

The United Parish of
BIRCHWOOD AND WOOLSTON
The Churches of the Transfiguration & the Ascension
Registered Charity Number 1185707 (England & Wales)

**Parochial Church Council
Annual Report
and
Financial Statements
for the year ended 31 December 2023**



The Ascension - Parish Church



The Transfiguration - Worship Centre

Incumbent:

Rev. Tabitha Rao

Bankers:

Barclays Bank Plc

**Warrington Business Centre
25 Sankey Street
Warrington**

CCLA

**Senator House
85 Queen Victoria Street
London**

Architect

**Rebecca Grimshaw - Anthony Grimshaw Associates
6 Brideman Terrace, Wigan, WN1 1SX**

Independent Examiner:

Bob Timmis

Approved by PCC on 17 April 2024, then submitted to and approved by the APCM on 12 May 2024

Annual Report Contents

- 1. Administrative Information
- 2. PCC Membership
- 3. Mission and Activities
- 4. Church Attendance
 - Electoral Roll
 - Message from Team Rector
 - Message from Tabitha Rao
- 5 Churchwardens' Review
- 6 Fabric Report
- 7. Deanery Synod
 - Safeguarding
 - PCC Review of The Year
- 8 Services during Interregnum
 - Finance
- 9. Fit for Mission
 - Health and Safety
 - Deanery Synod
- 10 Social Activities and Fundraising
 - Birchwood Community
 - Churches Together
 - Safeguarding
- 11 Birchwood Quiz
- 12 Ladies Group
 - Singing Nights
 - The Lighthouse
 - Social Committee
- 13 The Vine
 - Wednesday Club
 - Wider Community

Treasurer's Section

- Treasurer's Report
- Statement of Accounting Policies
- Accounts pages 1-6
- Notes to the Accounts Page 7
- Birchwood supplementary summary Page 8
- 2024 Budget Page 9
- Independent Examiner's Certificate



Annual Report for 2023 to the Annual Parochial Church Meeting

Reference and Administrative Information

The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Birchwood and Woolston, Warrington is a Registered Charity, number 1185707 (England & Wales) and continues to operate under the "Parochial Church Councils (Powers) Measure 1956" and the Church Representation Rules".

The Church of the Transfiguration is located on Admirals Road, Birchwood, and The Church of the Ascension (the designated Parish Church) is located on Warren Lane, Woolston. The parish is part of the Diocese of Liverpool and its official correspondence address is:

The Vicarage, 20 Warren Lane, Woolston, Warrington, WAI 4ES

Background

The PCC of the Parish of Birchwood and Woolston, comprising the Church of the Ascension and the Church of the Transfiguration, have the responsibility, of cooperating with the Vicar in post, of promoting in the ecclesiastical parish the whole mission of the church, pastoral, evangelistic, social, and ecumenical. Formal union the of two parishes of Birchwood and Woolston was confirmed by the Church Commissioners from 1 November 2014. From that date the two PCCs met jointly, until the 2015 APCM when a single PCC for the United Parish was elected following the compilation of a combined electoral roll. We applied during 2019 to register as an individual charity and we were granted that status on 9th October 2019. Our Registered Charity Number is 1185707.

Membership

Membership Members of the PCC are either ex-officio or elected by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) in accordance with the Church Representation rules.

For the period 23 April 2023 to the date of approval of this report at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting on 12th May 2024 the following people served as members of the Parochial Church Council (PCC):

Team Vicar: Position vacant during 2023 Although the post for a parish priest was advertised in 2023 no appointment was made, and we continued without a vicar until Rev. Tabitha Roa became our new vicar in October.

PCC Members: April 2023 to 2024; (January -April 2023)

Church Wardens; Brian Bradley Peter Dibben (Graham Broady April 2022- April 2023)

Representatives of the Deanery Synod

Neil Fairweather Elected APCM 2020 Peter Dibben Elected APCM 2020

Wendy Kelly Co-opted APCM 2023

Elected Members

Anita Bradley

Graham Broady

Barbara England

Val Howarth

Barbara Laughher

Tom Percival

Stuart Robinson

Cheryl Simpson

Stuart Walsh

Co-opted Members; Julie Clegg and Wendy Kelly

Appointments

- **The Chair of the PCC;** Peter Dibben
 - **Treasurer of the PCC;** Stuart Robinson (John Bailey April 2022- April 2023)
 - **Secretary of the PCC;** Wendy Kelly (Sheila Walsh (April 2022-2 April 2023)
 - **Health and Safety Officer;** Julie Clegg
 - **Churches Together;** Julie Clegg (Yvonne Woolley and Ethel Brocklebank; April 2022-2023)
 - **Electoral Roll Officer;** Cheryl Simpson
 - **Warrington Educational Trust Committees Standing Committee:** Neil Fairweather
 - **Safeguarding Officer;** Duncan Howarth
- During 2023, the PCC has continued to address the usual matters of finance, maintenance, and all other routine parish matters.

Meetings 2023 (all Wednesdays at 7.30pm)

There were 2 PCC meetings from January to April and 6 PCC meetings post April in 2023. The dates were 3rd May, 14th June, 26th July, 6th September, 18th October, and 22nd November

There are 14 members of the PCC and the average attendance was 12

Standing Committee:

This committee is a legal requirement to take decisions if the full PCC cannot be consulted. It is also responsible for finance. Decisions made and actions taken are reported at the next full PCC meeting. The members are; Peter Dibben, Brian Bradley and Stuart Robinson.

Public Benefits

During 2023, the PCC has given consideration to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit and, in particular, the specific guidance to charities concerned with the advancement of religion. Public Benefit The general functions of the PCC are stated within section 2 of the Parochial Church Councils (Powers) Measure 1956

[Registered Charity 1185707](#)

[Page 2](#)

In the United Parish of Birchwood and Woolston our mission statement is 'God in the Community' which confirms our commitment to proclaiming the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to the doctrines and practices of the Church of England. When planning our actions for the year, the PCC has given consideration and dedication to these aims and we have tried to do this through promoting His Word, and Jesus' ministry through worship, our deeds and within our meetings by working to express the love of the Lord our God, his children, our neighbours and each other in our Christian fellowship within our parish and the wider community. In 2023, the following public benefits were provided:

- Regular public worship open to all.
- The provision of sacred space for personal prayer and contemplation and helping people who have asked for assistance with prayer.
- Pastoral work including visiting the sick and bereaved, and offering Holy Communion to those who are not able to leave their own homes.
- Messy Church takes place at The Church of the Transfiguration, in partnership with Birchwood C of E School and The Vine at the Church of the Ascension
- Promoting the whole mission of the Church through regular social and fundraising activities open to the whole community.
- Supporting those in need in our community, through our project The Table Oakwood including a community café and a distribution hub for surplus food and providing practical help through donations and gifts to the wider community.
- Supporting other charities in the UK and overseas through giving to special appeals.
- Teaching of Christianity through sermons, courses, and small groups. Courses and small groups were delivered as part of the Warrington East Team.
- Working in partnership with the other Anglican churches in the Warrington East Team; namely Christ Church, Padgate.
- Regularly meeting with our ecumenical partners through Churches Together in East Warrington and Churches Together in Birchwood.
- Regular review of Safeguarding policies and practices for our work with young people and vulnerable adults. (As required by section 5, Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016)

Church Attendance

The Church of the Ascension is the designated Parish Church.

2023 the average Sunday attendance at the Ascension has 40 adults and 2 children. The services are also streamed live on Facebook for those unable to attend church with around 3 individuals engaging each Sunday.

“The Table” Sunday services at The Church of the Transfiguration attracted an average of 8 adults and 0 children.

