

# Annual Meetings 2025

## & Reports of our parish life in 2024



[www.jamesbasilfenham.org.uk](http://www.jamesbasilfenham.org.uk)

*Final*

# **Welcome to the Annual Report for 2024 &**

## **Annual Parochial Church meetings 2025**

**The purpose of this document is to give details of all necessary reports and accounts and to provide an overview of the life of the parish in 2024. This booklet also includes the agendas and various papers for the annual meetings to be held on the 16<sup>th</sup> March 2025 as part of the main 10am service.**

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## **Introduction & Vicar's Report**

The winter of 2024 might well be remembered as the coldest ever in church -at least in our living memory! The year began with a significant challenge in that no matter how much money, (which we didn't really have), we threw at the church boilers, we just couldn't get the place warm. We braved the storm and so as our Christmas 2023 celebrations drew to a close, we began a New Year 'in this together' as we shivered, gathered under patio heaters and cut services short. Whilst the heating problem would be practically solved by summer, (see the fabric report), our finances wouldn't allow us to actually burn enough gas to heat the place for the rest of the year. None-the-less, 2024 was another year of shared life together with its joy and celebration alongside times of sadness, grief and lament.

2024 saw a change in Churchwardens once again as Margaret Cutting stepped down from her role after 8 years, and Nigel was elected to this position. Margaret was one half of the warden duo who welcomed me to the parish (now six years ago), and she has continued as a loyal and open friend to me and to the parish through this time.

Tim and Jeanette continued for another year as Treasurer and PCC Secretary respectively.

The Parish lost a number of good friends in 2024. Amongst them, Fiona Le Geyt found her hope of heaven as she died at the end of February at home. Fiona was a member of both Js & Bs and Westgate Road Baptist Church. Perhaps best remembered for her attention to her outfit, her wit and character and her endless hope and certainty that our earthly life is not the end of all things.

2024 continued to see tumult of war in Europe and Israel. As a parish we sought to always have open doors of hospitality where we could and, although sometimes uncomfortable, it was an honour to host members of the local Palestinian Community in the autumn as they gathered to share their own cries of lament together.

The year saw some significant reorganisation – an awful lot of church floor cleaning in the summer (see the fabric report) – and a year ending with perhaps our most precarious and fragile financial position to date. This is challenging, but it is fragility that we can manage as we recognise that there many more serious areas of frailty within our world today. Yesterday (26<sup>th</sup> February), I stood at the end of the rail line that brought over 1.2million people to their death in the camps of Auschwitz-Birkenau. It was a sobering place to pause and reflect. In an increasingly instable world, it seems that some parts of our worldwide community are at risk of forgetting the fragility of humanity. I write this whilst flying home from Poland on the 27<sup>th</sup> February, the sixth anniversary of my Installation as Vicar, and for me at least, more importantly the commemoration of George Herbert. Herbert is loved or loathed by clergy for all sorts of reasons. As poet, he wrote what are regarded by some, as collections of some of the finest English poetry and hymnody. As Priest, he turned away from a successful life as a Member of Parliament in the Government of King

James I, to a life as a country parson in a parish just outside Sailsbury where he would live out his life, dying at the young age of 39. He famously wrote the text *The Country Parson* in which he defines the place of church, priest, pastoral care and population. He also articulates the need to be both ‘country parson and pioneer’. This is something of a wish to see those fundamental human truths and experiences maintained whilst responded to each and every new challenge and context.

As always, these pages tell a little more of the events of the year and the business of the parish: the challenges and the successes, perhaps also woven in the reports, there is something of our relationships, hopes and dreams. It seems to me that in 2024, in the face of fragility of many forms, we sought to continue to hold our sacred space as a sanctuary for humanity in the spirit of Herbert.

James ~ 27<sup>th</sup> February 2025 *Commemoration George Herbert, Priest & Poet 1633.*

### **Curate's report** *From The Revd Ryan McKeon*

This is my third year at J's and B's and so likely to be my last. Over my time here I have engaged with every aspect of the church's life. James has been a kind and fair teacher and friend. My experiences here have been many. I have moved a lot of chairs. (Something I was promised would happen when I came for my interview.) Partook and led the worship of this church, taught and studied with many of you, sat with the sick and dying, and more so have simply walked alongside you. This year we welcomed Bishop Mark to baptise and confirm members of our community, which was a highlight for me to be involved with.

At a funeral that I was conducting recently, someone asked me ‘what does a curate do?’ Assuming that my role is different to that of the vicar. And in one sense that is true, a curate is there to learn; however, one of the joys of this parish and being the curate here has been the fact that from day one I was valued and treated as an equal member of the leadership with a unique perspective. I was not an apprentice, or someone with their training wheel still on. I was encouraged to be myself as an individual. (This is a testament to James) I was encouraged to not simply become a carbon copy of my Training Incumbent, but instead I was to offer my unique view on things. All of the team were encouraged to do so; I have been able to learn from others, hearing their perspectives and learning from them. As a place to learn what it means to be a priest, J's and B's has been the perfect place for me.

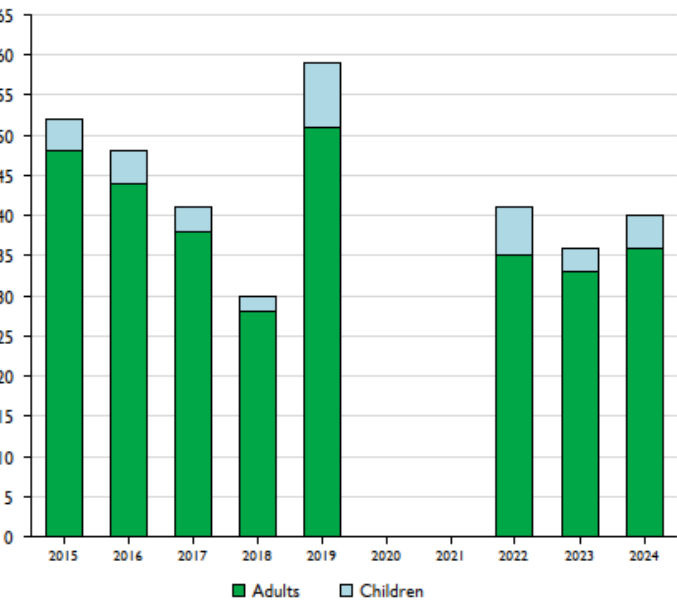
I also cannot overlook that this was Huw's and my first home together, and so while this has been a place of professional development, it has equally and arguably more importantly been a place for us to work out what it means to be a couple. In both these respects, the community of this church have allowed me to develop as a priest with my own unique traditions. (I promise to take any Icons of Mary with me when I leave.) And equally supported and encouraged Huw and I as we have worked out what it means to be us in this place at this time. I am not going anywhere imminently, this is

not a formal goodbye, but a brief overview of how this parish has shaped me. Just as much as I have shaped it.

**A snapshot of attendance and membership**

Parish Electoral Roll = 79 (20223= 78)

**Usual Sunday Attendance**



The Usual Sunday Attendance figure in 2024 included those who attended our Sunday Services

In 2024 our 10am services continued to be streamed online and average numbers of those joining in continued to be in the range of 6-12.

