,416		
RESTRICTED FUND INCOME				
Redevelopment/heating	£0		£0	
Other		£0	£280	£280
TOTAL INCOME		£106,416		£117,027

Phil Clucas:
See Note 1. below

Phil Clucas:
See Note 2. below

Phil Clucas:
See note 3. below

Phil Clucas:
This is the interest on our CCLA account CB 3923 957-001

Note

- 1 HMRC rejected claims as our details were not accurate.
Awaiting a reset, then the claim can be made and should bring in £6,500
- 2 Income from Community activities
- 3 Changed this year to income & expenditure rather than netting off

EXPENDITURE

	2024		2023	
Activities directly connected to the church				
Parish Share	£64,745		£70,620	
Clergy expenses	£1,001		£1,305	
Lighting, heating and water	£709		£7,424	
Insurance	£5,110		£4,525	
Upkeep of services (incl licences)	£3,819		£2,971	
Newsletter printing	£2,303		£5,045	
Mission	£2,080		£3,102	
Church Maintenance	£2,760		£10,682	£105,674
Wedding & Funeral Disbursements - 202	£1,485	£84,011		
Children and Family				
Salary	£0			
Materials etc	£0	£0		£0
Administration				
Salaries	£12,114		£10,709	
Stationery, postage etc	£1,539	£13,653	£880	£11,589
Donations	£0		£8,302	
Deanery Expenses (2023 only)			-£1,254	
Other	£958	£958	£1,002	£8,051
St Gabriel's	£0			£0
Organ & Piano	£0	£0		£0
TOTAL ST JOHNS AND ST GABRIELS EXPENDITURE	£98,622		£125,313	£125,314
ROGERS HALL - Expenditure	£14,660	£14,660	£33,231	£33,231
DEANERY - Expenditure	£754	£754		
TOTAL GENERAL FUND EXPENDITURE		£114,037		£158,544
RESTRICTED FUND EXPENDITURE				
Redevelopment	£10,188			
Other	£0	£10,188		£0
TOTAL EXPENDITURE		£124,225		£158,544

Note


- 1 Reduced from £73,879.80 to reflect expenditure on Hillmorton vicarage as not used during the year.
- 2 The St John's energy costs are mixed up with the Rogers Hall ones.
There is an auto-match on the accounting software for the Direct Debits from 'Positive Energy' who supply electricity to church & Rogers Hall as well as gas to Rogers Hall. For some time the auto-match has been putting all the amounts into the Rogers Hall fund. I have not been able to redirect the ammounts to the correct place. Figures below reflect our energy usage.
Rogers Hall Electricity: £1,621
Rogers Hall Gas: £2,254.10
St John's Electricity: £6,313

Statement of Assets & Liabilities as at 31st December 2024


	2024		2023	
Cash and bank				
HSBC	£24,971		£15,730	
CCLA Deposit CB3023957-001	£25,246		£52,787	
Cash	£481	£50,698	£104	£68,621
Funds				
General	£26,360		£39,357	
Redevelopment	£3,374		£13,562	
Rogers Hall	£16,588		£11,044	
Other	£4,376	<u>£50,698</u>	£4,658	<u>£68,621</u>
Connected Charities - Langton Bequest				
Balance brought forward 1st Jan 2024	£2,550	£2,550		£2,025
Interest received	£91	£91		£72
Balance carried forward 31st December 2023	£2,681	£2,641		£2,097
Money held as follows				£797
CCLA Deposit account - CB3023959-001	£888			£1,300
CCLA Investment fund - CB3023958-001	£1,793	<u>£2,681</u>		<u>£2,097</u>
Connected Charities - Hillmorton Church Lands				
CCLA Account - CO3055834-001				
Balance brought forward 1st Jan 2024	£10,695			£10,695
Dividends received	£504			£495
Transferred to PCC general income	-£504			-£495
Balance carried forward 31st December 2023	<u>£10,695</u>			<u>£10,675</u>

The Accounts were presented to and approved by the Parochial Church Council of St John the Baptist, Hillmorton

Reverend Steve Gold, Chairperson



Philip Clucas, Honorary Treasurer



Date

29th April 2025



CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Independent examiner's report on the accounts

Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees

Parochial Church Council of St John the Baptist Church, Hillmorton

**On accounts for the year
ended**

31st December 2024

**Charity no
(if any)**

1180245

Set out on pages

(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)

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

**Responsibilities and
basis of report**

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

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

**Independent
examiner's statement**

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination (other than that disclosed below *) which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- the accounts did not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

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

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

Signed:

M. Harrison

Date:

23rd April 2025

Name:

Malcolm Harrison

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

Chartered Institute of Taxation

Chartered Tax Adviser

Address:

14A Percival Road, Rugby, CV22 5JS

7. Presentation of the Building and Fabric Report - Judith Clucas

It has been a busy year yet again, keeping our buildings in a safe and good order. It can be quite testing at times especially as the price of materials has rocketed significantly. Our administrator does a sterling job securing estimates and arranging businesses to come onto site so we can receive the best value for the job either at the Hall or at Church.

We give thanks for the cleaning and access teams, for their hard work and often going out in unsociable hours to close and secure the hall, ensuring the hall is in a presentable state for the next set of hirers.

St John's Church

There have been no major repair or improvement projects completed in 2024. However, the task of caring for and maintaining the building continues.

Harborough Stone secured the bell tower masonry which had fallen.

The outside drains were flushed out by Dyno rod, however one on both the north and south side of the church are in need of having a new soak-away dug. This will need a faculty and also a cost in the region of £3,500.

A Fire Risk Assessment was carried out and we will be working through some of the points raised in that assessment in 2025 alongside the ongoing actions from our 2023 Quinquennial Report.

Our roof alarm system has been checked, and everything was fine apart from the replacement of a new battery.

The new heating system was installed in early 2025, which is certainly more efficient, however it maybe that some of the wall heaters would be better placed at a lower level. This will be followed up when funds allow.

A hazard warning strip has been placed along the steps leading to the tower room after an accident earlier this year.

Looking forward for 2025, we expect the new noticeboard to be installed in the churchyard, and we plan on replacing the drain soakaways. We also recognise that the Church Car Park is in a poor state and are awaiting contact from Urban and Civic for an update on the White House development, so as we have a more positive idea as to when the car park will be improved.

Rogers Hall

There were no major works on Rogers Hall in 2024. Entrance Porch roof and barge boards checked and made secure. A leak in female bathroom ceiling was checked and found to be coming from the pipework above, therefore this was fixed. The Boiler had an annual check.

Our church building is visited by so many people who just love being there, a haven for all. We are always looking for people to get involved with the care and maintenance of both buildings, so if you can help in any small way please contact one of the Church Wardens, we would so love to chat with you.

8. Deanery Synod Report - Judith Clucas

We meet three times per year and since our last APCM, two meeting have taken place. At each meeting we hear from the incumbent of the church where we meet, who gives a brief talk on what is happening in their Parish. This part I find very interesting and often sparks new ideas etc and certainly provides good discussion at coffee and cake time!

Other business includes movement and vacancies for clergy, Parish Share, rural ministry and sharing practices and problems in a safe environment.

In the summer we visited St. Peter's in Grandborough, a beautiful rural church setting.

Steve Cockrill shared the story of 'Angels', the goodness of God, sharing 'angel stories' with each other and being more open with each other's practices, gives more opportunities for our children.

Bishop Ruth was our speaker for the evening, and how refreshing and approachable she was. She offered to answer any questions she could during the meeting and was extremely open and willing to answer. She was interested in knowing what was happening in our parishes which she really listened to.

Our second meeting was in November, held at St Mark's in Bilton, beginning with evening prayer.

The keynote speaker was April Gold speaking from both her position as Diocesan Director of Education as well as Curate at St John's and St Gabriel's. She encouraged us to be excited by the fact that although children's numbers may be low on a Sunday, but to consider the ones we engage with throughout the week eg Assemblies, After-school clubs, special events and experiences like the 'Alive' event at Stoneleigh where over five thousand children encountered a major Christian experience.

The Spring meeting hadn't taken place at the time of compiling this report.

9. Pastoral Care – Peter Webb, Pastoral Care Lead

Recent experience has indicated that an increasing number of our Church Family have reached the stage where it is either very difficult or even impossible to attend Church Services on a regular basis. The reasons for this include:

- Admission to Care or Nursing Homes outside of the Parish
- Admissions to hospital
- Loss of mobility
- Increasing dementia or loss of memory
- Inability to function sufficiently until later in the day
- No family in the immediate area
- No transport

Many of these people have been long-standing members of the Church Community who have supported us in many practical ways during previous years and as such have a lot to offer from their experience.

