



St Nicholas' Church, Burton-in-Wirral

Parochial Church Council's
Annual Trustees Report
and
Financial Statements

For the year ending 31 December 2025



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Foreword

By Philip Hillman, Licensed Lay Reader, St Nicholas' Church, Burton

A period of vacancy can be challenging for any church, particularly for a small congregation in a semi-rural setting. Without a resident vicar, established patterns of worship and pastoral care may feel disrupted, responsibilities can be stretched, and important decisions delayed. Long-standing members may feel concerned about the future, while newer members may be hesitant to commit without a clear sense of direction.

At the same time, a vacancy presents valuable opportunities. In the absence of a central leader, members of the congregation can discover new confidence, share responsibility, and step into roles they may not previously have considered. This period can encourage the wider use of gifts and the emergence of unexpected leadership.

These times also allow the church to reflect prayerfully on its mission and its place within the local and wider community. Seeking God's guidance during this time can deepen spiritual maturity and help clarify priorities for the future.

While we value and honour our traditions of worship at St Nicholas' Church, we are not simply seeking to preserve the past. We look for leadership that will help us engage creatively with changing patterns of work and life, an increasingly online world, and the competing demands on the attention of younger generations.

Since my licensing last October, I have been encouraged by the breadth of activity taking place within the congregation, including children's work, schools engagement, family services, community events, and outreach beyond the church building, even within the local area of Neston.

It has been particularly heartening to see the church full at Christmas services, with young families actively involved, and to welcome members of local community organisations at our carol service. These moments reflect the strong connections between the church and the community it serves.

Although a vacancy can bring uncertainty, it is also a time of preparation. We look forward to welcoming a leader who will guide us with vision and creativity as we continue to serve our village church and its community with faith and purpose.

Reference and Administration Details

Charity Name

The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of St Nicholas' Church, Burton-in-Wirral

Charity Registered No 1184831

Principal Address

St Nicholas' Church, The Village, Burton Neston, Cheshire CH64 5TH

Trustees

Name

Office Held (if any)

John Coyne	-	Vicar, Chair of PCC & Trustee (Retired 31/08/25)
Jane Davies	-	Vice Chair, Churchwarden & Trustee
Ivor Thomas	-	Churchwarden, Parish Safeguarding Officer & Trustee
John Morris-Best	-	Lay Reader & Trustee

Elected Members

John Church	-	Trustee & Hon Secretary
Anthony Carter	-	Trustee & Deputy Churchwarden
Amanda Ankers	-	Trustee
Jenny Carlyle	-	Trustee
Ron Curnow	-	Trustee
Nicky Dennison	-	Trustee
Philip Hillman	-	Trustee & Lay Reader
John Vinson	-	Trustee
Claire Smith	-	Trustee (Resigned 09/02/25)

Churchwarden's Reflections on Church Life

The year 2025 was one of challenge and transition for St Nicholas' Church. Early in the year, John Coyne informed the Standing Committee of his intention to retire at the end of August. Although John and Sue's time at Burton was shorter than anticipated, the PCC sought to ensure that their final months in full-time ministry were as positive and stress-free as possible. To support this, the Standing Committee assumed responsibility for much of the parish administration. John and Sue's ministry was celebrated at a joint service with Shotwick at Burton, after which the benefice entered a period of vacancy.

At the same time, Ann Warr stepped down from her role as vergers after many years of dedicated service. As no volunteers were available to take on the role on a full-time basis, the duties are now shared among a team of volunteers.

During the year, there were several significant developments in lay and ordained ministry. Ruth Abbott was ordained deacon at Chester Cathedral and is now serving as a curate in West Kirby. In September, John Morris Best became Reader Emeritus after many years of active service, while continuing to support Holy Communion services. At the same service, Philip Hillman was licensed, and later in the year Amanda Ankers and Sheila Dennison began training as Occasional Worship Leaders.

To begin the vacancy process, the PCC conducted a parish survey in September to better understand the congregation's views on worship and the desired qualities of a new vicar. As expected within a broad Church of England tradition, opinions varied on matters such as worship style and the use of technology. However, there was strong consensus on future priorities: increasing the visibility of the church's faith within the local community, strengthening work with children and families, and nurturing the faith of the congregation. These priorities will inform the Parish Profile and the appointment process.