The Electoral Roll

The electoral roll for the United Parish was revised on April 2023 with a total of 78, 10 of which were resident outside the United Parish. As of the April 30th, 2024, there are 82 on the updated electoral roll, of which 10 were resident outside the parish. There are 7, new members and 3 who have moved away. These figures will be presented at the APCM.

A message from Revd. Neil Shaw, Team Rector.

First of all, folks I want to say a big thanks you for all your hard work in holding things together and keeping things going during a long and protracted interregnum. It was a tremendous effort and speaks volumes of ‘the Ascension & Transfiguration’.

Secondly, I also want to thank you for taking the brave step of joining in with Cohort 2 of Fit for Mission in our Deanery. This will be a journey that will be difficult in many ways and will present many challenges. However, given the position we find ourselves in as a Deanery & Diocese I believe it is a way of addressing the issues we face and will put us in a better position in the future to grow the Church and God’s Kingdom in our town & local areas. In many respects, we are preparing the ground not for ourselves but for the future. This is a very sacrificial thing to do but, having just celebrated Easter recently, our faith is based on a sacrifice that is a model to us right now. Finally, you have a new Team Vicar, Hooray! SUPPORT HER! Trust her. Give encouragement, avoid gossip & griping. Tabitha will bring new vision, new suggestions, new ways of looking at things, and yes, new challenges. Embrace them.

Every Blessing, Neil.

Team Vicar’s Report from Revd. Tabitha Rao

It’s a great pleasure to give my first Team Vicar’s report at my first APCM here at The United Parish of Birchwood and Woolston. As many of you know I was licensed here by the Bishop of Liverpool on 6th Feb 2024.

I would like to start by thanking you all for making me feel so welcome here. Of course there are too many to thank individually now who all make the benefice the place that it is.

I continue to enjoy working with our schools and to lead worship to the best of my ability each week. There is always more on my to do list each day.

We continue to welcome, or be involved with schools we are either associated with or are located within the parish. We have seen an increased number of Baptisms and this is exciting. The other reports identify so much of the work and energy that has gone into the running of the Parish over the year. We held a lent group and the important aspect of a study group is that we learn together.

‘For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.

We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. Romans 12: 4-6
This is your church. You make it what it is. So, a request to every member of our church community . Please do offer yourselves in some way to bless your Church community. You are invited to prayerfully consider if God might be calling you to join the PCC. It would be good to have some new ideas. We need someone with good IT skills. Could this be you? Do you have good ideas for fundraising? If so, we'd love to hear from you.
Please be assured that I am grateful for all you do and I thank God for each one of you and the fellowship we share.

With my prayers and best wishes The Revd. Tabitha Rao

Churchwardens' Review of 2023 to the 2024 APCM

2023 was our second full year in interregnum. The vacancy was advertised, yet again with no applicants. A situation that affected other vacancies in the diocese. A further advertisement in the Summer was successful. Various obstacles meant that Rev Tabitha Rao was not able to be licensed until February 6th 2024 but we ended the year knowing that our waiting was nearly over. During the year we continued to be supported by several retired clergy, particularly Rev Andrew, Rev Mo and Rev Veronica who had by now become good friends. We were also helped by Rev Neil, Rev Heather, and Rev Phillipa from Padgate and Archdeacon Simon. In September we had a visit from Bishop John. We must give a special thank you to Rev Nigel who took the bulk of the Wednesday services and found himself on permanent standby. Rev Audrey continued her work at Birchwood and also took some services at Woolston. Another friend was Margaret who came when Rev Andrew officiated and played the organ for us. In fact, she started coming once a month on a Monday evening and helped create a singing group.

In September we welcomed Amanda Taylor's licensing as a Reader at Liverpool Cathedral. For those who were not always able to come to church, the weekly e-mail continued to be sent out and services continued to be streamed live on Facebook.

The Vicarage started the year still drying out after the water leak in December 2022. From March the Vicarage was occupied by tenants. This continued until just after Rev Tabitha was appointed, when the diocese started another round of repairs including a new bathroom and roof. This work continued until after the end of January 2024.

Fundraising events, including a successful Summer and Christmas Fair, meant that our income almost kept up with our expenditure. Although this should improve a little with new contracts giving reduced electricity and gas bills, we do need to raise more money to ensure our future. The best way of doing this is through regular giving by our congregation and the PCC is very grateful to all those who give regularly through the Parish Giving Scheme which enables us to recover Gift Aid from your donations promptly.

Our community activities at Birchwood continued with the Community Café on Thursdays in term time and the "Bread and Butter Thing" surplus food scheme on every Thursday throughout the year. This brings a lot of people from the community into the church. It is used as a way of meeting people by several agencies including the Citizens Advice and Warrington Voluntary Action and has been a source of information which has helped many people. Alongside this, our mini food bank has been able provide help to families, often referred by the school, as well as Christmas hampers.

This has been supported by local supermarkets and local charities as well as the other Birchwood churches. Although we get plenty of help from outside, this all depends on the efforts of a few parishioners.

During the year the PCC continued to meet regularly. One additional task in 2023 was to consider if our parish should engage with the diocese Fit for Mission programme. We decided that we would engage, as did every other parish in the deanery. Most parishes including ourselves had some concerns which we can work together to address over the next couple of years before the scheme is fully implemented.

We ended 2023 looking forward to 2024 and the imminent arrival of Rev Tabitha to start a new era in the life of our parish, which we hope and pray, will flourish and grow.

Thank you to all who help in any way to keep the parish running. We really do need all the help we can get. The Parish will not survive without it. To end on a cautionary note: look at what happened at Cinnamon Brow. Peter Dibben/Brian Bradley

Fabric Report

During the last 12 months, work was started on painting the hallway, draught proofing the roof lights, Sacristy, Vicars Vestry with the Choir Vestry to be completed Spring 2024.

We started to paint the rear areas of the church and completed the corridor, sacristy and vicar's vestry. Other repairs included repairing a manhole cover, dealing with a fallen tree, and replacing some light fittings in the lady chapel. Routine maintenance included cleaning gutters and other "gardening" tasks. A new smart electricity meter was supposed to be fitted in the church but was delayed until Jan 2024.

The trees in memorial garden, following a severe Autumn storm, and the diseased silver Birch tree, which was blown over, were taken down. The wood was cut into manageable pieces by a kind neighbour, with some parts of the trunk left and the remainder being removed with Brian's trailer and taken to the recycling centre. The remainder of the tree was used to create a bug hotel and the restoration of the garden has begun. However, the remaining large conifer tree which was also damaged in the same storm needs removing with an approximate cost of £150 - £200. The Mission and grounds were tidied last year during the two-week Easter holidays. A skip was hired and it was filled with unwanted broken equipment. The inside of the mission was cleaned but it is still currently costing a lot of money to maintain e.g. heating boiler, water boiler, stove, and exterior woodwork, which requires replacing, some as a matter of urgency. The Mission has received repairs to the water heater and the heating boiler in addition to the usual summer tidy-up during the pre-school holiday.

We would like to express gratitude to the volunteer cleaners who maintain it on a weekly basis. Work is continuing to reinstate the car park border and the entrance was repaired. In addition to all of this the damaged man hole was repaired and the ongoing weekly maintenance continued. No significant repairs have been carried out at the Transfiguration but the recommendations from the recent quinquennial inspection need to be looked at.

Brian Bradley/Peter Dibben Church Wardens.

Deanery Synod

The Deanery Synod met three times during 2023 including one meeting held at the Ascension. The main topics were how to allocate the Deanery Parish Share between the parishes and the Fit for Mission programme. The Deanery organised a Fit for Mission Fair where we could go for information. After each Parish decided to embark on the Fit for Mission journey the final meeting of the year endorsed this decision and started to appoint the leaders for the teams to guide the process. Peter Dibben.