**Easter Day 2024**

**2024= Attendance in the Parish – 67**  
2023= Attendance in the Parish - 55  
2022 = Attendance in the Parish - 111  
2021 = Attendance in the Parish - 114

**Christmas 2024** (including all Christmas Eve and Christmas Day services)

**Attendance in the Parish 2024 – 413**

Attendance in the Parish 2023 – 390

Attendance in the Parish 2022 – 297

Attendance in the Parish 2021 – 178\*

Attendance in the Parish 2020 – 174\*

\* numbers restricted at some services due to COVID 19 regulations.

**October Count** Nationally the Church of England uses the month of October as a sample month to calculate average attendance at all church services per week. This figure excludes ‘non average’ attendance, for example if Harvest Festival is held in October.

2020 = 44

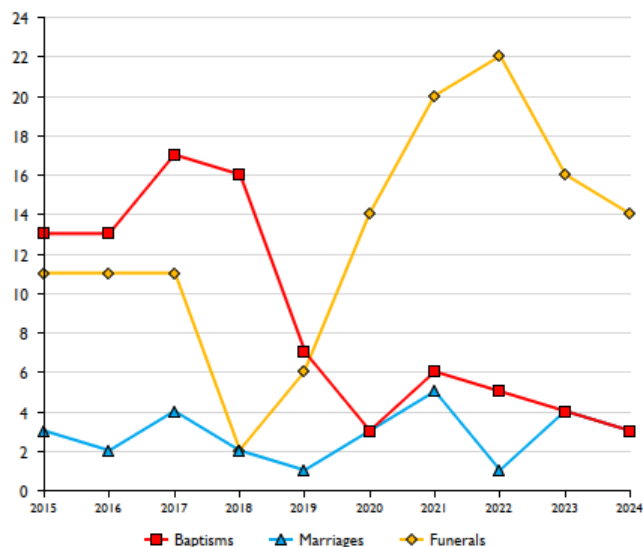
2021 = 39

2022 = 42

2023 = 57

2024 = 41

## Baptisms, marriages and funerals



**In 2024 3 weddings, 14 funerals and 3 baptisms were held in the Parish.**

*These figures include Funeral services held at the Crematorium, but not those held in other burial grounds or other churches.*

## Administration, publicity and website.

In 2024 parish administration was completed by the Vicar, Curate and Churchwardens, assisted by Jeanette Welsh (as PCC Secretary).

Administration in the parish is a significant task and we remain thankful to those who help out with small jobs to share the load around a little.

In the autumn, a desktop PC was installed in the Vestry to provide access to online resources and the easier management of the printer, wifi network, heating controls and general parish admin.

Our Facebook community ended the year with just under 1000 people 'following' us, this represents another year of growth on the 2023 figures.

In the late summer of 2023, the parish began using a new data management tool *iKnowChurch* to help with diary bookings and events and to start bringing our various mailing lists together. In 2024 we introduce further modules to this suite including ticketing and a secure database for managing Safeguarding concerns and reports.

## The African Chaplaincy From The Revd Osaro Omobude

The African Chaplaincy last met as separate group during the winter of 2023. Throughout 2024 members of the Chaplaincy joined together with the 10am congregation.

## Café & Fenham Markets

### *Café from David Todd*

In September 2025, I took over from Vicky Pitt co-ordinating the café at St James and St Basil. The café operates from 10am to 1pm on Thursdays. It relies heavily on the good will of our volunteers who do all of the baking and serving. We usually have a team of four or five, including myself. We are looking to recruit one or two more to allow our regulars a bit of respite as it's demanding work!



The café is an excellent community space, used by a wide range of people from the local area. It also generates a profit, usually making more than £400 a week, after costs.

We also provided refreshments at the Christmas Market again this year as well as the two Christmas Choir concerts. These are very profitable, especially given that they are staffed by volunteers.

### Markets –

2024 saw four markets held in church on Saturday mornings with a range of local producers from craft, to cheese, honey and beer. There are four markets planned for 2025.

### **Children and Young People**

Whilst we regularly have children and young people present in church, these are often in small numbers and in the absence of a regular group of people to prepare and lead anything specifically for this age group, the number attending is often very low. In February 2024 we experimented with a third Sunday Service pattern that mean that the Vicar could be in the vestry with support to lead a group for any younger members.

This was difficult to sustain as the year went on without more regular committed help.

Our ‘special’ services (for example, Harvest & Christmas), saw large numbers of family groups attending, perhaps suggesting a desire by families to keep some contact with us, even if they cannot be here very often.

‘Jellyfish and Bees @ Js & Bs’ (our early years, weekly music session) ran throughout 2024. As children grew older, numbers tailed off towards the summer, but we were pleased to welcome increasing number of new babies and toddlers in the autumn.

### **The Deanery - Deanery Synod Report**

Rachel Gill and Margaret Green continue to represent the parish on the Newcastle West Deanery Synod following their re-election at the last APCM. 2024 saw The Deanery Synod continue to meet three times per year – once per academic term. As has been custom, it continues to meet in a different venue each time. Our meetings begin with business and conclude with a short 15 minutes service of compline at 8:30pm – with ‘lights – out’ at 9pm.

The Deanery welcomed a new Vicar in the late summer of 2024, The Revd Ruth Harley was appointed as Vicar of Cowgate and Priest-in-charge of Newbiggin Hall. We also said ‘farewell’ to The Revd David Kirkwood on his retirement as Rector of Benwell and Scotswood.

The Vicar continues to work as Area Dean, supporting parishes in vacancy or

moments of need as requested and working alongside the Bishop and Archdeacon in a 'lite-touch' oversight of the churches in the area.

### **Electoral Roll** *From Margaret Green, Electoral Roll Officer.*

Every 6 years the Electoral Roll of the Church of England has to be renewed. As 2019 was when it was last renewed it is now due to be renewed this year 2025. Everyone wishing to be on the new roll has to apply to be on it.

For the first time in this parish applications can be made online. Those whose email address is already held by the church should have received the necessary form to apply on line.

For those not on line paper forms have been available in church or from me.

Application had to be made no later than 2 weeks before March 2nd, 2 Weeks before the Annual Parochial Church Meeting to be held on Sunday 16th March, to enable members to vote at that meeting. Application may still be made after March 2nd but voting will not be allowed until the APCM 2026. There are general notes on the back of the forms.

Some members from the last Roll may no longer be able to rejoin , they may have moved away, or found another church more suitable to their needs. It is permissible to be on the Electoral Roll of 2 churches but voting is only allowed at one of those. The total number of members may not be available before this report goes to print but will be available at the APCM

### **Engagement with Schools**

Once again in 2024, we welcomed school curriculum visits from Dame Allan's Junior School and Wingrove Primary School and we visited the senior school to support their Religious Studies Curriculum. The Parish also led Collective Worship in Cheviot Primary School as the Parish of Newbiggin Hall remained vacant.

