

**The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of St Oswald, Durham -
Registered Charity Number 1196296**

**Independent Examiner's report on the accounts for the year ended 31st December
2024**

This report on the accounts of the PCC for the year ended 31 December 2024, which are set out on the attached pages, is in respect of an examination carried out under Regulation 3(3) of the Church Accounting Regulations 1997 and section 145 of the Charities Act 2011.

Respective Responsibilities of Trustees and Examiner

As the members of the PCC you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('The Act').

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

Basis of this Report

My examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the PCC and a comparison of the accounts with those records. It also includes considering any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seeking explanations from you concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the view given by the accounts.

Independent Examiner's Statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. Accounting records were not kept in respect of the PCC as required by section 130 of the Act: or
2. The accounts do not accord with those records.

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

(Signed) 

Name *ANDREW PETER FRENCH*

Address *49 ANCREPT GARTH
HIGH STAINCLIFFE*

DURHAM
Date *25th March*

2025

**The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of St
Oswald, Durham - Registered Charity Number 1196296**

**General Account Summary of Receipts and Payments for Year
Ending 31st December 2024**

Receipts	Notes	2024	2023
Incoming receipts from donors			
Planned giving	01	48,113 ✓	41,536
Collections/donations	02	3,979 ✓	5,508
Grants	03	23,563 ✓	538
Institute income	04		
from King's Church		12,782 ✓	11,940
from Main Hall		9,123 ✓	7,038
Other activities	05	<u>10,830</u> ✓	<u>12,374</u>
Total receipts		108,390 ✓	78,934 ✓

Payments

Ministry	06	22,036 ✓	25,598
Other activities	07	29,290 ✓	22,610
Music	08	18,736 ✓	14,506
Institute costs	09	22,475 ✓	12,338
Other costs	10	<u>13,757</u> ✓	<u>13,146</u>
Total payments		106,294 ✓	88,198

Balance 01/01		1,796 ✓	11,060
Surplus/(Deficit) for year		2,096 ✓	(9,264)
Balance 31/12		3,892 ✓	1,796

Totals may not add/balance exactly due to rounding.

**The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of St Oswald, Durham -
Registered Charity Number 1196296**

General Account Receipts for Year Ending 31st December 2024 – **notes** (and refer to note numbers given on page 2 above)

		2024	2023
1.1	Standing orders	30400	30760
1.2	Envelopes	4830	1527
1.3	Other gift-aided donations, including yellow gift-aid envelopes	2914	1943
1.4	Gift-aid recovery	<u>9969</u>	<u>7306</u>
		48113	41536
2.1	Loose cash collections	1845	320
2.2	Sundry donations	1167	2717
2.3	Bequest	-----	1000
2.4	Church box/Sum-Up	<u>967</u>	<u>1471</u>
		3979	5508
3.1	County Council	20000	-----
3.2	Listed Places of Worship Scheme	1463	438
3.3	Diocese of Durham – energy costs grant	1100	-----
3.4	Lord Crewe Charity	<u>1000</u>	<u>100</u>
		23563	538
4.1	Institute income from King's Church	12782	11940
4.2	Institute income from Main Hall	<u>9123</u>	<u>7038</u>
		21905	18978
5.1	Magazine	720	545
5.2	Weddings/funerals	6369	7990
5.3	Concerts/recitals in Church	1170	1322
5.4	Fundraising	711	422
5.5	Bank interest/refunds	125	360
5.6	Shincliffe contribution	<u>1735</u>	<u>1735</u>
		10830	12374

**The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of St Oswald, Durham -
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General Account Payments for Year Ending 31st December 2024 – **notes** (and refer to
note numbers given on page 2 above)