By the end of the year, the Churchwardens had held several meetings with the Shotwick Churchwardens, the Rural Dean and the Archdeacon. Progress was made on the Parish Profile following a joint PCC meeting with the Patron.

Unlike previous vacancies, there has been no in-parish retired clergy available to assist with services. Nevertheless, the parish has been well supported by a number of retired and serving clergy, enabling the regular pattern of services to be maintained with minimal cancellations. The Churchwardens have worked hard to ensure continuity of worship wherever possible.

Regular church activities have continued throughout the year. Coffee mornings have been well attended, and in October a concert by Rhos Male Voice Choir filled the church and successfully raised funds while providing a valuable social occasion. The Lent Group and Follow Group also continued to meet.

Messy Church and St Nics Nippers combined to form a Junior Church, which has been led with enthusiasm and energy. In an effort to reduce the cost of hiring the GVH, more activities are now held within the church building. However, limitations in baby-changing facilities and the condition of the WC have presented challenges. As a result, the PCC agreed that improvements were necessary, and progress has been made towards upgrading these facilities.

Building & Maintenance

During the year, plans for the refurbishment of the church toilet facilities were finalised. The Diocese confirmed that a Faculty was required, resulting in a revised timetable to allow for statutory notices. No objections were received, and formal diocesan consent is now awaited. Quotations have been obtained, and it is anticipated that work will commence in spring 2026.

Following severe weather, several trees in Church Wood were removed to address safety concerns. Additional clearance work along the boundary with the main road was completed, enabling the installation of the final directional sign to the church.

In line with the church's ongoing safety policy and the findings of last year's grave survey, repairs were carried out to a tilting gravestone near the church entrance.

Repairs were also completed to the roof of the churchyard shed.

The clock face continues to deteriorate due to weather exposure. Quotations have been sought for its refurbishment, and fundraising will be required to enable the work to proceed.

The churchyard grounds have been maintained to a high standard throughout the year, and the natural habitat area to the east of the church is developing well.

The church remains grateful to church members, the Friends of St Nicholas' Church, and all others who provide financial support towards the maintenance of the church building.

Children, Youth, Families & School

By Sheila Dennison, Children & Families Worker



Over the past year, the Junior Church Team has continued St Nic's Nippers and Messy Church, supported church involvement in community events, and launched *Crafternoon*, a monthly session for Key Stage 2 children.

I now lead assemblies at Bishop Wilson Primary School and represent the church at school services, strengthening links with staff, pupils, and families. This has led to involvement in Values Days, supporting the promotion of Christian values across all year groups.

St Nic's Nippers remains a small but consistent group, with some families engaging through Christmas and Messy Church. Messy Church now attracts a younger age range, though attendance varies and additional volunteers are needed.

Crafternoon launched successfully in March and continues to provide a welcoming space for children and families. Resources are also available in church to support children's activities more generally.

Time spent in school continues to build strong relationships, further supported by my and Sarah's roles as Foundation Governors. A highlight of the year was the coming together of different groups at the Christmas Eve service.

Finally, Sarah Curnow's dedication to Junior Church is essential and greatly valued.

Pastoral Care Report

Throughout the year, the PCC sought to ensure that pastoral visits and the administration of Holy Communion at home were offered with care, respect and sensitivity, under the coordination of the Pastoral Care Co-ordinator, John Church.

Three Lay Eucharistic Ministers were authorised to take Holy Communion to those at home, with the Lay Readers providing support when needed.

Members of the congregation are gently reminded not to assume that requests for pastoral support have already been passed on and are encouraged to share any concerns so that appropriate support can be offered in a timely way.

During the vacancy, John Church also kindly coordinated requests for bereavement and end-of-life visits, ensuring pastoral support continued to be available at these important times.

Contact details:

Tel: 0151 336 2228 | Mobile: 07703 199132 | Email: john_sue44@hotmail.co.uk

Parish Safeguarding

With the approval of the PCC, Ivor Thomas continued to serve as Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) throughout the year. The PCC maintained full compliance with the Church of England House of Bishops' Safeguarding Policy during 2025. A hard copy of the Parish Safeguarding Handbook, together with the *Promoting a Safer Church* poster and the Parish's Statement of Commitment to the Five National Safeguarding Standards, remains available in the church porch.