Safeguarding

During 2023, the PCC continued to implement the national Church of England Safeguarding Policy, as outlined in the Parish Safeguarding Handbook. Policy statements are on display inside The Church of the Ascension, The Mission Hall, and The Church of the Transfiguration. The PCC will formally review this policy, and any amendments proposed by The Church of England, at their meetings. Fortunately, there have been no reported safeguarding incidents in the last twelve months. However, there has been a requirement for renewal of DBS checks (the diocese insist on a three yearly renewal rotation) along with new DBS applications, these being mainly for the youth club. The diocese insist that all PCC members undergo basic safeguarding instruction (by an online course) and this is currently in progress. The Churchwardens are required to undergo some additional instruction, and this too is in progress. As Safeguarding officer, I have completed four training courses since January of this year. Safeguarding within the Church of England is an ever-evolving topic, and now we are out of the interregnum period, I hope to work with Rev. Tabitha to establish a procedure which will suit both the needs of our church and the requirements of the diocese. Duncan Howarth

PCC Review of the year 2023

Services and Worship

To comply with the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit and, in particular, the specific guidance to charities concerned with the advancement of religion, during 2023 regular public worship was open to all and the provision of sacred space and support for personal prayer and contemplation. Our PCC has continued to have regular meetings in the interregnum and have expressed how extremely grateful we are to all our visiting priests who have ensured that we have not had a Sunday without cover. We are grateful to Rev. Neil Shaw and Rev. Andrew Heatherington for their continued commitment to delivering our Sunday services and Rev Nigel for allowing the Wednesday service to continue. Rev Audrey had agreed to take over much of the work done at Birchwood on the Joshua Project during the year while we still have funding. Our grateful thanks go to Helen Bennet, the Community Support Worker who had agreed to continue as a volunteer. The taking part in religious worship, within a child friendly form, for pupils in Birchwood C of E Primary School, and Woolston C of E Primary School, was made available at The Vine and the Messy Church. Throughout the year all services and church events were outlined, discussed and planned in detail at the PCC meetings. At the PCC meetings, Stuart Walsh was thanked for organising and ensuring that vicars were able to officiate weekly and readings were given by members of the congregation. The wardens were also thanked for their efforts which have ensured the smooth running of our services throughout the interregnum.

Services during 2023 during the inter-regnum

Church of the Ascension; Weekly Holy Communion; Wednesday and Sunday

Church of Transfiguration; Evening service; Sunday; The Table

Annual services which took place during 2023

Ash Wednesday 22nd February Holy Week April 2nd- 9th April

Ascension 18th May Transfiguration (Birchwood) 6th, August

Harvest; October 1st Remembrance Sun 12th November

Toy Service Sun 10th Dec Nativity Sun 17th Dec / Carols Sun 17th Dec,

Christingle Sun 24th Dec. Midnight mass (Woolston)

Christmas Day Mon 25th (Birchwood)

There were additional services;

The Vine (Organised by Amanda Taylor each month on Sundays at 3pm for younger worshippers and families)

Messy church provided for children and families with prayer, activities and refreshments (monthly at Birchwood School)

The Table (Sunday evening service at The Church of the Transfiguration)

Baptisms, confirmations (with the Bishop of Warrington officiating) weddings and funerals took place throughout the year

The Reader Service at Liverpool Cathedral (Amanda Taylor was licensed as a reader on September 30th).

Women's Day of Prayer/Padgate Walking Day took place and refreshments were provided by our church.

Decisions;

Any changes to the planned services and their format were to be left until the appointment of our new vicar

Finance. (See more detailed report provided by Stuart Robinson)

From January 2023 until April, John Bailey was the Financial Secretary for our Parish within the PCC, however, when he retired after many years of service, Stuart Robinson took on this important role. John was formerly thanked by the PCC and members of the parish for all his hard work and Stuart has stated in the initial meetings how grateful he has been for the guidance and support which has been provided by John. This has enabled, during the months since April, a smoother transmission of responsibilities, although changing the mandate proved challenging.

One of the main issues facing our parish has been the need to increase our income so that the payments of our outgoings can be met. At each PCC meeting, Stuart has provided and explained a detailed outline of the financial status of our parish so that any issues could be openly discussed. The most regular problems have been maintaining the regular payments of the Parish Share, paying for the maintenance and running of the buildings and facilities, and the fuel and water costs. Much of the income has been provided by the Parish Scheme, church collections, rent from the mission, funding and contributions from social functions and the monthly Birchwood quiz.

Decision

To increase rental income

To change the utility provider

To promote more Parish Giving and church contributions

Fit For Mission

Throughout the church year, the PCC has been discussing the positives and negatives involved in adopting the FFM initiative. The PCC and all members of our parish have had access to detailed information and presentations provided from the Liverpool Diocese and personally by Harriet Roberts. On September 27th, PCC members attended an open meeting, presented by Andrew Thurston, with other churches, within the Warrington Deanery, concerning the implications of belonging to the FFM'S financial system. A specific PCC meeting was arranged for a full discussion concerned with making the final decision for our parish which was needed by the 24th November. The PCC members examined how Fit for Mission was a new way of organising and working within the diocese of Liverpool, and discussed how these changes, over a 2-year period, would affect our churches at Woolston and Birchwood. The main concern was that our parish would lose its control over its finances and decision making. Other more positive points made were that FFM would enable growth in church attendance as at present the challenge was the decreasing numbers of worshippers, higher levels of bureaucracy and the cost of the upkeep of buildings. We discussed how it would be a Bigger Church for a Bigger Difference, when our parish joined together with other parishes in the deanery to form one large parish, there would be access to further combined use of resources, and expertise and support for the clergy. Although the FFM placed much emphasis on the priorities of introducing more people to Jesus, developing Discipleship and Christian leaders and working for justice for all there were some members of the PCC who felt that the priority was to streamline the diocese for economic reasons.

Decision

To accept that our parish would become part of the FFM initiative and keep updated on the changes and outcomes of FFM processes.

Health and Safety

Julie Clegg was appointed as Health and Safety Representative and has introduced an updated Health and Safety Policy to the PCC members with the support of a detailed booklet, outlining the important guidelines we need to promote and ensure are implemented by everyone involved in both churches and the mission. Julie has emphasized the need to be aware of the health and safety issues involved in all aspects of the parish and to ensure that individuals understand their specific responsibilities. It has been suggested at that we needed to stipulate to organisations, such as the nursery and organisations, using the Mission, that the standards of hygiene and cleanliness need to be maintained and safety regulations followed.

Decision

To ensure that all necessary parties have access to the updated Health and Safety Policy that individuals understand their roles and responsibilities

To review all Risk Assessments and further provide further documentation where necessary

To promote the implementation of an On-line Safeguarding Policy

Deanery Synod There had been 3 meetings during the year. Peter Dibben has attended them and reported to the PCC and outlined their main concerns to the PCC. The Synod discussed in depth the implications of the FFM initiative and there was an agreement to accept the changes and responsibilities involved as the majority of representatives felt that there would be advantages for taking this step in the future. The PCC was glad to know that for this coming year there will be no increase in the Parish Share.

Decision

To have further representation at the coming meetings so that we are fully informed about the changes involved in the FFM transmission within the Deanery Synod.