		2024	2023
Ministry			
6.1	Regional church contributions, including Share	17596	21213
6.2	Missions and Charities	1960	1330
6.3	Vicarage costs	526	471
6.4	Clergy working expenses	1417	1211
6.5	Other clergy	<u>537</u>	<u>1373</u>
		22036	25598
Church			
		2024	2023
7.1	Gas	3017	1525
	Water	133	122
	Insurance	6514	6379
	Cleaning	2760	2376
	Electricity	1389	985
		13813	11387
7.2	Church maintenance	8331	6233
7.3	Support of church services	3390	3676
7.4	Churchyard and Bow Cemetery	<u>3756</u>	<u>1344</u>
		29290	22640
Music			
8.1	Organ playing and choir direction	9170	8550
8.2	Organ and piano tuning	1982	1392
8.3	Music purchases	845	903
8.4	Music scholars	<u>6739</u>	<u>3661</u>
		18736	14506

		2024	2023
9.	Institute		
	Main Hall electricity	1134 ✓	1666
	Gas (whole Institute, of which 50% recouped from King's Church)	2366 ✓	1466
	Insurance	1528 ✓	1496
	Water (of which 50% recouped from King's Church)	358 ✓	327
	Cleaning (part recouped from King's Church)	3132 ✓	3095
	Waste collection (67% recouped from King's Church)	713 ✓	693
	Sewerage (of which 50% recouped from King's Church)	238 ✓	412
	Appleby electricity (100% recouped from King's Church)	2083 ✓	2094
	Maintenance/repairs	<u>10923</u> ✓	<u>1089</u>
		22475 ✓	12338
	Other		
10.1	Administration	12033 ✓	12291
10.2	Magazine	990 ✓	825
10.3	Miscellaneous	<u>734</u> ✓	-----
		13757 ✓	13116

General Account Notes

There have been significant increases by individuals in planned giving by standing order, and also in giving by envelope, which are very much appreciated. There have also been a number of one-off gift-aided payments. Gift aid obtained from planned giving and one-off donations is an extremely important part of our annual income: £9,969 in 2024. **Gift aid** was therefore 9% of the total income into the General account. **If you can gift aid your donations, therefore, please do.**

Grants are extremely variable from year to year. In 2024, thanks to the hard work of Roz, Sheila and Andy, we obtained a grant of £20,000 from the County Council towards the work on the Institute, and a grant from Durham Diocese of £1,100 towards the cost of insulation for the Institute. We also recouped £1,463 from the Listed Places of Worship Scheme.

It is encouraging to see that **Institute income** increased in 2024, up to £21,905 (compared to £18,978 in 2023), notwithstanding the ongoing improvement work.

It is good to see the income from **concerts** in Church: £1,170. **Please do support these concerts**, which are publicised in the weekly calendar. You will enjoy yourself and, in doing so, you will support not only the wider community, including the talent in the student community, but also St Oswald's.

In 2024 we paid our total **Parish Share** of £40,000 from income into our General account (£16,500) and the balance (£23,500) from the Combined Charities account.

Charitable giving: as you know, our congregation, guided by our Appeals Committee, raised thousands of pounds in 2024, and the amounts will be separately summarised by Bob Layton. Most of the money raised does not pass through the PCC accounts at all, but is sent directly to the chosen charities. A proportion of the money raised does go through the PCC accounts because it has been donated via our CollecTin at the North door of the Church.

We made various other small donations, including to Durham Churches Together and Royal British Legion, and also for bibles for St Oswald's School leavers.

You can see that the cost of **gas and electricity** for the Church increased in 2024, as expected.

Note the **contribution of King's Church** to the cost of utilities in the Institute (above, page 5 of 12).