The Parish Safeguarding Policy for children, young people, and vulnerable adults was reviewed and formally approved by the PCC during the year. It was endorsed by the Vicar and two Churchwardens and displayed in the church porch. The policy is subject to annual review. Policies relating to Safer Recruitment and the Recruitment of Ex-Offenders were also maintained, supported by a safeguarding checklist used at PCC meetings to monitor safeguarding arrangements.

All new PCC members received safeguarding briefings, and all PCC members, Lay Readers, Churchwardens, and Church Group Leaders have completed the appropriate level of safeguarding training. The PSO continued to use the Church of England Safeguarding Dashboard to ensure compliance with statutory safeguarding requirements. In addition, the Parish fully supports the Diocese's safeguarding awareness campaign, *Speak Out, Stay Safe*.



Speak Out, Stay Safe represents our commitment to the National Safeguarding Standards of the Church of England across the Diocese of Chester

Independent Examiner's Report



CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Independent examiner's
report on the accounts

Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/
members of

THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL
PARISH OF ST NICHOLAS' CHURCH BURTON-IN-WIRRAL

On accounts for the year
ended

31st December 2025

Charity no
(if any)

1184831

Set out on pages

11 - 13

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above
charity ('the Trust') for the year ended 31/12/2025

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 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 which gives me
cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of
the Act or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records

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

Signed:

P. N. Bates

Date:

10/04/26

Name:

PHILIP NEIL BATES

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

FCA & ICAEW - INSTITUTE OF
CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS

Address:

1-3 CHESTER ROAD
NESTON
CH64 9PA

Section B**Disclosure**

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).

Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.



Financial Statements

Statement of Receipts

	Unrestricted General Funds	Unrestricted Contingency Funds	Restricted Churchyard Fund	Restricted Fabric Fund	Total 2025	Total 2024
Receipts						
<i>Voluntary Income</i>						
Cash Collections Bank	£ 2,972.58				£ 2,972.58	£ 734.88
Electronic Giving	£ 1,760.43				£ 1,760.43	£ 1,917.37
Cash Gift Aided	£ 2,080.00				£ 2,080.00	£ 2,576.00
Planned Giving	£ 39,702.00				£ 39,702.00	£ 41,545.00
Friends of St Nicholas'	£ 2,540.00				£ 2,540.00	£ 2,670.00
Bishop Wilson School Trust Prof. Fees	£ 3,238.20				£ 3,238.20	£ 8,703.60
Interest		£ 118.22	£ 84.30	£ 922.28	£ 1,124.80	£ 1,252.73
Dividends			£ 1,013.23		£ 1,013.23	£ 962.98
Events	£ 6,902.20				£ 6,902.20	£ 3,043.00
Children & Families Worker	£ 2,000.00				£ 2,000.00	£ 7,100.00
Bld Soc Interest	£ 3,817.48				£ 3,817.48	£ 2,406.35
Tax Refund	£ 13,060.07				£ 13,060.07	£ 12,189.18
St Michael's Insurance	£ 2,209.47				£ 2,209.47	£ 1,786.47
St Michaels Contribution	£ 1,410.00				£ 1,410.00	£ 1,320.00
Weddings, Funerals & Memorials	£ 10,425.92				£ 10,425.92	£ 15,422.00
Magazine Income	£ 250.00				£ 250.00	£ 320.00
Legacies/other income	£ 7,100.00				£ 7,100.00	
Sundry Income	£ 1,627.83				£ 1,627.83	£ 367.00
Discretionary Diocese Refund	14,725.00				£ 14,725.00	
Total Receipts	£115,821.18	£ 118.22	£ 1,097.53	£ 922.28	£117,959.21	£ 104,316.56