Social Activities and Fund Raising. (Please see further report from Barbara England)

Members of the PCC and also the Social Activities Committee have discussed and organised many social events throughout the year which have provided fellowship, joy and much needed funds for the parish. There were special evenings celebrating events, such as the Coronation and a Murder Mystery. There were 2 enjoyable afternoons for the whole community in the Summer Fair and November Mini Market which raised the most funds for the parish. The PCC were informed of all the coffee and tea afternoons and the members of the Social Committee thanked for all their hard work. The PCC recognised the good work and value of our Youth Club, which has been organised and provided for 9 to 13 year olds every week in the Mission on Mondays by Hilda Taylor and a team of volunteers. (See Report for further details)

Birchwood Community . (See Parish Report for further details)

As a member of the PCC, Cheryl Simpson, explained how the monthly quiz (except August) has been organised and run with the help of volunteers on the first Saturday of each month, providing much entertainment and friendship for the wider communities of Woolston and Birchwood and much needed funds for our parish. Also, at Birchwood she with other members of the PCC have been running The Thursday Café, providing companionship and refreshments for anyone in the community each week. It has only been closed during the school holidays while activities by Warrington Youth Zone have taken place

Churches Together

During the last year Yvonne Woolley has not been present at any Churches Together meetings, due to circumstances beyond her control, whilst Julie Clegg has attended more of the meetings, and reported events and outcomes back to the PCC. Joint services and events have included Women's World Day of Prayer in March 2023, Liverpool's Pentecost Walk of Witness along Hope Street and the two Cathedrals in May 2023, and Padgate & Woolston Walking Day in June.

Decisions

To continue to work closely with churches of other faiths, and our own, especially during the FFM transition period.

To continue to take part in the joint services and events planned for 2024.

Safeguarding

During the year, the PCC continued to refer to the national Church of England Safeguarding Policy within the Parish Safeguarding Handbook, ensuring that policy statements are on display inside The Church of the Ascension, The Mission Hall, and The Church of the Transfiguration. Duncan, as our Safeguarding Officer had given advice to the PCC and has updated the PCC's safeguarding needs, although no issues have been reported to him. All members of the PCC have been DBS checked and training has been given concerning Safeguarding to Duncan, Peter Dibben and Brian Bradley

Decisions; To ensure that all members of the PCC are trained and achieve the certification

Fabric Report (Please see further report Brian Bradley)

The PCC was informed throughout the year about all the work needed to improve and maintain the upkeep of the two churches and the Mission. Tom Beesley was contacted for the

- [Registered Charity 1185707](#)

Quinquennial inspections and he has asked to meet with the churchwardens to discuss plans for carrying out this work, as the terriers needed updating for both churches. Concerns have been expressed about the needs of maintaining higher standards of hygiene within the mission and an annual thorough cleaning took place in August. There have been ongoing problems in both churches and the mission, such as the boiler and the cooker in the community kitchen, all of these issues had been addressed by the PCC. The electrical and gas installations have been checked by safe registered engineers. Members of the PCC and the parish had volunteered to redecorate and ensure that the vicarage was ready for occupancy with the additional support of funding and expertise from the diocese. The Net Zero Initiative continues to be an objective in the future for the PCC. Peter Dibben replied to the diocese saying that while we recognise the importance of this, being in the interregnum for over 2 years, has proved problematic to at the moment.

At our meetings, Peter Dibben has thanked everyone who has contributed to the work of the PCC throughout 2023. All PCC members, our church wardens and treasurer have had a heavy workload to keep our churches and mission going and therefore, Peter stated that they deserved recognition. Peter and the whole of the PCC has expressed that every person within our parish, who has contributed so much time, energy, and dedication to maintaining the life, service and worship of our Christian community deserves a great deal of praise and gratitude.

Wendy Kelly (Secretary)

Parish Reports

The Birchwood Community Project Our Community Café has continued to open on Thursdays in school term time. This provides a basic meal for a voluntary donation and the opportunity to collect surplus food gathered from local supermarkets. Alongside this, on every Thursday, the church space is used as a hub to sort and package food for “The Bread and Butter Thing” a charitable organisation which distributes surplus food from factories, farms and supermarkets, across the region. In co-operation with our ecumenical partners and other local organisations we are also able to help some local families through our Food Pantry (mini food bank). This included 47 Christmas parcels. This is all run by volunteers from the local community with minimal church supervision and represents a major part of the Outreach and Social Justice work in our Parish. But don’t take our word for it; Come and See!

The Birchwood Quiz The quiz night at Birchwood has been running since 1986 and, again this year, we still have had a loyal following, some from the early days, but also newcomers. It has been held on the first Saturday of the month, where possible, for eleven months of the year, although we do not have a quiz in August. The attendance is approximately 36 per session.

All of the money raised, over a thousand pounds a year, goes directly to the treasurer each month to support the churches within our parish. The quiz night cost of £4, was raised slightly during the year and includes a raffle and stand-up Bingo during the interval to increase our takings. It is held in the hall at Birchwood C of E Primary School and our aim is, as always, to increase the number of people within the whole parish of Woolston and Birchwood to come and enjoy a night of friendship and fun. Cheryl Simpson

Ladies Group During the year, the Ladies Group has met 10 times, with the average attendance of 20 members. There has been informative and enjoyable presentations from a variety of groups and individuals, such as The Blood Bikers, who depend solely on voluntary contributions for their work transporting medical and emergency supplies and Home Start, who provide practical and emotional support to families throughout the year. Don Billington, a national gardening expert, explained about his lifelong interest in exotic plants with some of his examples on display. Our annual events, such as the Summer Dinner, Christmas Lunch, Quiz with Dave Warburton, and Hot Pot Supper proved to be fun and well attended. At our AGM we enjoyed a free buffet and a presentation by a marathon runner. Throughout the year, we have supported charities in both practical and financial ways, raising over 250 pounds from our entrance fees, and providing toiletries for families in need. A lovely letter and picture were received from Home Start and a certificate from the Blood Bikers, to thank us for our generosity. Our group of women have continued to meet on the first Thursday of the month to share Christian fellowship and friendship.

Wendy Kelly

Singing Nights at the Ascension Throughout our long Interregnum, we were lucky to have Rev Andrew Hetherington as our celebrant on many occasions. He was always accompanied by Margaret who beautifully played our Organ/Piano as musical accompaniment for our hymns.

In June 2023, Margaret agreed to join us at the Ascension on a monthly basis, and so our Singing Group started. We have regular attendance of around 10-20 from our congregation, singing well known and favourite hymns, as well as learning new songs too. Please feel free to join us for an hour or two on the third Monday of each month. £1 per session including refreshments. In our first six months, we raised over £100. Julie Clegg

The Lighthouse I volunteered to take on the magazine a year ago. At the time, I took an opportunity to update the magazine structure and create a magazine with content written by many members of the community, for the community. Some of the new section additions include a puzzles section, a colouring page, and my own column which is for tv, film, book and restaurant recommendations. I have created regular spaces for members of the community to send in pieces written by themselves, and to share something that they have read/listened to. I appreciate when people send things in, as it encourages their own creativity, and brings joy to readers. I would like to propose that we change the magazine from 10 editions a year to 6 - 1 edition covering 2 months. It would be easier to align with the school holidays for printing purposes and I could make the magazine 28 or 32 pages instead of 24 pages each month. Julia Taylor

The Social Committee Our small group of committee members meet regularly to exchange ideas and discuss our next social projects for our parish. During 2023, many social events took place which were supported by members of both churches, our parish and wider community. The members of the Social Committee have planned and organised differing functions to raise funds for our parish, to promote our church fellowship and, more importantly, to bring happiness and fun into our community. Some of the events were; a celebration of the Coronation, a Summer Fair, a Murder Mystery, a Christmas Mini Market, a quiz and several coffee and cake get-togethers and Afternoon Teas. All our events rely on the many volunteers who give their time, contributions, as well as items for the raffles. Over the past year, at least two thousand and five hundred pounds have been raised. We have asked for further ideas from our church members so that attendance to these events may increase in the future. Anita Bradley