**The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of St Oswald, Durham -
Registered Charity Number 1196296**

**Combined Charities Account Summary of Receipts and Payments for Year Ending 31st
December 2024**

<u>Receipts</u>	2024	2023
1. Grants from Vicar and Churchwarden charities		
Caldcleugh income account	15000 ✓	-----
Ternent income account	3000 ✓	
Caldcleugh invested funds	55000 ✓	50000
2. Transfer from CCLA Ashton funds to cover Ashton Distributions		129
3. Distributions from the Cock Charities		
Non-educational	55 -	55
Educational	11 ✓	11
4. Ex gratia payment from Barclays	-----	0
Total receipts	73066 ✓	50245
<u>Payments</u>		
5.1 Parish Share	23500 ✓	20000
Fees paid to Diocese	-----	354
5.2 Missions and Charities (Cock and Ashton distributions)	120	166
6 Support of Church services - music	-----	95
7 Music scholars	-----	334
8 Institute	72451 ✓	12803
Total payments	96071 ✓	33752
Balance brought forward on 1 st January	25083 ✓	8589
Surplus/(Deficit) for year	(23005)	16493
Balance carried forward on 31 st December	2078 ✓	25083

Totals may not add/balance exactly due to rounding.

Notes

The PCC did not have sufficient income into the General account to pay the whole of the Parish Share pledged to the Diocese in 2024 (£40,000), so £23,500 was paid from the Combined Charities account.

RESTRICTED

**The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of St Oswald,
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The Rev. John Cock's Charities 2024

	2024	2023
Non-educational (a/c 3395)		
Current assets (from dividends) held in Combined Charities account, brought forward 01/01/2024	608	559
Receipts (BLK Charities UK Bond Fund A Inc)	55	55
Payments	0	6
Current assets held in Combined Charities account at 31/12/2024	663	608

Capital fund at 31/12/2024	1302	1362
Education (a/c 3396)		
Current assets (from dividends) held in Combined Charities account, brought forward 01/01/2024		
Combined Charities a/c	137	126
Receipts (BLK Charities UK Bond Fund A Inc)	11	11
Payments	0	0
Current assets held in Combined Charities account at 31/12/2024	148	137

Capital fund at 31/12/2024	269	281

RESTRICTED

**The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of St Oswald,
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**Ashton Bequest 2024 (transferred to Adamson CCLA deposit account in
February 2019)**

	2024	2023
Current assets brought forward in Combined Charities a/c 01/01/2024	120	51
13/03/2023 payment from CCLA deposit a/c	-----	129
Distributions from Combined Charities account	(120)	(60)
Current assets in Combined Charities a/c at 31/12/2024	0*	120

***Note:** a withdrawal will be made from the Adamson CCLA deposit account in early 2024, so that there will be a positive Ashton balance in the Combined Charities account from which to make Ashton distributions in 2024.

CCLA deposit account

Brought forward 01/01/2024	3173	3168
13/03/2023 payment into Combined Charities account to cover distributions	-----	(129)
Interest (see breakdown below)	163	134
Deposit account at 31/12/2024	3336	3173

Breakdown of interest accrued

January	13.89
February	13.90
March	13.01
April	13.91
May	13.46
June	13.97
July	13.51
August	13.98
September	13.62
October	13.12
November	13.49
December	12.71

**The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of St
Oswald, Durham - Registered Charity Number 1196296**

Record of restricted funds	2024	2023
General account		
Ayton Trust	462	462
Choir Fund (robes)	2813	2813
Social Committee funds (following closure of Social Committee a/c)	52*	302
TOTAL	3327	3577

***Note:** owing to a banking error, the bulk of the profit from the *Much Ado About Nothing* evening (£316), will be included in the record for 2025.

Combined Charities account

Cock Charity 3395	663	608
Cock Charity 3396	148	137
Ashton	0	120
TOTAL	811	865

Record of funds in the PCC General account restricted to the use of the Social Committee

	Balance
Funds restricted to Social Committee @ 01/01/2024	302.00
Less £100 donation to Daft as a Brush	202.00
Plus £132.35 - St Matthew Passion	334.35
Less £22.42 reimbursement for St Matthew Passion expenses	311.93
Less £189.48 reimbursement: 72 plates	122.45
Less £29.20 reimbursement: evensong 16/06/2024	93.25
Less £63.82 reimbursement for Harvest Tea	29.43
Plus Much Ado £22.50 payment, bringing balance @ 31/12/2024 to:	51.93

Note: owing to a banking error, the bulk of the profit from the *Much Ado About Nothing* evening (£316), will be included in the record for 2025.