It is important, therefore, to recognise their value and not leave them out of our service to others. If they are unable to attend Church, for many different reasons, then surely it is our responsibility to go out to them to support their spiritual needs.

As such, since my appointment as Pastoral Care Co-ordinator I currently arrange and share:

- Home Communion to 4 people (one of whom is in Nursing Care) on a fortnightly basis
- Communion for a group of three people in Webb Ellis Court once a month
- Lead a Communion Service at Crick Road for a group of 4-5 people (on a rota basis with Steve Gold) * This involves transporting some of them.
- I have also been asked to consider sharing Home Communion with another Parishioner who has just been admitted to a Nursing Home and is suffering from developing dementia.
- I visit two more people without Communion at present but may choose to ask for this in the future.

Some people who are far from well thankfully still attend Church Services often being transported by caring members of the congregation

There is no doubt that these numbers will gradually increase as people get older or more disabled and unfortunately will only reduce as people die or move out of the areas.

It will be noticed that I am presently concentrating on more senior members of our family, but we also need to care for other people who may be facing particular troubles in their lives.

I am extremely grateful to the people who visit those in need or provide more practical help (e.g. transport to Hospital appointments but as need increases we need to spread the responsibility more widely among ourselves.

I am currently liaising with the co-ordinator of the “Gift of Years” organisation who actually provide Chaplaincy services in some of the Care Homes in Rugby.

10. Safeguarding – Jo Isley, Parish Safeguarding Officer

Within our parish, as throughout the world, safeguarding issues need to be identified and addressed. This means that every member of our church community has a duty to be alert to any concerns and report them, however insignificant they might seem. It is better to pass on an individual piece of information, than withhold it and later regret doing so. The onus is simply on passing on information, which may contribute to a larger picture, rather than launching an investigation. Concerns will be addressed with discretion, and on a strictly need-to-know basis. The diocesan safeguarding team are always consulted about actions required, and they have links with multiple other agencies.

Training is available to anyone who would like to learn more about how to spot concerns and who to raise them with. Certain roles require three-yearly refresher training at the relevant level required for that role. I am very grateful to those who undertake the training when requested, and I am happy to provide any support needed to complete the training.

Safeguarding continues to be included as a standing item on the agenda at every PCC business meeting. Meetings between the Parish Safeguarding Officer and clergy are held regularly in the interim to review the Parish Safeguarding Dashboard and the newly introduced Safeguarding Hub (which helps us to ensure we manage recruitment and people management safely across all the activities and teams of the church) and thus to identify any required actions. I am well supported in my role as PSO and responsibility is shared between us to comply with the increasing demands of this important area of ministry.

The PCC has complied with the duty to have ‘due regard’ to the House of Bishops’ Safeguarding Policy and Practice Guidance.

ELECTIONS AND APPOINTMENTS

- 11. Elections to Deanery Synod**
- 12. Elections to the Parochial Church Council**
- 13. Appointment of Independent Examiner**
- 14. Any Other Business**
- 15. Closing Prayer**

Minutes of the 2024 APCM

The meeting was held during the 10:30am service of Morning Prayer at St John the Baptist on Sunday April 21st 2024.

Present: Steve Gold (Vicar), Helen & John Merrigan, Ted & Heather Lyons, Tony & Brenda Pittam, Peter & Linda Webb, Don & Eleanor Thorneycroft, Cyril & Jane Franklin, James & Sarah (Esther & Iona) Yates, Rachel & Alan Knight, Joe & Angela (Lochlan & Mackenzie) Riddaway, Dawn (Jack & Evan) Kallmeier, Malcolm & Liz Ingham, Tina Davies, Pam Beech, Margaret Caygill, Janet Addison, Rae Ogden, Bill Sewell, Anne Tippet, Sue Palmer, Jane Pogson, Matt Gundel, Hazel Setchell, Jack Hardy, Pat Lole, Ruth Merrigan, Maureen Thompson, Audrey Carpenter, Charlie Ray, Val Aspinall, Ray & Emma Lenton, Ben Merrigan, David Bradford, Ruth Benn, Louise Bradshaw, Deeanne Clarke, Min Yang.