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The Vine

During the year 2023 these family services have been based around the ideas of Messy Church and are relaxed, fun and informative. While we see regular families, the attendance numbers have been irregular, with the numbers of children varying each month from 3 to 12. The themes have been mixed between the old and new Testaments and as examples, this year we learned about the creation story, how God provided the Israelites with manna, the prophecy of God building a new city for everybody, being accepted, being humble, and God's forgiveness and blessings. The services begin with the children doing their craft and prayer activities, which have been drawn or written on crosses, leaves, and cardboard people, and these have been sometimes displayed in church. A few of the activities have included making crowns, planting seeds, decorating trinket boxes and decorating photo frames and the ones involving food have proved to be popular, as the children have made sandwiches, decorated buns, made a flower bouquet with chocolate centres, made a burger using biscuits, and trying honey on wafers to represent manna. There was a chance to enjoy some of their refreshments before the lighting of our own Vine candle and a story with an explanation. Also, we continue with prayer, singing, sometimes with actions, and songs, like Our God is a Great Big God, When I Look Up, or I Love You have been very popular. The Christmas Party saw over 20 children – we only just had enough material for the craft activities, which were making Christmas Crackers and Christmas Trees. There were party games of pass-the-parcel, pin the nose on the gnome, and reindeer hoopla. There was also party food and of course birthday cake for Jesus. During the year, I was frequently told how wonderful the services are, but I am not the only person responsible for creating the service, as others have put in a lot of work behind the scenes and on the day, I have had an army of helpers who I am extremely grateful for and would be lost without. My hope for 2024 is that The Vine service will continue to grow from strength to strength, and it would be wonderful to see more people, both young and old joining us. Amanda Taylor

The Wednesday Club

Our Wednesday Club, which meets on the first Wednesday afternoon of the month, began the year of 2023 with talk by a representative from the Body Shop where some of their products were displayed and their uses explained. During the later months we were given an extremely interesting talk by Julie Clegg, about her holidays, and a presentation by the Fire Brigade, from Lymm Fire Station, about their work and important operations. Both Sheila and Stuart Walsh, gave their own amusing versions of their topics, such as “Do you believe in Aliens?” and a very gripping ghost story! Our numbers have grown recently and everyone has enjoyed both the presentations, and the opportunity to chat together during the refreshment break and we hope that this will continue and the number of our members will increase. Barbara England

Our Churches and the Wider Community

Throughout the past year, members of our parish have been involved in providing funds, toiletries, toys, chocolate eggs and selection boxes for those in special need of some support and kindness, especially women and children, who are living under difficult circumstances. Through our giving, families in both Woolston and Birchwood, and wider afield, have been able to enjoy a little more the festivities at Easter and Christmas and have had access to regular help at the Food Bank too. We have provided support for 2 Women's Refuges and a Drop-in Centre where there is much need for our practical donations.

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Within Warrington, we have established a close relationship with Home Start, where families are given guidance, fun times and companionship and help to develop skills and confidence so that homes become places of security and care. Our generosity and Christian fellowship has been greatly appreciated by these charities and they are so grateful for our practical presents but more importantly our gift of kindness. Barbara Laughner

The Youth Club

The Youth Club runs on Monday evenings during term time, and we have 28 children on the register across school years 5 to 8. We have a small team of volunteers who, without them giving up their Monday evenings, we would not be able to open, therefore I need to thank Anthony, Ash, Caz, Di, Gaynor, Gemma, Julia, Justina, Liz, Sally and Sue for all of their support. this year. We need 6 people every week to open and to provide a space for the youngsters and teenagers to meet friends, to join in with craft activities, and play football, just to name but a few of the various activities which we provide.

This year we supported the Church Summer fair running a number of games and stalls, and were able to give a donation to the church of £200. We also purchased a large Gazebo for the event which we donated to the church for future use. In addition we donated £180 towards the costs of the mission for the weeks we opened in 2023.

We are always looking for help and would invite more volunteers to join our team please let me know – No experience necessary! Hilda Taylor

The Joshua Project and Sunday Evening Services at the Transfiguration Church

Originally, the Sunday services took place at 3:30pm but I found this to be unproductive and hardly worth the trouble Paul and I went to for just 3 or 4 people. It was discouraging, and so after prayer and discussion, I approached Peter and Cheryl to ask if we could change the time to 6:30pm instead, this happened last April 2023. This was the right move, and is a much better service with more people turning up each week. I have aimed to make the services both encouraging and informative, having fellowship and opportunity for discussion on the subject I present each week. The topics have varied significantly, but always relevant to the times we live in.

Just recently, we have been looking at evangelism, with short video clips from Ray Comfort, who has a unique style in his approach to talking to people about God, faith, eternity, and heaven and hell. These have been very well received, and have been encouraging people to become open and bold in sharing the Gospel. Each week, I give opportunity for people to share their thoughts on each topic I present, but never pressure anyone to speak, it is always done in an attitude of respect and inclusion, and learning from each other. It has been encouraging to me that the response has been as good as it is, and hopefully it will continue to develop and grow as a church. Both Paul and myself have been greatly encouraged by the church members, and can see God at work in this church. Thank you to everyone who has supported the services 'And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encourage one another especially as we see the Day drawing near' (Hebrews 10:25)

With Tabitha now on board, the plan is that we will work together, and bring new thoughts and ideas to the services. Audrey Holgate

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Reserve's policy

It is PCC policy to try to maintain a balance on unrestricted funds which equates to at least three months unrestricted payments. This is equivalent to approx. £16,800 (Including full Parish Share) and is intended to help smooth out fluctuations in cash flow and to meet emergencies.

The bank balances of £13,646 held on unrestricted funds at the year end, together with the amounts payable to of £4,230 and by £8,900 amounted to £8,976 being 53% of that target. The PCC's is aware that we need to do more to increase our giving to improve this situation and protect our long-term viability.

The balances of £26,633 in the Fabric and Gorton restricted funds are retained principally towards meeting the cost of major repairs to fabric of the church, its organ, and the mission hall. It is our policy to invest a substantial element of these fund balances with the CCLA Church of England Deposit Fund, and Barclays Deposit Accounts, currently amounting to £12,377 (46%) and the remainder with our principal bankers Barclays Bank Plc.

Other specific restricted fund balances amounting to £10,877 relate to Birchwood Community Projects.

In addition, the PCC can take some comfort from the fact that we own the Church (Mission) Hall which has a significant value.

Registered Charity No 1185707

Treasurer's Report for the year ended 31st December 2023

Thanks

I would like to begin by acknowledging the very high quality financial reporting and accounting work carried out over a long period of time by my predecessor, John Bailey. John has been of huge help in the handover of treasurer duties and continues to have a significant financial role in the monitoring of the Parish Giving Scheme and in processing claims for Gift Aid tax.

I would also like to thank Peter Dibben who carried out the arduous task of recording the visits of visiting priests and completing the claim for sequestration reimbursement. Peter has also carried out a lot of work on the accounts of the Birchwood café which is explained further below.

Both the claim for Gift Aid tax prepared by John and the sequestration claim for reimbursement of priest fees prepared by Peter, and which are shown in the Statement of Assets as debtors, have recently been paid into the church's bank account.

I would also like to thank everyone who has made a contribution to the financial wellbeing of the Parish, whether the contributions are overtly financial through giving or fundraising or in the shape of time and effort. All are much appreciated.

The accounts

The movement on each fund is summarised on page 1 and the fund details supporting the Summary are shown on pages 2 to 5. The Statement of Assets on Page 6 shows both the monetary assets and material or significant debtors and creditors as well as the fixed assets owned by the Parish. Behind the accounts are some explanatory notes giving a further breakdown of some of the significant items in the accounts. My comments on each fund are as follows:

General Fund (page 2)

The General Fund shows a surplus for the year of £4846 but only 10 out of 12 instalments of Parish Share were paid during the year. The November and December instalments of Parish Share were paid in January and March 2024 respectively and these instalments are shown in the Statement of Assets as a creditor.