The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of St Oswald, Durham

Receipts and payments – statement of assets and liabilities for the year ended 31st December 2024

	Unrestricted £	Designated £	Restricted £	Endowment £	Total 2024 £	Total 2023 £
Cash funds						
General & Combined Charities accounts	1832		4138		5970	26879
Ashton deposit account	-	-	3336	-	3336	3173
Other monetary assets						
Gift aid recoverable (estimate)	8500	-	-	-	8500	7500
Recoverable from LPoW (est.)	1000	-	-	-	1000	800
Investment assets						
Cock (non-educational)	-	-	-	1302	1302	1362
Cock (educational)	-	-	-	269	269	281
Assets retained for Church use	-	-	-	-	-	-
Liabilities						
Cheques still to be banked	0	-	-	-	0	2796

The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of St Oswald, Durham

Registered Charity Number 1196296

Receipts and payments - financial statement for the year ended 31st December 2024 (for both General account and Combined Charities account)

	Unrestricted	Designated	Restricted	Endowment	Total 2024	Total 2023
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Cash at bank/in hand 01/01	22437		4442		26879	19649
Receipts						
Planned giving by SO	30400				30400	30760
Collections at services	3979				3979	3035
Grants	75463		21100		96563	50717
Other donations (including gift-aided)	5936		1808		7744	4690
HMRC gift-aid recovery	9969				9969	7306
Legacies	0				0	1000
Investment income	0		66		66	66
Church activities	32580		155		32735	31605
Total receipts	158327		23129		181456	129179
Payments						
Parish share	✓40000				40000	40000
Clergy/staffing	22156				22156	21490
Church running/maintenance	41953		✓1250		43203	33823
Institute running/maintenance	73826		✓21100		94926	25141
Giving and donations	✓997		✓1083		2080	1496
Total payments	178932		23433		202365	121950
Excess of payments over receipts	(20605)		(304)		(20,909)	7229
Cash at bank/in hand 31/12	1832		4138		5970	26879

[Totals may not add/balance exactly owing to rounding.]

ST OSWALD'S CHURCH DURHAM – REPORT ON OUTREACH COMMITTEE CAMPAIGNS ADVENT 2024 AND LENT 2025 for 2025 AGM

International appeal, Advent-Christmas:

The *Disaster Emergency Committee* (DEC) is made up of 15 leading UK aid charities, including Action Aid, Care, the International Rescue Committee, Christian Aid, Islamic Relief and Save the Children. The funds raised by its Middle East appeal will be mainly spent in aid to Gaza and Lebanon, but with some spent in the surrounding region including the West Bank.

The UK Government has undertaken to match donations received by the Committee up to ten million pounds.

Although DEC's relief activities were primarily focussed on Gaza at the time our appeal was launched, it also works in Lebanon and the West Bank, so we can be sure that our donations were put to good use, even if the Israeli blockade prevented them from being delivered to Gaza.

At the time our appeal was launched, over 1 million people had been displaced in Lebanon, and many needed emergency access to food as shelters could not keep up with demand. Before the conflict with Israel escalated, 80% of the population was living in poverty and many families were already facing hunger daily.

In the West Bank, the World Food Programme had estimated that the escalation of violence could push at least 600,000 people into food insecurity.

Thanks to your generosity, St Oswald's raised £1,943.50, of which almost all was gift aided, giving a potential total of £2,373.50

Local appeal, Lent -Easter 2025

Our local campaign was for St. Cuthbert's Hospice. We had already supported them once before, the hospice was currently facing a deficit of £ 1.3 million and had recently had to cut 18% of its workforce including 11 clinical staff and 5 from income generation.

You generously donated £1,820. With gift aid this represented a potential total of £2,147.50.

There were one or two small problems to be sorted out (such as cheques made out to St Oswald's rather than St Cuthbert's), but I took our donations over to the hospice earlier this week. They were warmly received and I was photographed holding a large "cheque" of which they will send a copy that can be displayed on our Outreach information board inside the south door.