Statement of Expenditure

	Unrestricted General Funds	Unrestricted Contingency Funds	Restricted Churchyard Fund	Restricted Fabric Fund	Total 2025	Total 2024
Payments						
Diocesan Expenses						
Parish Share	£ 36,123.12				£ 36,123.12	£ 44,220.00
Chester DBF	£ 8,151.80				£ 8,151.80	£ -
Vicarage Council Tax	£ 3,851.98				£ 3,851.98	£ 7,608.34
Vicars Expenses Reimbursement	£ 1,626.16				£ 1,626.16	£ 1,481.45
Vicarage Expenditure	£ -				£ -	£ -
Other Expenses						
Resources					£ -	£ -
Locum Vicar Costs	£ 2,520.40				£ 2,520.40	£ 1,266.56
Church Building						
Water Rates	£ 250.02				£ 250.02	£ 295.82
Oil	£ 1,253.50				£ 1,253.50	£ 1,247.75
Electricity	£ 809.95				£ 809.95	£ 2,838.33
Insurance St Nicholas'	£ 1,828.20				£ 1,828.20	£ 1,765.17
Insurance St Michael's	£ 1,807.97				£ 1,807.97	£ 1,786.47
Maintenance & Repairs	£ 1,418.93				£ 1,418.93	£ 6,430.01
Churchyard	£ 4,486.00				£ 4,486.00	£ 3,467.95
Sundry	£ 767.14				£ 767.14	£ 16.45
Church Wood	£ 1,550.00				£ 1,550.00	£ 64.58
Equipment	£ 2,191.46				£ 2,191.46	£ 2,843.84
Church Admin						
Verger	£ 1,144.50				£ 1,144.50	£ 538.00
Professional Fees	£ 2,262.00				£ 2,262.00	£ 1,638.00
Honoraria (Book Keeping)	£ 1,680.00				£ 1,680.00	£ 1,480.00
B Wilson School Trust Prof. Fees	£ 1,093.20				£ 1,093.20	£ 10,848.60
Upkeep/Cleaning	£ 910.00				£ 910.00	£ 1,470.00
Stationery & Copying	£ 641.31				£ 641.31	£ 614.83
Books & Materials	£ 200.00				£ 200.00	£ 798.13
Bell Ringers	£ 360.00				£ 360.00	£ 480.00
GVH Hire	£ 699.00				£ 699.00	£ -
Licences/Subscriptions	£ 610.82				£ 610.82	£ 274.99
Website & IT	£ 215.00				£ 215.00	£ 233.00
Organist/Choir Fees	£ 1,261.80				£ 1,261.80	£ 1,622.65
Telecoms	£ 460.69				£ 460.69	£ 420.45
Events	£ 1,526.43				£ 1,526.43	£ 1,329.53
Refund to St Michael's Church	£ -				£ -	£ -
Charitable Giving	£ 11,973.00				£ 11,973.00	£ 12,500.00
Children & Families Worker	£ 9,272.36				£ 9,272.36	£ 3,569.66
	£ 102,946.74	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 102,946.74	£ 113,150.56
Dividends Re-invested			£ 1,013.23		£ 1,013.23	£ 962.98
	£ 102,946.74	£ -	£ 1,013.23	£ -	£ 103,959.97	£ 114,113.54

Statement of Assets & Liabilities

	Unrestricted General Funds	Unrestricted Contingency Funds	Restricted Churchyard Fund	Restricted Fabric Fund	Total 2025 To-date	Total 2024
Receipts	£115,821.18	£ 118.22	£ 1,097.53	£ 922.28	£117,959.21	£104,316.56
Payments	-£102,946.74		-£ 1,013.23		-£103,959.97	-£114,113.54
Net	£ 12,874.44	£ 118.22	£ 84.30	£ 922.28	£ 13,999.24	-£ 9,796.98
Bank & Cash 01-01-25	£117,894.03	£ 2,612.35	£ 1,862.75	£20,379.41	£142,748.54	£152,545.52
Bank & Cash 31-12-25	£130,768.47	£ 2,730.57	£ 1,947.05	£21,301.69	£156,747.78	£142,748.54
	Unrestricted General Funds	Unrestricted Contingency Funds	Restricted Churchyard Fund	Restricted Fabric Fund	Total 2025	Total 2024
Statement of Assets & Liabilities						
Barclays Account No. 1	£ 43,627.33				£ 43,627.33	£ 27,787.95
Barclays Account No. 2	£ 9,810.34				£ 9,810.34	£ 16,590.34
Skipton Building Society No. 1	£ 61,154.30				£ 61,154.30	£ 58,238.21
Skipton Building Society No. 2	£ 16,145.04				£ 16,145.04	£ 15,243.65
Cash on Hand	£ 31.46				£ 31.46	£ 33.88
CCLA Fabric Fund				£21,301.69	£ 21,301.69	£ 20,379.41
CCLA Contingency		£ 2,730.57			£ 2,730.57	£ 2,612.35
CCLA Church Yard Fund			£ 1,947.05		£ 1,947.05	£ 1,862.75
	£130,768.47	£ 2,730.57	£ 1,947.05	£21,301.69	£156,747.78	£142,748.54
						£ 14,030.70
					Total 2025	Total 2024
Investment Assets at Valuation						
CBF CoFE Inv Fund Income Shares						
Contingency Fund						
Church Yard Repair Fund			£35,630.04		£ 35,630.04	£ 34,337.68