Dame Allan's Chamber Choir led Evensong in church at the end of each half term. 2024 saw the choir change direction and it is almost now entirely comprised of students rather than staff. The Direction of Keir McGregor (Teacher of Music) and Kris Thomsett (Assistant Director of Music at the Cathedral), has seen a significant leaps forward in the ability of the choir. Towards the end of the academic year, services were also accompanied in part by an organ scholar.

Monday mornings saw the beginning of music tuition in church on the Organ as individual students from Dame Allan's came for lessons and guidance.

At the end of the summer term, the Vicar stepped down from his role as Chaplain to the Dame Allan's Schools. He will continue to support schools in this role until a replacement is found and we look forward to our relationships with the schools continuing in the years ahead.

The Vicar also resigned his position as a Director of the Pele Academy Trust after



a number of years on the Board there. As the Pele Trust continued to grow and develop the role was demanding an increasing amount of time away from the Parish. The Vicar remains a member and Director of Diocesan Board of Education.

## **Fabric** **Church**

Routine servicing and repairs continued throughout 2024. Small projects and repairs were completed thanks to the formation of a small team including Nigel and Kevin.

In the autumn of 2024, a Defibrillator was installed in a heated cabinet in the church gardens. This was funded in part by an anonymous donor and The Dame Allan's Parents Association. By the end of the year, this had been used twice the Ambulance Service and remains on standby for the community.

A further anonymous gift prompted an appeal to 'correct the clock'. In just a few weeks, a total of £10,000 was raised to cover the cost of the installation of an auto wind mechanism and regulator. This work will also cover the cost of repairs and adjustment to the clock mechanism meaning that after 90 years of service, the Church Clock will continue to be a reliable local landmark. By the end of the year the Faculty Application had been submitted, and it is hoped that this work will be completed during the spring of 2025.

As in previous years, routine works were carried throughout the year including, servicing of the Clock, the heating system, and the organ was tuned towards the end of the year by Woods of Huddersfield.

An off-the-cuff remark by a member of the Wednesday Choir in the late summer of 2023 prompted a conversation with the PCC about the refurbishment of the lower Vestry area. By the end of the year a design brief had been agreed to refurbish the existing two (now redundant toilets), install a new accessible WC, storage area and heating. The works were estimated to cost in the region of £45,000. By April of 2024 grants from Catherine Cookson Charitable Trust and the Northumbria Historic Churches Trust were given to cover almost all the cost of this, and the PCC appointed a contractor. The works were carried in June and July. In addition, the Vestry was redecorated and a small 'brew kitchen' was installed. Repairs to the church heating system were carried out and a new water main and waste drains were installed. This project would be the largest 'upgrade' to the church building since it was opened in the 1930s.

By the year end, the PCC had begun to specify the next major improvement which might see level access installed at the Fenham Hall Drive entrance, together with new landscaping on Fenham Hall Drive (to replace the cobbled area) and an internal timber and glass lobby to help reduce heat loss and improve safety and security.

## **Fabric – Hall (including hall users)**

Routine servicing continued in 2024. Our regular users continued to meet, and activities included Zumba classes, daytime exercise groups and yoga, an art group for children who are homeschooled, the local History Society, English and Maths Tuition, early morning weekend yoga, evening Youth Group and our resident Scout Group the 82<sup>nd</sup> Newcastle.

Our two studio spaces (the Upper Room and the Basement) continue to be home to two local businesses. The basement is occupied by Derek Farrell and is home to his joinery workshop. Derek continues to be in demand locally, but offers his workshop to the community on a Saturday mornings and is often around to offer a loan of tools or tips, advice and guidance. Derek and continues to support the parish through his offer of time and labour to help carry out some routine maintenance and work.

The Upper Room remained the home of Petals & Power, a local floristry and art studio run by Vicky Foreshaw until Easter, when Vicky relocated to space in the city centre. Demand for this space was higher than we expected and by the year end we had new resident business eager to set up in there as *The Wild Potager* opened for trade under the direction of Jane. Jane lives locally and sells and prepares products using plants and flowers grown on the nearby allotments.

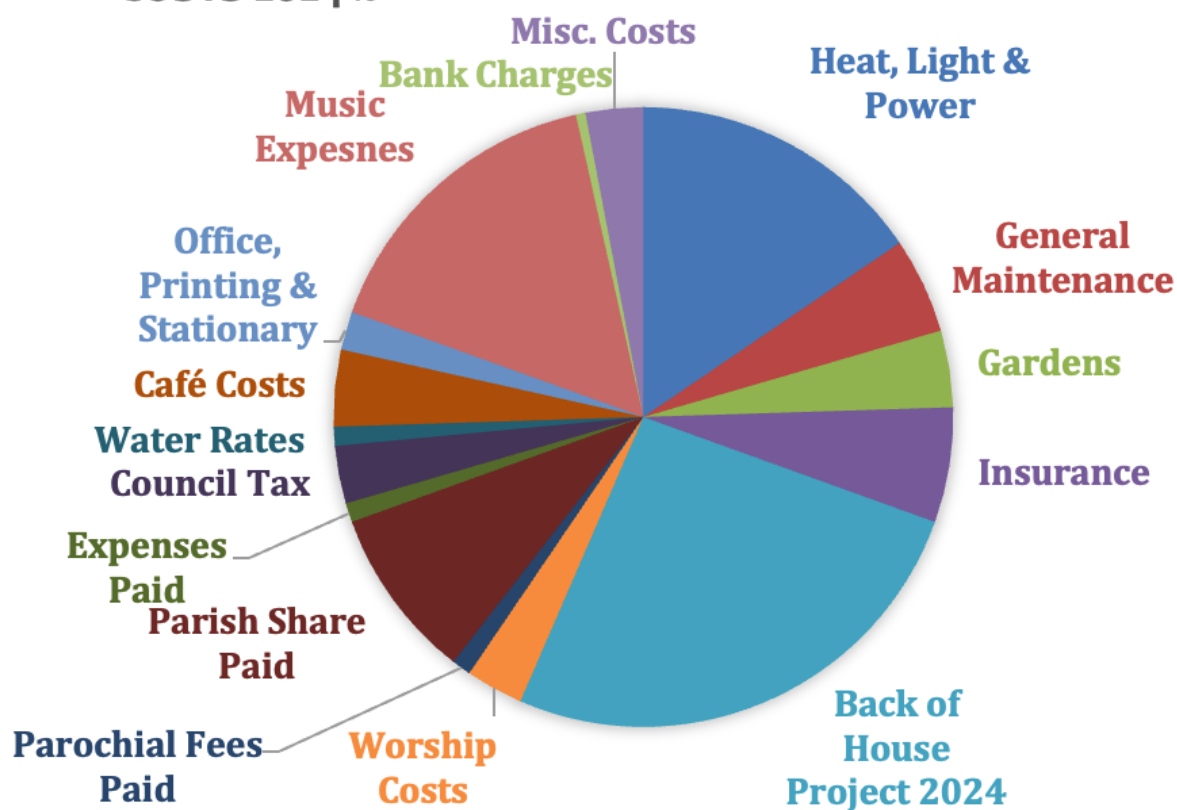
The redevelopment of the Parish Hall– initially conceived pre COVID-19, but on hold since – should remain a priority. The Parish has spent a minimal amount on repair and maintenance in 2024, and the building is really showing its age. However, at this stage we do not have the resources to invest into the site. The PCC continues to slowly work with our architect to look to a new future for this site.