Bob Layton

The Parish Church of St Oswald, Durham

MEETING OF PARISHIONERS
TO ELECT CHURCHWARDENS

and the ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

The meeting will be held on
Sunday 18th May 2025 after the Parish Eucharist

AGENDA

1. Opening Prayers
2. Apologies for absence.
3. Minutes of the Meeting of 28 April 2024
4. Matters arising from the minutes
5. Election of Churchwardens
6. Electoral Roll Report
7. Annual Report
8. Financial Statements for 2024
9. Report on the Goods and Fabric of the Church
10. Report on the proceedings of Deanery Synod
11. Election of PCC members.
12. Appointment of Independent Examiner
13. Renewal of Health and Safety and Safeguarding Policies
14. Any questions about church matters.

**Minutes of the St Oswald's Church, Durham
Vestry Meeting and Annual Parochial Church Meeting
Sunday 28 April 2024**

1) Apologies for absence

Apologies: Alan Middleton; Alice Wort; Alison Shambrook.

3) Approval of the minutes of the last Vestry Meeting and APCM held on 30 April 2023

The minutes were approved as an accurate record and signed by the chairman.

4) Matters arising from the Minutes

There were no matters arising.

Vestry Meeting

5) Election of churchwardens

There were two nominations for churchwardens: Gill Aubrey was nominated by Sheila Hingley and Mark Davies. Andy Jones was nominated by Sheila Hingley and Roz Layton. Both were duly elected as churchwardens for 2024/25. The meeting thanked Sheila Hingley for her work as churchwarden during the last seven years.

Annual Parochial Church Meeting

6) Electoral roll report

The report was given by Sue Pitts, Electoral Roll officer. On the roll in 2023 there were 64 names, one person had resigned from the roll and two more have been added. Three people have died. A copy of the roll with the names only has been displayed in the church porch. Sue was thanked for all her work in preparing the roll.

7) Annual report

Rector's Report

The Rector's report was circulated with the papers for the meeting. Peter added some points to the written report: Mark Davies was graduating in the summer and would be leaving Durham after his wedding in St Oswald's to Nell Guthrie. We were very grateful for his services to St Oswald's during his three years in the University, including being a member of the PCC as well as playing a central role in the sanctuary team. And there had been an excellent confirmation service at which Andrew and John Wort had been confirmed. Peter also thanked those who had helped to maintain a BCP Communion service on Wednesdays

Outreach Appeals

A full written report was provided by Bob Layton on the 2023/24 appeals. At the meeting he praised the generosity of the congregation for the amounts raised in addition Sarah Knight pointed out that the £3,000 raised in the annual Christian Aid appeal was not included in the report.

St Oswald's Outreach Committee: report on Advent/Christmas 2022 and Lent/Easter 2023 appeals

For our 2022-23 outreach programme the St Oswald's Outreach Committee agreed, with the support of the PCC, to hold two appeals, the first over Advent and Christmas 2022 for a local charity, the second over Lent and Easter 2023 for a national or international charity.

Advent and Christmas appeal

The St Margaret's Centre is a well-established local charity in Durham that works to promote people's mental health. The Centre houses a well-equipped woodwork department and an arts and crafts room where instructors teach a wide range of skills such as painting, drawing, sewing and

model making, and a café. The appeal raised a total of £1,317.50 (including gift aid). We received a warm letter of thanks from the Deputy Manager and a donation of four bird boxes plus two bat boxes for us to erect in St Oswald's churchyard.

Lent and Easter appeal (22 nd February to 16 th April)

This appeal raised £2,050 for the reconstruction of the Ukraine and the support of refugees and was channelled through the Disasters Emergency Committee.

Music Report

The Director of Music, David Harris, had supplied a written report circulated with the papers. He highlighted the extra music that had been performed during the year because of the contribution of the choral scholars. David was thanked by the meeting for his work and that of the choir.