ANNUAL MEETING OF PARISHIONERS

1. Election of Church Wardens: Nominations for Church Warden had been received from Judith Clucas and John Merrigan and Pat Lole had been nominated as deputy CW. No voting was required as the number of nominations did not exceed the number of posts, but a show of hands was offered in support of the nominations.

Steve expressed his gratitude on behalf of the clergy team and the church for all that the Church Warden team does for us and appreciating how much of a blessing they are.

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

1. Apologies: Phil & Judith Clucas, Chris Addison, April Gold, Marie Haydock, Georgina Lenton, Jo Isley & Bruno Hughes
2. The minutes of the meeting held on 4th April 2023 were accepted and signed as a true record.

ELECTIONS AND APPOINTMENTS

1. **Elections to Parochial Church Council.** PCC nominations had been received from Peter Webb (St John's), James Yates and Jo Jones (both members of St Gabriel's). No voting was required as the number of nominations did not exceed the number of posts and all 3 were elected.

All members of the PCC present stood so the congregation could recognise their representatives and Steve prayed for them.

As there are 9 elected members for the PCC there are still 3 spaces.

The clergy (Steve, April & Helen), Church Wardens (Judith, John & Pat) and deanery synod representatives (Judith, Louise Bradshaw & Pat Lole) are all ex-officio members.

2. **Vicar's comments:**

- Steve noted the reports in the APCM document and assumed people had had the opportunity to read these for themselves
- Despite all we hear in the media about the supposed decline of the CofE our community in the parish of Hillmorton is in fact growing. We give thanks for an increase in numbers and the fact that this is mainly due to an increase in young people. Our Sunday numbers are slightly up on last year.
God is breathing life into His church and will continue to do so.
- We are not without challenges!
Finance: there was a substantial deficit last year, even without including our investment in the facilities of Rogers Hall. If this trend continued we will run out of our reserves. Somehow, as a church community, we have to balance the books.

Please pray for increase – both in numbers and knowledge and love for God that God may continue to do more in and through us and that we can grow to become financially self-sufficient and stable.

Steve invited us all to pray, reflect and review our giving, including financial.

At the same time we will also continue to seek other ways to increase our income.

Buildings: we have been entrusted with a beautiful old church building – which is an important part of our faith and our ministry, both a gift and a responsibility. However, it is not easy to steward – it takes much time and money and this is an ongoing challenge for us. We seek to maintain this place of worship whilst at the same time ensure it is fit to meet the needs of our ministry.

The Rogers Hall is also a blessing and helps us engage in our parish and community.

Please pray that we can look after these facilities well.

- Steve acknowledged that this has not been an easy year – there have been some difficult things going on in our community and we have had a number of significant pastoral situations to deal with. We have tried to act wisely and lovingly in all these things but we have not always done a perfect job.

These situations have resulted in a number of people feeling hurt and ultimately some have decided that they could no longer remain a part of our church. This has been both challenging and hurtful to our community.

Some of these situations remain unresolved and we continue to try to walk through them in a way that brings healing and restoration.

Steve had no further specific information available at this time and acknowledged that this may be the case for some time yet.

- Steve thanked all the many people who play so many different parts in the life of the church offering their gifts and time generously – much of which is unseen. All of us together make life in our church happen and Steve said that we could not do as much as we do without all of this support in the background.
- Steve reminded us that Jesus is the Cornerstone.

It is easy for us to think that the future of the church depends on our programmes and our clever strategies but as Peter told the lame man (Acts 3) – it is by faith in the Name of Jesus that we are transformed. The Church flourishes and grows one person at a time as people come to know the love God for them and enter into a relationship with their Creator.

As we know and love God more deeply and hold out that love to our community God's purposes will be fulfilled through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Steve asked if there were any comments or questions:

- Rachel, who joined us at the end of last year, expressed thanks for the wonderful welcome she had received from the St John's church community
- People asked about 'Football' and pizza so Steve explained this was after the service at St Gabriel's and was part of the community there reaching out to the youth in the Houlton area.

John Merrigan expressed our thanks to Steve, along with the support of April, for his leadership and service to us.

Morning Prayer then continued with corporate prayers and closing worship and blessing.