## **Finance**

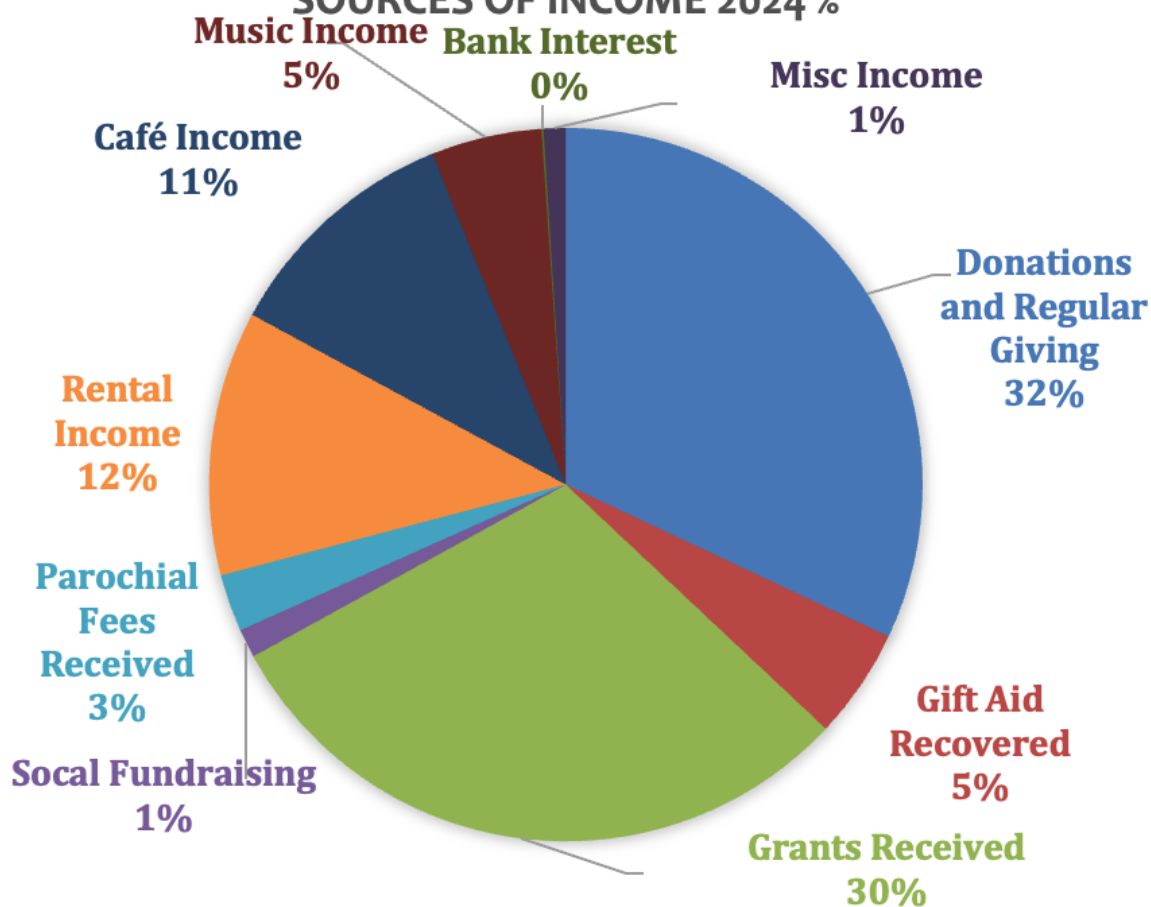
The accounts are appended at the back of this report. They show a year-end balance of just over £20,000. However, this includes a restricted amount of £10,000 that was given for the repairs to clock, meaning that our actual ‘free’ cash balance at the year end was the lowest it has been for many years. As a Parish we have no investments or assets to draw upon, and whilst we have a high cash turnover, cashflow has to be carefully managed. Excluding major capital works, we need over £2,500 each week to simply stand still. Whilst this could be seen as a great challenge, we also ought to remember that we are a very busy parish with very open doors – whilst we have high costs, when compared with similar parishes, we probably delivery very good ‘value for money’ when we consider all the activity that takes place, and the number of individual people that we welcome and engage with each week.

*At the annual meeting, our Treasurer will give a verbal update too, and together with the Vicar and Wardens, will be available to answer questions or make further comment.*

## COSTS 2024 %



## SOURCES OF INCOME 2024 %



In 2024 The Church Gardens continued to be an asset shared with the community. Our paid gardener, Penny Hunter continued to work with volunteers to manage the gardens throughout the year. We reported in last year's report that one of regular volunteers Emma, was involved in a serious accident resulting in a brain injury. Emma's recovery continued throughout 2024, though the nature of her injury meant that she did not return to the gardens this year, she still hopes to rejoin the group in the future.

By the end of the year, we finally took delivery of three new memorial benches. This delivery will see the completion of the project to reinstall benches in garden. One is in memory of a local resident, Berrie of Auburn Gardens who sadly passed away. Another in memory of the parents of another local family, and the third in memory of Mrs Fiona Le Geyt.

### **Godly Play**

We continue to hold a large stock of Godly Play resources and these continue to be used on occasional school visits, and also on some occasion during our church services. With nobody here to run regular sessions, these paused in the late spring of 2022 and did not restart throughout 2024.

### **Hospitality**

As always, the parish mission continues to place a high priority on its mission to create space for all whether through services, events, concerts or simply over coffee and food. We continued to meet for shared lunches after services on a number of occasions throughout the year.

### **Jazz @ Js & Bs** from Tony Roberts

In 2024, Jazz at Js & Bs continued to take a break.

### **Lay Ministry** Reader's report from Andy Lie

First of all, I am most grateful to members (old and new) who have welcomed me (and Mabel) back into SSJ&B after an 'absence' from 2011-2022/3, and specially to James our Vicar for agreeing to transfer my Licence from St Andrew's, Newgate Street, Newcastle, to this parish. Secondly, it was through your generosity that I was able to celebrate the 30th anniversary of my Admission and Licensing as a Reader on Sunday, 11 February 2024, at Evensong followed by a meal and conversations in the Vicarage.

The Office of a Reader, theologically-trained and episcopally-licensed, has a long history and development within the Church of England and is a fully voluntary lay and teaching role. With the distinctive blue scarf and robes, we are at times confusedly perceived as ordained ministers though I have tried to support the clergy (James, Osaro, Ryan) as best as possible. Thank you all too for putting up with my occasional

preaching. While it's often a thankless task, I prefer to preach what I practise (rather than the proverbial reverse order!) and it's an opportunity to sow the seeds towards a deeper grasp of the Holy Scriptures.