Approved on behalf of the PCC on 17th March 2026

Signed by:-

Ivor Thomas, Church Warden & Trustee

John Church, PCC Secretary & Trustee

Notes to the Accounts

Basis of preparation of accounts

The accounts have been prepared on a receipts and payments basis.

Receipts

Voluntary income for 2025 was £49,056 compared with £49,443 in 2024.

The PCC continued to be aware of the risks associated with a diminishing income stream and the factors and consequences affected by a decline. These include:

- Inability to fund ministry in future
- Reduced capacity to fund outward giving
- Unable to meet running costs.

These risk factors can be exacerbated by:

- Significant reliance on a small group of generous donors
- Reduction in tax refund

In 2025 the PCC received a tax refund of £13,060 through Gift Aid compared with £12,189 in 2024. The amount received from HMRC represented 11% of total income for the year, emphasising the importance to PCC finances of regular planned giving by church members using Gift Aid, where possible.

Donations received through the Friends of St Nicholas' Church amounted to £2,540.

Fees received in 2025 from weddings and funerals amounted to £10,425 compared with £15,422 in 2024.

During the year, the Church received a Discretionary Grant of £14,625 from the Diocese of Chester. This grant was made in relation to the sale of the old Vicarage.

Investments

Funds to support day to day expenditure were held on deposit with Barclays Bank and Skipton Building Society.

Other longer-term funds are managed by CCLA Investment Management Ltd.

During 2025 the PCC decided to close the Skipton accounts and re-invest the funds in CCLA. (This transaction was completed in February 2026)

Payments and Expense Costs

No unforeseen items of expenditure were incurred during the year.

A proportion of the fees collected by the PCC for weddings and funerals are payable to Chester Diocese (DBF). During the year £8,151 was paid including £5,714 that was owed for 2023 & 2024 DBF Fees.

During 2025, there was an arrangement with Bishop Wilson's School Charitable Trust for the PCC to facilitate the payment of legal costs incurred by the Trust which would subsequently be reimbursed. As at 31 December 2025, no funds were outstanding (2024 £2,145).

Outward Giving

In addition to various fund-raising events in aid of St Nicholas' Church and other causes, it is the policy of the PCC to support a number of charities annually. In 2025 the PCC was able to make the following donations to charitable causes:

Tear Fund	£1,000	Wirral Ark Project	£1,000
Church Pastoral Aid Society	£1,000	Save the Family	£1,000
The Mango Tree	£1,000	Church Mission Soc.	£1,000
Charles Thompson's Mission	£1,000	Chester Clergy Trust	£1,000
World Vision	£1,000	The Bible Society	£1,000
Melanesian Bros	£1,000	Other (fund raising event)	£ 973

Parish Share

All ministry expenses (vicar and related on costs) are shared with St Michael's Church, Shotwick. St Nicholas' Church PCC pays 77.25% of the cost and St Michael's Church PCC covers 22.75% of expenditure.

The amount paid by the parish to Chester Diocese to cover the costs associated with the employment of an incumbent was £36,123 in 2024 compared with £44,220 in 2024 (-18%).

Vicarage Accommodation

Certain costs associated with the provision of accommodation for the vicar and his family, including the council tax, are borne by the parishes of Burton and Shotwick.

Related Party Transactions

During the year an honorarium of £1,680 for accounting support services was paid to Helen Thomas, who is related to churchwarden and trustee Ivor Thomas.

Trustees Remuneration & Employees

The PCC had one employee in 2025, the Families and Children's Worker.

No expenses were either claimed by or paid to trustees in performance of their duties as trustees.