Safeguarding Report

Gill Aubrey, Safeguarding Officer, had provided a written report circulated with the papers. She said that it had not been noted in the report for 2022 that the safeguarding policy was agreed at the 2023 APCM. She reported verbally that all safeguarding training had been completed by members of the PCC and she would continue to remind people when they needed to update this. She was thanked for her work as Safeguarding Officer.

8) Financial Statements for 2024

There have been increases in planned giving by standing order, and giving by envelope, which are very much appreciated. There have also been a number of one-off gift-aided payments. Gift aid obtained from planned giving and one-off donations is an extremely important part of our annual income: £7,306 in 2023 (ie. nearly 10% of our total income).

Grants are variable from year to year.

It is good to see the increase in income from concerts in Church.

We are hoping that the recently installed CollecTin will make a difference to Church income in future. (Many thanks are owing to Gill Aubrey for overcoming all the obstacles to its installation.)

Note that Parish Share has been paid as follows: 50% (£20,000) from our income, and 50% (£20,000) from the Combined Charities account (having been granted to the Combined Charities account by the Vicar and Churchwarden at the time from the Vicar and Churchwarden charities).

Charitable giving: remember that the bulk of our giving, which is co-ordinated by the Appeals Committee, raises thousands but that none of the money passes through the PCC's accounts. The amounts raised are sent directly to the charities concerned.

The charitable giving of £1330 noted at section 5.2 of the accounts includes donations made by the Social Committee from the profits on social activities:

£359 to the Turkey/Syria Earthquake appeal; and

£100 to the Durham Food Bank.

(Note that a further £100 donated by the Social Committee to Daft as a Brush will appear in the 2024 accounts, because the payment did not clear before 31/12/2023.)

These charitable donations highlight the hard work and importance of our Social Committee.

There were various other small donations, including to Durham Churches Together, Royal British Legion and for bibles for St Oswald's School leavers.

For those who are interested in how much we spend on utilities, you can for the first time see a breakdown of the running costs of Church and Institute.

9) Fabric and Goods of the Church

The churchwardens' detailed Fabric Report was circulated with the meeting papers, including a report on the churchyards by Roz Layton. The postponed Quinquennial Inspection was done during 2022 by our new architect Chloe Granger. We are awaiting the final report. The main preoccupation was with the heating which was causing problems and needed replacement parts. It included a

report on the Institute Development Group's work with details of the completion of Phase 1 where secondary glazing was added to the Institute windows. It is hoped that this improvement will reduce heating bills and support the sustainability of the building in future. It is hoped Phase 2 will be carried out in the summer of 2024.

10) Deanery Synod

Peter reported on the activities of the Deanery Synod in a paper circulated with the meeting papers. Sue Pitts and Sheila Hingley were St Oswald's representing on the Synod.

11) Election of PCC members

Peter thanked all the members of the PCC for their hard work this year. The member of the PCC who has finished her term was Fenella Wright but she has been renominated for another term. She was duly elected. Sheila Hingley would remain on the PCC after standing down as churchwarden since she is a Deanery Synod representative. Mark Davies has resigned as he is moving away from Durham so there were three vacancies now.

12) Appointment of independent examiner for the accounts

The meeting thanked Andrew French for his work in this role, and reappointed him for 2024/25.

13) Health & Safety and Safeguarding

The meeting formally affirmed the Safeguarding policy and the Health & Safety policy.

14) Any questions

Roz Layton asked if lay communion servers would be recruited again, as before Covid. Peter hoped to do this in the future. Anne Glen asked if it would be possible to pay anything to the sanctuary party. Peter said this would be considered.

The meeting closed at 1:00pm with the Grace

PARISH CHURCH OF ST OSWALD

DURHAM

ANNUAL REPORT

and

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

of the

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

for the year ended 31 December 2024

Rector

The Revd Peter Kashouris

St Oswald's Vicarage, Church Street,

Durham DH1 3DG

Bank

Barclays Bank plc, 6 Market Place, Durham City, DH1 3ND

Independent Examiner

Mr AP French, 49 Ancroft Garth, High Shincliffe, Durham DH1 2UD

The governance of the Church of England now comes under the Church Representation and Ministers Measure 2019, **and the Church Representation Rules 2020**. These are new, and simplified rules.