### **Liturgy & Worship**

The first half of the year saw our liturgical music continue to be led by Mr Robin Beaumont and Mr Paul Ritchie. In the summer, the PCC advertised for a permanent resident organist and they were pleased to appoint Dr Myles Hartley FRCO in July.

*From Dr Myles Hartley*

It has been a real joy to accompany Sunday services and to contribute to the life and worship at J's and B's since becoming Organist in July. I am grateful to James, Ryan, Osaro and Andy, for the opportunity to work with them in planning hymns and musical settings. It is a joy, also, to work with the Sanctuary Voices, who continue to provide wonderful choral music on the third Sunday of each month. The choir also led the carols and descants for December's joyous Christingle and Crib Service. The choir has sung a broad range of repertoire over recent months, from anthems by Bach and Vivaldi, to contemporary works by Kathryn Rose and Richard Shephard.

At this time, it is exciting to be adding additional communion settings to our repertoire for congregational singing. During Lent we will sing the 1549 communion setting by John Merbecke, one of the earliest pieces of Anglican liturgical music. For Eastertide, we will be singing David Thorne's uplifting Mass of St. Thomas. With gratitude to Tony, on April 27<sup>th</sup> we will also be singing the Jazz Mass written for J's and B's by one of the UK's leading jazz musicians, Paul Edis. April 27<sup>th</sup> is the Sunday immediately before International Jazz Day, and Paul's congregational setting, with its wonderful arrangement for organ by Robin Beaumont, will give us additional musical resources to go alongside our settings by Schubert and MacMillan.

I look forward very much to the year ahead as we continue to nurture and grow our liturgical music and repertoire.

### **Morning and evening prayer and Midweek Eucharist from The Revd Ryan McKeon**

The act of meeting together to pray morning and evening prayer was reestablished when the curate first turned up, the timings have changed recently to reflect the changing patterns. Most of the time it is just the parish clergy who meet to pray, but everyone is welcome to attend if they are around or would value praying as a group. People still come in to the church to light candles and leave notes for things

they would like prayer for. These are prayed at the next service of Morning or Evening prayer. Over the last we have developed a small cohort of people who regularly join with the clergy in praying morning and evening prayer. The midweek Eucharist was well attended at first, attaching it own group of people who valued the early morning shorter service or for whom due to commitment Sunday attendance was unlikely. Of late, the service has been poorly attended. And so has been paused while we reassess its need and viability.

### Sunday Services and Occasional Offices from *The Revd James McGowan*

Our 10am Sunday services continued to be streamed online to our website and via YouTube. We have had a regular group of between 6 – 12 join us each week. We retained the option of being able to stream to families on private pages if requested.

Our Sunday Services have been mainly congregational led. Our Sunday Choir has continued to meet and grow throughout the year and is now a regular feature of our third Sunday services.

### **Music**

The church continues to be the base for several choirs and music groups. J's & B's Singers continues to grow, now with around 80 singers who perform in our three concerts a year. Attendance at Concerts was very good with standing room only on a number of occasions. Income from the Js & Bs Choir continues to subsidise our other musical activity, notable the work of the Phoenix Choir.

The Newcastle Phoenix Choir continues to meet on Friday afternoons in the church. During the year they performed several times - alongside The Morning Chorus in concert, in a service of Remembrance at Brunswick Methodist Church and in the homelessness awareness service at J's & B's. In the Autumn of the 2024, choir member Tim, curated an exhibition of photographic portraits of choir members. This remained in church throughout the early part of the winter

Alongside choirs run on behalf of the PCC, Js & Bs continued to be a home for Voices of Hope, The Fenham Ensemble and The Morning Chorus as they worked in rehearsal and in concerts. The Saturday Classic series saw another season of world leading performers visit the church.

The church continues to be a popular choice for musicians looking to perform their music. 2024 saw the church used as a 'recording studio' on a number of occasions by private musicians keen to make the best of the acoustics and facilities on site.

### **Net Zero Carbon 2030**

General Synod voted in February 2020 for the whole of the Church of England to achieve net zero carbon by 2030. The vote recognised that the global climate emergency



is a crisis for God's creation and a fundamental injustice. You can find out more about the 2030 target online at

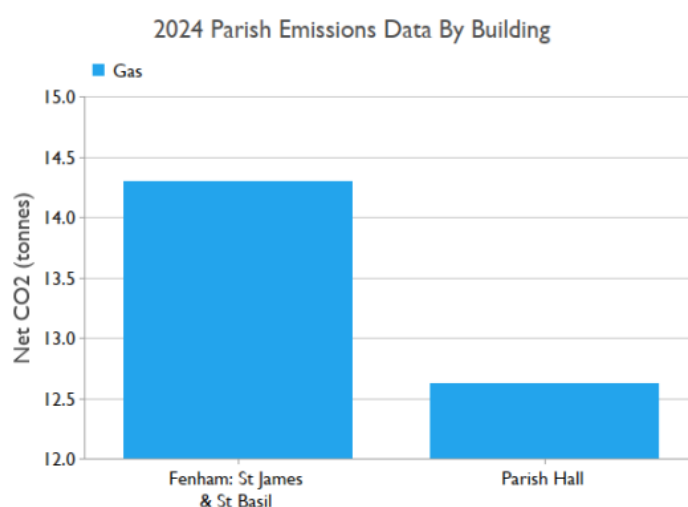
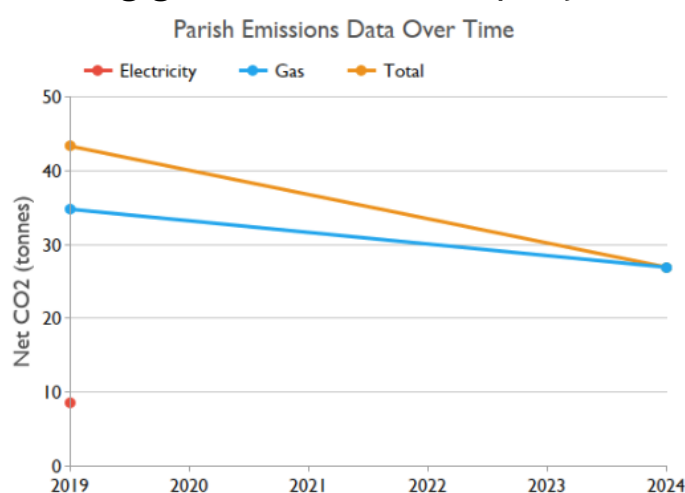
<https://www.churchofengland.org/net-zero-carbon-routemap>

The Parish achieved the Silver Eco Church award in 2023.

Since then, we already begun to take some steps to reduce our environmental impact. Our Gas heating boilers are all 'A' Rated. In 2021, we replaced all the lighting in Church with LED fittings and adapted our Chandeliers to take LED Lamps and we've introduced recycling facilities in the church and hall.

Our electricity now is all 100% renewable.

Over the last five years we've reduced our Carbon Dioxide emissions produced by burning gas from 35 Tonnes per year to 24.8 Tonnes in 2024.