As Treasurer I need to monitor the General Fund balance closely to ensure that it does not become negative, as this would mean that we were taking money from the restricted funds. The balance on General Fund is currently inadequate for the church's needs.

Fabric and Gorton Funds (page 3)

The main item charged to the Fabric Fund was the purchase of new chairs for the Mission Hall. There has been no movement on the Gorton Fund other than the receipt of CCLA bank interest.

Joshua fund (page 4)

The main item charged to this fund was the salary of the congregation leader at Birchwood. It is expected that the balance on this fund will reduce to zero by October 2024 when the financial future of this project will be reviewed.

Birchwood Community Project (page 4)

As a result of time constraints only the first 6 months receipts and payments are included in the main church accounts. A supplementary sheet has therefore been prepared to show the full year's receipts and payments which relate mainly to the lunch club café. This has generated a surplus of £239.50 held in cash at the year end. Of this £219 has since been expended in 2024 on a new fridge for the café. The other main activity of this project, the distribution of free food parcels, is largely self-financing. The project has received a further grant of £400 from the Bread and Butter Thing Charity in 2024.

The payment of rent charged by Birchwood Primary School for use of the Community Office is currently being withheld pending clarification of the costs attributable to use of the facilities at 'The Mount' complex by both The Church of The Transfiguration and The Birchwood Community Project.

Organ and John Hicks Funds (page 5)

The organ fund has been reduced to zero. Future organ repairs will be charged to the Fabric Fund. There has been no movement on the John Hicks fund.

Statement of Assets and Liabilities (page 6)

The other assets represent our Mission Hall building and its contents which are shown at the 2018 valuation provided by the insurance company. A Mission Hall building in Penketh similar to ours which was previously used as a day nursery is on the market for \$425,000. Our 2 church buildings and our Mission Hall are included within a single insurance policy which provides for a maximum loss of £3.3m for each building. The 2 church buildings are not shown as assets because they are not owned by the PCC.

Stuart Robinson 3.5.2024

Registered Charity No 1185707



Statement of Accounting Policies used in the Financial Statements for the year ending 31st December 2023

The Financial Statements of the PCC have been prepared in accordance with the Church Accounting Rules, using the Receipts and Payments Basis.

The Fund Summary and fund accounts on pages 1 to 5 include only completed cash transactions. The Statement of Assets on page 6 includes monetary assets, material or significant debtors and creditors, and other assets comprising Fixed Assets owned by the PCC.

Funds

General funds are funds held by the PCC that are not subject to any special restrictions regarding their use and are available for application to the general purposes of the PCC. These include funds designated for a particular purpose by the PCC.

The purpose of any restricted funds is noted in the Financial Statements.

The financial statements include monetary transactions assets and liabilities for which the PCC can be held responsible. The statement of assets also includes money held on behalf of other organisations not part of the Church but having a connection with it. (Agency balances).

Statement of Assets and Liabilities

The following assets are recognised but not necessarily valued in the Statement of Assets and Liabilities:

- Movable church furnishings held by the churchwardens on special trust for the PCC and which require a faculty for disposal.
- Land and Buildings held on behalf of the PCC.
- Other fixtures, fittings and office equipment where the PCC is free to dispose of such assets without faculty and where the original cost exceeded £1000.
- Any investments held beneficially by the PCC.

The following assets are recognised and a monetary value given as part of the description in the Statement of Assets and Liabilities:

- Amounts owing from HMRC where a formal claim has been made.
- Any other amounts owing to the PCC including church hall lettings and insurance claims.
- Legacies where formal notification of entitlement and amount has been received by the PCC at 31st December.
- Closing cash and bank balances as shown in the Receipts and Payments accounts.

The following liabilities are recognised in the Statement of Assets and Liabilities:

- Any loans or overdrafts advanced to the PCC
- Any arrears of Diocesan Parish Share.
- Material creditors for goods and services where the supply has been received and invoiced by 31st December.

Registered Charity No 1185707

The United Parish of **BIRCHWOOD AND WOOLSTON**

The Churches of the Transfiguration & the Ascension

Summary - All Funds - Year to 31 Dec 23

		<u>Unrestricted</u>	<u>Restricted</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Total</u>
		£	£	£	£
				<u>2023</u>	<u>2022</u>
Receipts					
Parish	General	71,986		71,986	66,906
Ascension	Fabric		526	526	2,841
Ascension	Gorton		294	294	119
Ascension	Heritage 50		0	0	0
Ascension	Organ		0	0	0
Transfiguration	Joshua Project		115	115	8,000
Transfiguration	Community Project		168	168	15,340
Transfiguration	John Hicks		0	0	0
		<u>71,986</u>	<u>1,103</u>	<u>73,089</u>	<u>93,206</u>
Payments					
Parish	General	67,140		67,140	77,303
Ascension	Fabric		3,190	3,190	744
Ascension	Gorton		0	0	0
Ascension	Heritage 50		0	0	0
Ascension	Organ		192	192	252
Transfiguration	Joshua Project		4,587	4,587	1,450
Transfiguration	Community Project		723	723	12,049
Transfiguration	John Hicks		0	0	0
		<u>67,140</u>	<u>8,692</u>	<u>75,832</u>	<u>91,798</u>
Transfers					
Ascension	Gorton - from Heritage 50		0	0	1,804
Ascension	Heritage 50 - to Gorton		0	0	(1,804)
		<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Surplus (Deficit)					
Parish	General	4,846		4,846	(10,397)
Ascension	Fabric		(2,664)	(2,664)	2,097
Ascension	Gorton		294	294	1,923
Ascension	Heritage 50		0	0	(1,804)
Ascension	Organ		(192)	(192)	(252)
Transfiguration	Joshua Project		(4,472)	(4,472)	6,550
Transfiguration	Community Project		(555)	(555)	3,291
Transfiguration	John Hicks		0	0	0
		<u>4,846</u>	<u>(7,589)</u>	<u>(2,743)</u>	<u>1,408</u>
Opening Bank Balances					
Parish	General	2,998		2,998	13,395
Ascension	Fabric		18,028	18,028	15,931
Ascension	Gorton		10,975	10,975	9,052
Ascension	Heritage 50		0	0	1,804
Ascension	Organ		192	192	444
Transfiguration	Joshua Project		7,918	7,918	1,368
Transfiguration	Community Project		8,343	8,343	5,052
Transfiguration	John Hicks		5,802	5,802	5,802
		<u>2,998</u>	<u>51,258</u>	<u>54,256</u>	<u>52,848</u>
Closing Bank Balances					
Parish	General	7,844		7,844	2,998
Ascension	Fabric		15,364	15,364	18,028
Ascension	Gorton		11,269	11,269	10,975
Ascension	Heritage 50		0	0	0
Ascension	Organ		0	0	192
Transfiguration	Joshua Project		3,446	3,446	7,918
Transfiguration	Birchwood Community Project		7,788	7,788	8,343
Transfiguration	John Hicks		5,802	5,802	5,802
		<u>7,844</u>	<u>43,669</u>	<u>51,513</u>	<u>54,256</u>

**** Note - John Hicks Fund is Designated**

General Fund - Receipts & Payments Account - Unrestricted

Year -->

2023

2022

Receipts

Note

Incoming resources from donors

Regular Planned Giving

Tax efficient planned giving	1	28,075		27,805
Income Tax Recovered	2	8,351		8,044
Other Regular Giving	3	2,573		2,763
Collections of loose cash at services	4	4,143		4,006

Occasional Giving

Donations		1,288		1,539
			44,430	44,157

Non Recurring Grants

Diocese of Liverpool - Covid Support			615	2,000
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Othe incoming resources