PCC Membership

The PCC has the responsibility of co-operating with the Rector, the Rev.'d Peter Kashouris, in promoting in the parish the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical.

The PCC membership coming into the annual meeting 2025 is:

PCC Membership May 2025			
	Name	Capacity on PCC (and position)	Term of Office
1.	Peter Kashouris	Rector (Chairman)	Ex-officio
2.	Andy Jones	Churchwarden	Ex-officio
3.	Sue Pitts	Deanery Synod 2023-2026	Ex-officio
4.	Fenella Wright	Elected member (Treasurer)	2:2024-2027
5.	Sheila Hingley	Elected member	1:2024-2027
6.	Peter Shambrook	Elected member	1:2023-2026
7.	David Harris	Elected member (Director of Music)	2:2022-2025
8.	Roz Layton	Elected member	2:2022-2025
9.	Gordon Mitchell	Elected member	2:2022-2025

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

Data protection – GDPR, May 2018

The church has complied with the new GDPR regulation, using a form to seek the consent of its church members to hold contact details and to be in touch with them for limited reasons, to which they could agree or not.

Safeguarding

The PCC has complied with the duty under section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 (duty to have regard to House of Bishops' guidance on the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults).

Safeguarding and **Health & Safety** appear on every PCC agenda.

Electoral Roll Report

Sue Pitts, the Electoral Roll Officer, has put a copy of the revised Roll in the Church, with just the names, in accordance with the Data Protection Act.

Report on the work of the St Oswald's PCC 2024.

Sherburn House

Fortnightly services have begun, taken by Peter and Jane Middleton.

Sound System

Following a number of engineer visits and tests, we now believe the sound system to be working well

Campers in the Churchyards.

Andy worked tirelessly to resolve this situation, winning the trust of all parties.

It was felt that this has been handled as best as it could be, having never encountered this situation before. Andy engaged and worked alongside a number of agencies, including our local PCSO.

St Oswald's has now erected signage to deter and future such event.

Andy will continue to monitor the situation.

Trees and large shrubs will be maintained by raising low growth to deter rough sleepers from sleeping underneath.

Institute Renovation works

The kitchen window has been replaced.

Secondary glazing has been installed to the staircase windows, and in the main hall.

The Institute now has an accessible toilet and men's toilet.

A 2 storey extension across the small rear yard has created 2 toilet cubicles downstairs and additional space in our current office area.

Lintels have been installed in the hall to allow a serving hatch to the kitchen (Phase 3)

New carpets have been laid up the stairs and throughout the upstairs.

Boyd is producing floor plans with new layout of Institute. These will be placed in prominent places for use in emergency.

Lychgate

The remedial works to the Lychgate at Bow Cemetery has been a great achievement.

Entrance via the South Door.

Work has been done to move furniture around at the south door to function more practically, and improve first impressions. The intention to improve the ramp led to further discussion as to whether the removal of the internal entrance would offer a better solution to the ramp placement or/and possible use of larger glass doors.

The cluttered feel of the Church as you enter this door was reviewed. It was recommended to place the Orthodox Icon in this place to enhance the sense of entering a place of prayer.

Contactless Giving

Gill Aubrey has done a great job getting this up and running and donations are steadily increasing.

This is also proving a very effective collection tool for specific appeals.

Bell Ringers Commemoration Plaque

St Oswald's bell ringers are requesting a plaque to be erected in the ringing chamber to commemorate a special peal they completed for the Coronation of King Charles

PCC agree to go halves on the cost.

Noticeboards:

All 4 noticeboards have now been replaced.

QI:

Peter, Boyd and Andy walked through church with Martin Howard, following this meeting the next five year focus will be the required works to the Tower roof and Masonry repairs.