## **Property (Vicarage & Auburn Gardens)**

### **The Vicarage**

*As the official 'Benefice Property', maintenance of the Vicarage remains the responsibility of the Diocese, day to day running costs are met by the Vicarage Household.*

As reported for the sixth consecutive year, electrical problems persist in the house, with fuses tripping and supply failures regularly occurring. That said, a national scheme to install Car Charging points in clergy housing saw one installed at the Vicarage in October. This was funded by the Church Commissioners as part of a strategy to reduce the carbon footprint of the wider church.

Problems with the guttering continued and there is still a leak in at the side (above the yard) of the house causing damp and moss to build up. In addition, in the late summer it was identified that the 'hidden' lead gutter above the front door is failing due to rotten timber within the eaves of the house.

The Vicarage is a large, listed (Grade 2) building that proves to be very difficult and expensive to heat. This is noted for the record as this extra burden is not faced by some clergy households in more modern or efficient vicarages in effect meant a reduction in stipend for the incumbent here, (all parish clergy in the diocese receive the same 'package in terms of payment, pension and the provision of an official



house). Some secondary glazing was provided in 2023 (funded jointly by the diocese and the Vicarage household), and in the late summer of 2024, the Vicarage Household covered the cost of secondary glazing to two further rooms.

Some redecoration was carried to some rooms and the kitchen received a facelift with the addition of replacement cupboard doors towards the end of the year. *The house is larger than most in the diocese and fails to meet the recommended standards for clergy housing as it does not offer accessible entrance routes, nor a separately accessed office space. The house was due for its 5 yearly inspection in 2024, however this was not carried out by the Diocesan Surveyor.*

### **32 Auburn Gardens**

The house is owned by the PCC on Auburn Gardens and under the terms of a trust deed, retains its designation as housing for an Assistant Curate if one is appointed to the Parish.

The house is likely to require significant repair work before a new tenant might be able to move. As reported in previous Annual Reports, the Kitchen will need replacement at some point soon. In addition, the roof and chimney stack now need repair to the ridge, pointing and flashings. The external render on the front of the house is failing and the house will need redecorating before a tenant can move in. The PCC will need to carefully consider options for the future of this property in 2025.

### **Safeguarding and Health and Safety**

Ensuring our buildings and communities are as safe as they can be is of upmost importance

#### *Health and Safety*

In line with our insurance requirements and with national Church policy, we continue to review risk assessments for activities and events.

#### *Safeguarding*

In 2024 Professor Jay was appointed by the government to look into safeguarding in the Church of England. She scrutinised the present structures, processes & challenges of the church, especially in regard to victims of abuse. She recommended safeguarding be entirely independent of the church, thereby showing the Church of England was serious about safeguarding & so restoring trust in the church. Her advice was discussed at the General Synods in both February 2024 & February 2025 . This year an amendment was introduced so further time is required to allow for more scrutiny . Bishop Helen-Anne is in favour of of Professor Jay's recommendations.

To achieve this the welfare of children, young people & adults will be promoted by working to prevent abuse from occurring, responding well to those who have been abused & also identify & give support where a person may present a risk to others &

take steps to mitigate such risks. By safe recruitment for people working or volunteering with children & adults it is hoped to reduce this risk & case histories shown on the various training courses on this subject are useful ways in which can reflect on our own practice.

Safeguarding Policies & Procedures for the Church of England are outlined nationally by the House of Bishops & can be seen in the Parish Safeguarding Handbook, a copy of which is displayed on the church notice board . Safeguarding is always on the agenda of PCC meetings & policies agreed upon by the PCC are reviewed as necessary. All members of the PCC, as trustees of the church, & anyone in close contact with children, young people & vulnerable adults, are subject to DBS checks, (the Disclosure & Baring Service) every 5 years & those checked in this way have to attend training courses, on line initially & then in groups, either face to face or on Zoom thereafter. Information about safeguarding & useful numbers can be seen on the churchh notice board & website, - [jamesbasilfenham.org.uk](http://jamesbasilfenham.org.uk). & details of the Safeguarding Officer iare on the Sunday pew sheet.

At the end of 2024 an in house audit of DBS checks was carried out. It is intended that a similar exercise of training will be conducted in the Spring of 2025. A new system for logging concerns and actions was introduced as part of the iKnowChurch system towards the end of 2024.

### **Scouts – 82<sup>nd</sup> Newcastle**

The group has had another busy year, our numbers continue to be healthy and there is a waiting list for Squirrels and Beavers of children wanting to start their Scouting journey with us. The Squirrel section is particularly proving popular.

In April we had hoped to repeat the Expedition camp for Scouts at Dilston near Corbridge, this had been postponed from the previous October due to the sight being waterlogged. The young people had a lovely weekend with some of them completing their Expedition Challenge which in turn meant completing their Chief Scout Gold Award, the highest award they can earn in Scouts section.

In the summer we had our annual Group Camp at Moor House Adventure Centre near Durham. It was a busy camp with everyone having a fab time. It is always so lovely having young people spending the weekend together, enjoying the activities, Scouts cooking for themselves and of course coming together for Camp fire.

The commitment of the leaders and young leaders to support the Squirrels, Beavers, Cubs and Scouts is second to none. Our leaders are working hard to offer a fantastic programme to the Scouts but we still need some additional support, so as always the plea is if you know of anyone that may be interested let me know.

In November the Beavers took part in the annual Beaver Collage Competition in memory of our former Beaver Leader and Group Scout Leader, Pauline Armstrong, and

I'm delighted to say our Beavers won again. Pauline's daughter Becky is one of our Squirrel leaders now and Pauline would be so delighted that the family's connection to the group has continued.

I was incredibly humbled and honoured in June to be awarded the British Empire Medal in the Kings birthday honours for my contribution to Scouting, to Beaver Scouts and work with the wider District and County Teams. I have been incredibly privileged over the last 30+ years to be able to be part of the journey of so many young people in Scouting and with the support of the many leaders and parents throughout that time. A very humbling experience, thank you to everyone who has supported me.

As always, we are incredibly grateful for the continued support of the church with our group, we love being part of the community, thank you.

### **Study Groups/personal reflection & prayer** *From The Revd Ryan McKeon*

The bible study fellowship has continued over the last year and has been well attended. We meet over a meal and share in conversation and joy before studying. We have studied the books of Ruth and Esther, over Advent, we looked at the mother Mary, and coming up for Lent we will be looking at the Gospel of John. This fellowship has met together bi-weekly at the curate's house. There is always space for more people, and depending on volunteers and space to meet, growth for other groups to spring up is possible. The Church studies meet usually in Advent and Lent, the theme or books studied usually relate to the theme of the liturgical season. These studies are included in this report as they follow the pattern of the bible reading fellowship, albeit weekly rather than bi-weekly. This change was introduced because meetings in the church were poorly attended. Meeting at the curate's house has greatly increased attendance

### **Annual Meeting of Parishioners**

*In accordance with the Churchwardens Measure 2001 a meeting of the parishioners of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Fenham: St James and St Basil, will be held for the purpose of appointing 2 churchwardens of the parish.*

*The following persons are entitled to attend the meeting and vote:*

- (a) persons whose names are entered on the church electoral roll of the parish; and
- (b) persons resident in the parish whose names are entered on a register of local government electors by reason of such residence.