Council tax and utility refunds			142	0
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Incoming resources from operating activities

Net Interregnum reimbursements	5	1,865	(1,103)	(1,103)
			1,865	

Activities for generating funds

Fund Raising	6	5,010	4,609	
Hire of Church Hall		19,844	17,243	
Magazine advertising		80	0	21,852

Total Receipts

£71,986 **£66,906**

Payments

Costs of activities for generating funds

Magazine		480	440	
Fund Raising Costs		515	568	
Church Hall Running Expenses	7	9,339	13,507	
			10,334	14,515

Donations to Charities

Missionary Giving		0	75	
Christian Overseas Relief and Development Agencies		109	100	
Home Missions		0	325	
Secular Charities		50	0	
			159	500

Activities directly relating to the work of the Church

Cost of parish ministry

Diocesan Parish Share		44,503	49,692	
Parsonage House		115	2,733	

Church Running Expenses

Heat, Light, Insurances etc	8	9,105	6,641	
Maintenance		795	353	
Upkeep of Services		1,216	1,627	

Support and training costs

Support costs		760	1,123	
			56,494	62,169

Church Management and Administration

Printing and Stationery		20	0	
Bank & Card Charges		10	20	
Miscellaneous		123	99	
			153	119

Total Payments

£67,140 **£77,303**

Excess of Receipts over (Payments)

4,846 **(10,397)**

Bank Balances

Barclays Bank - current account at 1 January 2023		2,998		13,395
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Barclays Bank - current account at 31 December 2023		£7,844		£2,998
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The United Parish of
BIRCHWOOD AND WOOLSTON
 The Churches of the Transfiguration & the Ascension

Fabric Fund - Restricted
Receipts & Payments

	2023		2022	
	£	£	£	£
Receipts				
Incoming resources from donors - Occasional Giving				
Restricted Donations:				
In Memorial - General	0		65	
In Memorial - Gift Aid	120		540	
Legacy	0		2,000	
Donations	95		40	
Donations - Gift Aid	0		0	
Envelopes - General	0		0	
General donations Gift Aid	260		0	
		475		2,645
Gift Aid - Tax Refunds		0		64
Activities for generating funds				
Cake Raffles	0		0	
Remembrance Book	25		130	
Fund Raising	0		0	
		25		130
Income from Investments				
Bank Interest		26		2
Total Receipts		526		2,841
Payments				
Activities directly relating to the work of the Church				
Church Hall - New Chairs	2,011		0	
Church - Chalice Repairs	0		621	
Inscribing Remembrance Book	92		123	
Church Hall - new water heater	330			
Other Church Hall maintenance costs	757	3,190		744
Excess of Receipts over Payments		(2,664)		2,097
Bank Balances				
Barclays Bank current / deposit accounts at 1 January 2023		18,028		15,931
Barclays Bank current account at 31 December 2023	12,452		15,442	
Barclays Bank deposit accounts at 31 December 2023	2,912		2,586	
Barclays Bank current / deposit accounts at 31 December 2023		£15,364		£18,028

This fund is restricted to the maintenance of the Fabric & Contents of Woolston Church Buildings.

Gorton Memorial Fund - Restricted

	2023		2022	
	£	£	£	£
Receipts				
Incoming resources from donors				
Restricted Donations:				
Donations		0		0
Income from Investments				
Interest - CCLA		294		119
Total Receipts		294		119
Transfers				
Activities directly relating to the work of the Church				
Transfer back from Ascension Heritage 50 Fund	0	0	1,804	1,804
Excess of Receipts over Payments		294		1,923
Bank Balances				
CCLA Bank deposit accounts at 1 January 2023		10,975		9,052
Barclays Bank current account at 31 December 2023	1,804		1,804	
CCLA Bank deposit accounts at 31 December 2023	9,465		9,171	
Bank accounts at 31 December 2023		£11,269		£10,975

This fund is restricted to the maintenance of the Fabric of Church Buildings & Contents in Woolston and certain other costs as detailed in the original Trust deed

Financial Statements for the year ended 31st December 2023

Birchwood - Joshua Project - Restricted		2023		2022	
Receipts & Payments Account		£	£	£	£
Receipts					
Incoming resources from donors - Occasional Giving					
Restricted Donations:					
LBDF - Grant - Birchwood Projects		0		8,000	
Loose cash collections		115	115		8,000
Total Receipts			115		8,000
Payments					
Activities directly relating to the work of the Church					
Joshua Centre:					
Salaries & National Insurance	3,973			661	
Payrol & Admin Costs	257			44	
Maintenance	142			0	
Other Costs	0			532	
Messy Church	153			197	
Activity Costs	62			16	
			4,587		1,450
Excess of Receipts over Payments			(4,472)		6,550
Bank Balances					
Barclays Bank current account at 1 January 2023			7,918		1,368
Barclays Bank current account at 31 December 2023			£3,446		£7,918

This fund is restricted for the development of a new congregation in Birchwood. It has been provided by the Diocese of Liverpool through their Joshua Centre project, which is funded by the Church of England Strategic Development Fund. The funding is provided on a reducing scale over 6 years, until October 2024 and in the early years this enabled us to employ a congregational leader for one day per week; this ended in July 2021 but a new appointment was made in November 2022. Final grant monies to take us to the end of the project were received in the current year.

Birchwood - Community Project - Restricted		2023		2022	
Receipts & Payments Account		£	£	£	£
Receipts					
Incoming resources from donors - Occasional Giving					
Restricted Donations:					
Donations (Lyr inc repayment of £1,000 Covid donation)	0			570	
Deanery - Grant - Community Worker	0			13,694	
Food Parcel Grants	0			250	
Lunch Club Donations	168			826	
			168		15,340
Total Receipts			168		15,340
Payments					
Activities directly relating to the work of the Church					
Christian Community Worker:					
Salaries, National Insurance & Pensions	0			7,474	
Payrol & Admin Costs	0			143	
Office Rent	360			1,440	
Office Costs	0			163	
Travel Costs	0			39	
Training	0			484	
Mobile Phone	71			339	
Food Parcels	0			320	
Other Neighbourly items	0			39	
Lunch Club - Running Costs	303			1,529	
Activity Costs	0			0	
Other Costs	(11)			79	
			723		12,049
Excess of Receipts over Payments			(555)		3,291
Bank Balances					
Barclays Bank current account at 1 January 2023			8,343		5,052
Barclays Bank current account at 31 December 2023			£7,788		£8,343

This fund is restricted for the employment of a Christian Community Development Worker and associated works to serve the Birchwood part of our parish. The majority of the funding is provided by the Deanery Mission and Growth Fund. Our Community worker retired in August 2022 and the project is currently staffed by volunteers.