To be appointed churchwarden a person must be baptized and;

- (a) entered on the church electoral roll of the parish;
- (c) an actual communicant;
- (d) 21 years of age or upwards;
- (e) not disqualified as outlined in section 2 of the Churchwardens Measure (2001).

## **Agenda**

**1) Minutes of the last meeting Appendix 1**

**2) Election of Churchwardens**

## **Annual Parochial Church Meeting Church Representation Rules 2021**

## **Agenda**

- 1) Apologies**
- 2) Minutes of the last meeting Appendix 2**
- 3) Matters arising**
- 4) Election of**
  - a. Diocesan Synod representatives (2 needed)**
  - b. Members of the Parochial Church Council (PCC)**
  - c. Sidespeople / Welcomers** under the new rules, these positions are to be filled at the first meeting of the PCC in accordance with section 2(2)(f) of the Parochial Church Councils (Powers) Measure 1956.
- 5) Appointment of Auditor**
- 6) Report on the proceedings of the Church Council**  
*this document to be taken as such a report*
- 7) Treasurer's Report Accounts attached in appendix 3**
  - a. Examination of audited accounts**
  - b. Statement of funds & property** no verbal report given. Church Log books and accounts will be available and opportunity for question given.
- 8) Fabric Report** A brief summary will be given. Further details to specific buildings will be given in this document. Opportunity for question or comment will be given.
- 9) Chairman's Report** to be presented as a review of the year during the service
- 10) Any Other Business** – To be notified at the start of the meeting

## **Appendix 1. Annual General Meeting of Parishioners 2024 (Vestry meeting)**

## **Minutes**

### **Election of Churchwardens**

The Parish of Fenham, St James and St Basil has two (2) Churchwardens.

- 1) the minutes of the 2023 meeting were received and approved.
- 2) Two nominations were received for Mr Antony (Tony) Roberts and Mr Nigel Welch.

All were duly elected by unanimous agreement.

## **Appendix 2**

**The Parish of St James & St Basil, Fenham The Annual General Meeting (AGM)  
Sunday 17th March 2024 During 10am Service in Church**

### **Minutes of Meeting**

#### **Present & Apologies**

**Present:** There were 28 members of the Electoral Roll present including Revd James McGowan (Chair)

**Apologies:** Bonnie Brinn, Jeanette, Nigel & David Welch.

#### **Annual General Meeting of Parishioners (Vestry Meeting**

Revd J. McGowan opened the meeting in accordance with the Churchwardens Measure 2001

#### **1. Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting of Parishioners (Vestry Meeting) held on 26<sup>th</sup> March 2023**

The minutes were received as true and correct with no amendments

Proposed by: Lesley Crawford

Seconded by: Marjorie Rochester

**All in attendance agreed & the minutes were duly signed by Revd J. McGowan**

#### **Matters Arising**

The PCC secretary was away on holiday at the time of the meeting, so the APCM was recorded as part of the live stream of the service and these made at a later date.

#### **2. Election of Churchwardens**

There were two nominations received

- Nr Nigel Welch
- Mr Anthony Charles Roberts

There being no other nominations both nominations were accepted:

**All in attendance agreed & therefore both nominations were duly elected.**

## **Annual Parochial Church Meeting**

Revd J. McGowan opened the APCM in accordance with the Church Representation rules of 2021 & advised that there would not be any spoken/verbal presentation of reports as they were all contained within the APCM printed booklet (see attached)

### **Minutes of the previous APCM held on 17th March 2024**

The minutes were received as true and correct with no amendments

Proposed by: Lesley Crawford

Seconded by: Marjorie Rochester

**The minutes were agreed by all & duly signed by Revd J. McGowan**

### **Matters Arising**

There were no Matters Arising

### **. Election of:**

#### **a) Deanery Synod Representatives (2 required)**

Margaret Green and Rachel Gill were elected in 2023 and so no new representatives were needed as their terms continue.

### **Agreed by all**

#### **b) Members of the Parochial Church Council (PCC)**

There was one nomination:

- Anne Henderson

**Agreed by all unanimously**

#### **c) Sidespersons/Welcomers**

Under the new rules, these positions are to be filled at the first meeting of the PCC in accordance with the Church Representation Rules 2021 M6(6)

## **5. Appointment of Examiner of Accounts**

Jane Makepeace examined 2022 accounts and has agreed to stand again as Independent Examiner of Accounts for 2024.

Proposed – Margaret Reid

Seconded – Tim Bradbury

**This position was unanimously agreed by all**

## **6. Report on the proceedings of the Church Council**

These reports were received in the form of a booklet which had been printed and distributed to members of the Electoral Roll in advance of the APCM and this booklet to be taken as such a report (see attached).

All were invited to ask any questions. There were no comments or questions

## **7. Treasurer's Finance Report & Accounts (Jan-Dec 2023)**

These are reported in the booklet (attached) which were discussed and accepted by the PCC at a previous PCC meeting & were then independently examined by Jane Makepeace and the completed & signed report of the accounts is in the booklet (attached). These will also be available online (after the service today). Tim Bradbury, Treasurer gave an update/overview of Finances: Tim noted that we face challenging times. In particular, our new utility contracts began which will see a significant increase in our costs.

The Parish has offered to pay £20,000 in Parish Share this, this is reduction but will still be a significant challenge.

## **7b. Statement of Funds & Property**

Revd J McGowan advised the Church Log Books, Terrier & Inventory and accounts were available to view & all were invited to ask any questions or comment on Church assets/property.

There were no questions or comments.

## **8. Fabric Report**

**JMcG gave a quick summary update of the proposed works to include a new and refurbished toilets and vestry area.** There were no questions or comments.

## **9. Chairman's Report**

This is in the form of the Introduction & Vicars Report which is also included in the booklet (see attached). There was nothing else to add to what was written in the Chairman's Report & all were invited for comments or to ask questions. There were no questions or comments.

## **10. Any Other Business**

There was no other business. There being no other business Revd J. McGowan closed the meeting & announced: **NEXT PCC MEETING: Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> April 2024 in Vicarage at 7pm**

## **Appendix 3 Financial statements**

These include a statement of Assets and Liabilities at the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024, together with the financial statements for 2024. *NB at the time of printing, these*



*statements, whilst approved by the PCC, were awaiting Inspection. If this has not been completed by the date of the APCM, it will be proposed that these statements are 'received' and then are later 'approved' at an Extra-ordinary Meeting called for this purpose sometime before the 31<sup>st</sup> May 2025 whose date and time will be published in accordance with rule M13 of the Church Representation Rules 2020.*

## **Employee Pensions Liability**

### **Church Workers Pension Fund (CWPF) December 2024 Year End**

**The Parish** participates in the Pension Builder Scheme section of CWPF for lay staff. CWPF is administered by the Church of England Pensions Board, which holds the CWPF assets separately from those of the Employer and other participating employers.

**Pension Builder 2014** is a cash balance scheme that provides a lump sum which members use to provide benefits at retirement. Pension contributions are recorded in an account for each member. Discretionary bonuses may be added before retirement, depending on investment returns and other factors. The account, plus any bonuses declared is payable, unreduced, from age 65.

There is no sub-division of assets between employers in each section of the Pension Builder Scheme.

The scheme is considered to be a multi-employer scheme as described in Section 28 of FRS 102. This is because it is not possible to attribute the Pension Builder Scheme's assets and liabilities to specific employers and means that contributions are accounted for as if the Scheme were a defined contribution scheme.

A valuation of the Pension Builder Scheme is carried out once every three years. The most recent valuation was carried out as at 31 December 2022.

This followed improvements in the funding position over 2024. There is no requirement for deficit payments at the current time. The next valuation is due as at 31 December 2025. For the Pension Builder 2014 section, the valuation revealed a surplus of £8.5m on the ongoing assumptions used. There is no requirement for deficit payments at the current time. The legal structure of the scheme is such that if another employer fails, The Parish could become responsible for paying a share of the failed employer's pension liabilities.

## **Assets**

Property owned by the Parochial Church Council is detailed in the Inventory and Terrier (Church Logbook).

### **32 Auburn Gardens**

This property is held in trust by the PCC for the purpose of providing accommodation for an Assistant Curate if one is appointed. The property generates rental income for

the parish which is detailed in the financial statement. The property (or any assets arising from a sale of the property) may not be used for any purpose other than housing for an Assistant Curate without the express consent of the Charity Commission, the Church Commissioners, the Incumbent, and the Bishop of Newcastle. As noted earlier, the PCC will need carefully consider the future of this asset and it make a decision between repair and refurbishment or replacement in the near future.

Account Summary

Paxton		Assets and Liabilities Report - December 2024	Page 1 of 1
Charity no. 1184511			
St James' and St Basil's PCC Fenham		All fund codes consolidated	Printed: 17/02/2025
Month = December 2024			
All fund codes consolidated			
	Value	Last year	
Cash Funds			
Bank current account	7,781.23	11,493.86	
Bank savings account	8,880.85	3,430.65	
CBF 1	879.86	879.86	
CBF2	2,970.09	2,970.09	
		20,512.03	18,774.46
Net assets/liabilities		20,512.03	18,774.46

# Multiple Fund Receipts and Payment Report - December 2024

Paxton

Page 1 of 3

Charity no. 1184511

St James' and St Basil's PCC Fenham

Printed: 18/02/2025

December 2024 year to date turnover

	<u>General</u>	<u>Auburn</u>	<u>Hall</u>	<u>SJKT</u>	<u>Development</u>	<u>Music</u>	<u>Cafe</u>	<u>Phoenix</u>	<u>Bell</u>	<u>Total</u>
Voluntary Receipts										
Donations received	7,083.53	0.00	500.00	0.00	8,195.00	15,468.45	0.00	3,135.48	49.00	34,431.46
Legacies	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	5.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	5.00
Collections	699.11	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	5.00	0.00	704.11
Charity Collections	36.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	36.00
Planned Giving	18,844.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	18,844.00
Gift aid tax received	8,564.73	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	8,564.73
Grants received	3,510.50	0.00	0.00	10,000.00	37,613.82	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	51,124.32
	<u>38,737.87</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>500.00</u>	<u>10,000.00</u>	<u>45,808.82</u>	<u>15,473.45</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>3,140.48</u>	<u>49.00</u>	<u>113,709.62</u>
Receipts from Fundraising Activities										
Fundraising income	63.00	0.00	2,081.90	0.00	0.00	0.00	45.00	0.00	0.00	2,189.90
	<u>63.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>2,081.90</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>45.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>2,189.90</u>
Receipts from Charitable Activities										
Fees	4,472.98	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	4,472.98
Rent	1,355.00	4,200.00	14,761.45	0.00	0.00	335.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	20,651.45
Charitable Activity Receipts	656.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	656.00
Cafe	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,207.60	17,166.15	0.00	0.00	18,373.75
Choir subs										

Concert income	756.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	712.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,468.00
	137.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	7,376.05	252.00	366.80	0.00	8,131.85
	<u>7,376.98</u>	<u>4,200.00</u>	<u>14,761.45</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>9,630.65</u>	<u>17,418.15</u>	<u>366.80</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>53,754.03</u>
Receipts from Investments										
Interest received	169.20	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	13.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	182.20
	<u>169.20</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>13.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>182.20</u>
Other Receipts										
Miscellaneous receipts	1,174.94	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	40.00	1,214.94
	<u>1,174.94</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>40.00</u>	<u>1,214.94</u>
Fundraising Costs										
Charitable Donations	663.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	663.00
	<u>(663.00)</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>(663.00)</u>
Charitable Activities Costs										
Heat, Light and Power	14,396.34	232.99	10,739.50	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	25,368.83
Maintenance	6,005.48	200.00	0.00	0.00	216.00	416.64	0.00	0.00	705.38	7,543.50
Hall Maintenance	0.00	0.00	510.80	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	510.80
Grounds Maintenance	485.84	0.00	0.00	6,929.15	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	7,414.99
Insurance	0.00	307.05	0.00	10,234.39	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	10,541.44
Development	3,697.37	0.00	0.00	0.00	40,810.61	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	44,507.98
Worship	4,737.72	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	316.67	0.00	0.00	0.00	5,054.39
Diocesan fees	1,770.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,770.00
Parish Share	15,000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	15,000.00
Clergy Expenses	568.03	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	568.03

Council Tax	2,752.05	2,037.37	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	4,789.42
Water rates	1,196.16	751.62	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,947.78
Volunteer expenses	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	988.76	0.00	0.00	988.76
Cafe expenses	303.16	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	5,956.36	0.00	0.00	6,259.52
Office costs	1,400.49	0.00	456.50	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,856.99
Printing & stationery	1,784.52	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,784.52
Music expenses	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	16,282.61	0.00	10,097.00	0.00	26,379.61
	(54,097.16)	(3,529.03)	(11,706.80)	(17,163.54)	(41,026.61)	(17,015.92)	(6,945.12)	(10,097.00)	(705.38)	(162,286.56)
Governance Costs										
Sum up charges	825.67	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	825.67
Bank charges	339.06	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	339.06
	(1,164.73)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	(1,164.73)
Other Costs										
Miscellaneous costs	5,198.83	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	5,198.83
	(5,198.83)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	(5,198.83)
Transfers										
Transfers between funds	4,750.50	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	(4,750.50)	0.00	0.00
	(4,750.50)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	4,750.50	0.00	0.00
Net receipts/payments	(18,352.23)	670.97	5,636.55	(7,163.54)	4,782.21	8,101.18	10,518.03	(1,839.22)	(616.38)	1,737.57
Cash funds at start of year	389.40	1,275.85	3,516.99	(7,178.46)	3,000.00	6,345.56	6,291.66	1,543.89	3,589.57	18,774.46
Cash funds at end of year	(17,962.83)	1,946.82	9,153.54	(14,342.00)	7,782.21	14,446.74	16,809.69	(295.33)	2,973.19	20,512.03