The above Projects work in tandem and are known collectively as 'The Table' Oakwood

Financial Statements for the year ended 31st December 2023

Organ Fund - Restricted Receipts & Payments Account	<u>2023</u>		<u>2022</u>	
	£	£	£	£
Receipts				
Incoming resources from donors - Occasional Giving				
Restricted Donations				
Maintenance Fees from Funerals	0	0	0	0
Income from Investments				
Bank Interest		0		0
		0		0
Payments				
Activities directly relating to the work of the Church				
Repairs to Organ	192	192	252	252
Excess of (Payments) over Receipts		(192)		(252)
Bank Balances				
Barclays Bank current account at 1 January 2023		192		444
Barclays Bank current account at 31 December 2023		£0		£192

This fund is restricted to the maintenance and renewal of the Church Organ

Birchwood - John Hicks - Designated Receipts & Payments Account	<u>2023</u>		<u>2022</u>	
	£	£	£	£
Receipts				
Incoming resources from donors - Occasional Giving				
Restricted Donations:				
Grants & Donations towards Replacement Ceiling				
Donations	0	0	0	0
Total Receipts		0		0
Payments				
Activities directly relating to the work of the Church				
Chairs for Birchwood C of E School	0	0	0	0
		0		0
Excess of Receipts over Payments		0		0
Bank Balances				
Barclays Bank current account at 1 January 2023		5,802		5,802
Barclays Bank current account at 31 December 2023		£5,802		£5,802

This fund is designated for the maintenance of the Fabric of the Church & associated buildings in Birchwood

Statement of Assets and Liabilities at 31 December 2023

	General Fund Unrestricted £	Fabric Fund Restricted £	Gorton Fund Restricted £	Birchwood Projects Restricted £	John Hicks Fund Designated £	Agency balances	Totals	
							2023 £	2022 £
Monetary Assets								
Bank Accounts - Current - Barclays	7,844	12,452	1,804	11,234	5,802	742	39,878	42,499
Bank Accounts - Deposit - Barclays		2,912					2,912	2,586
Bank Accounts - Deposit - CCLA			9,465				9,465	9,171
Total Bank	7,844	15,364	11,269	11,234	5,802	742	52,255	54,256
Debtors -								
Gift Aid Tax Refunds	1,695						1,695	1,934
Interegnum Fees reclaimable	2,535						2,535	3,184
Other							0	1,395
Total Debtors	4,230	0	0	0	0		4,230	6,513
Other Assets								
Church Hall (Mission) - Building **	540,000						540,000	540,000
Church Hall (Mission) - Contents **	15,000						15,000	15,000
Total Other	555,000	0	0	0	0		555,000	555,000
.** per Insurance Valuation Sept 5 2018								
Total Assets	567,074	15,364	11,269	11,234	5,802	742	611,485	615,769
Liabilities								
Fabric & Buildings	0						0	0
Other Creditors	8,900			361		742	10,003	646
Total Liabilities	8,900	0	0	361	0	742	10,003	646
Net Assets								
Restricted / Designated	555,000	15,364	11,269	10,873	5,802	0	598,308	606,258
Unrestricted	3,174	0	0	0	0	0	3,174	8,865
Total	£558,174	£15,364	£11,269	£10,873	£5,802	£0	£601,482	£615,123

Notes to the accounts for the year ended 31st December 2023

	2023	2022
	£	£
1 Tax efficient planned giving-gift aided		
Envelopes	1,225	1,166
Direct payments to Bank	1,218	1,418
Parish Giving Scheme	25,632	25,221
	28,075	27,805
2 Tax Refunds		
Envelopes, Direct to Bank and Donations re Prior Financial Year	941	1,152
Transfer to other funds re restricted donations	-	(64)
Gift Aid Small Donations Scheme re Prior Financial Year	1,002	744
Diocese Admin fee		(94)
Parish Giving Scheme - Current Financial Year	6,408	6,306
	8,351	8,044
3 Other Regular Giving		
Envelopes	-	368
Direct to Bank	300	540
Parish Giving Scheme	2,273	1,855
	2,573	2,763
4 Collections of Loose cash at services		
Collections	2,205	2,070
Collections via Sumup card machine	1,817	1,759
Donations towards charities and missions	121	177
	4,143	4,006
5 Net Interregnum Reimbursements		
Fees PCC element	651	937
Interregnum fees set off against Diocesan element	2,975	928
Fees for Banns and other certificates	67	286
Interregnum fees paid	(1,828)	(3,254)
	1,865	(1,103)
6 Fundraising		
Receipts		
Christmas Market	1,819	1,023
Sunday morning tea and coffee	137	194
Social Committee	1,481	1,848
Birchwood quiz	1,573	1,544
	5,010	4,609
Payments		
Social committee	-	80
Birchwood quiz	515	488
	515	568
Net receipts	4,495	4,041
7 Mission Hall running expenses		
Electricity	2,743	3,467
Gas	2,410	3,103
Water	2,630	1,607
Insurance	452	1,349
Maintenance	80	1,636
Cleaning wages	411	1,083
Payroll costs	44	275
Cleaning materials	96	483
Refuse collection	473	504
	9,339	13,507
8 Church running expenses		
Electricity	2,834	468
Gas	3,608	3,430
Water	201	444
Internet	721	830
Insurance Ascension	1,406	776
Insurance Transfiguration	164	492
Cleaning	171	201
	9,105	6,641



Birchwood café accounts summary 2023

Receipts		£
	Café donations	561.16
	Other donations	248.63
	Raffle	30.00
	Total receipts	839.79
	Less accounted for in church 2023	-£168.00
	Adjusted receipts	671.79
Payments		
	Food costs	705.32
	Printer ink	29.97
	Total payments	735.29
	Less accounted for in church 2023	-303.00
	Adjusted payments	432.29
	Surplus (cash in hand at 31.12.23)	£239.50

£219 Of this spent in 2024 on new fidge

Not Included in Review by Independent Examiner.

General Fund Budget 2024

INCOME

Parish Gving Scheme and PGS Gift Aid tax	£34,532
Mission Hall Hire	£18,508
Fundraising	£5,000
Plate and Envelopes	£3,580
Sequestration reimbursement	£2,535
Sumup card machine	£2,056
Other Gift Aid tax	£1,794
Other direct to bank giving	£1,468
Donations	£1,304
Funerals and Banns	£915

Total Budgeted Income	£71,692
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EXPENDITURE RECURRING

Parish share	£53,404
Mission Hall gas	£2,988
Insurance	£2,776
Church gas	£2,296
Mission Hall water	£1,844
Vicarage Council tax	£1,600
Mission Hall electricity	£1,556
Internet and Mobile	£792
Church electricity	£744
Vicarage water	£700
Mission Hall trade waste	£564
Magazine printing	£480
Church water	£300
Fire extinguisher maintenance	£240

EXPENDITURE MISCELLANEOUS

Church supplies	£1,000
CCLI License	£500
Vicar's expenses	£500
Sundry church and mission maintenance	£500
Warrington Brass for walking day	£375
Bi-annual alarm maintenance	£312
Photocopying and Stationery	£300
Miscellaneous expenditure	£250
Vine expenses	£100

Total budgeted expenditure	£74,121
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Budgeted deficit	(2,429)
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Opening General Fund cash balance	£7,844
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Projected General Fund balance at 31.12 24	£5,415
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Less arrears of Parish share payable	(8,900)
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Projected adverse balance on General Fund	(3,485)
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Not Included in Review by Independent Examiner.

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the Parochial Church Council (PCC) of the United Parish of Birchwood and Woolston, in the Diocese of Liverpool, on the accounts for the year ended 31 December, 2023, as set out in its Annual Report and Accounts.

Respective responsibilities of Trustees and Examiner

The PCC is responsible for the preparation of the accounts. It considers that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 (the Charities Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act,
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act), and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's statement

My examination was carried out in accordance with general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the PCC and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from the PCC concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair' view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent Examiner's statement

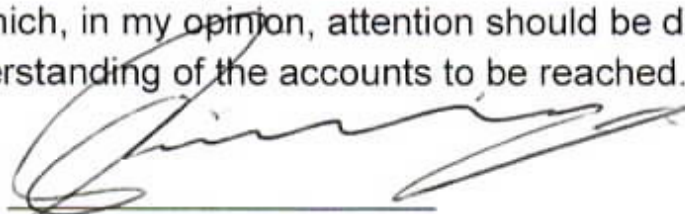
In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

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

- to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act;
- to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act have not been met; or

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

Signed:



Date: 2 May 2024

Independent Examiner's Name
Independent Examiner's Address

Bob Timmis
73 Lovely Lane, Warrington WA5 1TY