Safeguarding:

Gill Aubrey stood down as Safeguarding Officer and Gordon Mitchell has kindly taken on this role.

Churchyard

Bob Layton and Boyd Sims-Williams have put up bird boxes and bat coxes kindly donated by St Margarets Centre

Churchyard trees and shrubs:

In order to best maintain the churchyard several trees and shrubs have been removed

The Rector's Report

The Sunday Eucharist and Wednesday Holy Communion services continued well; and weekly Sunday Evensong has resumed. Thanks to James, Hamish, John, Andrew, for their help; and also the Rev.'d Gavin Wort, John McManners, Alan Middleton for their super ministry; and to those who set up for the services and welcome people. David and the choir have given excellent warmth and energy to the services throughout the year, and have added a lot to the worship at St. Oswald's. Highlights were the joint Covenant Service with Elvet Methodist Church, joint Ash Wednesday service with St Mary's College, Holy Week and Easter, when the Church was beautifully adorned with flowers, many thanks to Wendy and Ann Stevenson, the Ascension Day service at Finchale Priory, and our Advent and Christmas Carol service,

School assemblies and services at Church have been well attended.

Several weddings and funerals took place.

The social committee have generously catered for a number of occasions, often responding at relatively short notice.

There were a record number of concerts in Church, thanks very much to Sue Pitts and all the welcomers.

I am very thankful for the generosity shown by so many people in various tasks that make the life and ministry of St. Oswald's flourish, and enable it to contribute to the wider ministry of the benefice and diocese.

Peter Kashouris

May 2025

Outreach Appeals: There were a number of successful appeals through this period. A report will be given separately.

Fabric report 2024–25.

Church

Many thanks go first of all to Kelvin Appleby for his tireless work in repainting the steel bell frame. It is now a rich and cheerful shade of red, suitably emblematic of the joy and dignity the bells convey, and looks quite stunning when picked out by shafts of sunlight through the window openings in the tower walls.

Many thanks are due, too, to Boyd Sims-Williams for his sterling maintenance work on the gate to the **organ loft**, and to Beth Rainey for organising the **PAT testing** (and many other things). Regular servicing has also been carried out on the **roof alarm** and the **fire extinguishers**.

The report of the **Quinquennial Inspection** carried out by Crosby Granger in August 2023 arrived in July 2024, the delay being caused by the volume of work the architects are experiencing. (Conservation architects are apparently in short supply.) Apart from a reminder to keep on keeping the guttering free of detritus, and a couple of points about the main noticeboards and tree cover in the churchyard, the urgent recommendations concern the tower roof and stonework — the Victorian leadwork needs replacing, and the eroded stonework needs to be fixed.

At one time it seemed that the obvious next step would be to erect scaffolding round the **tower** and do all the works at once, as scaffolding comes at such huge cost. A closer look at the masonry, however, has revealed that a complex mixture of stone and mortar types has built up over decades or centuries of patch repairs, and the architects' advice is that the chemical interactions between these components need to be understood in detail before a durable scheme of repair can be prepared. The current plan is to commission a detailed survey using a cherry-picker, before devising a scheme of work and putting it out to tender. Accordingly, the leadwork was patched (again) in May 2025, which will hopefully stop the minor water ingress that has been noticed over the winter, and Crosby Granger are working on next steps. They will also be advising us on securing grant funding.

The **lightning conductor** was inspected in September, and a new earth electrode was recommended at not inconsiderable cost. Several features of the report caused disquiet (not least that the same firm had installed the existing electrode only six years ago), and a different firm was commissioned to test the system in December. It passed.

Swift boxes — boxes, that is, for swifts to dwell in — are in contemplation for installation in the tower, and many thanks go to Mike Harris for sourcing grant funding and volunteering to build and fit them. There would be little point, though, in attracting swifts into residence and then terminally annoying them by carrying on building work around them, and so the boxes' commissioning will need to wait until after works are concluded.

The **gas boiler** continues to raise concerns. A new control unit fitted back in September has kept it running quite well over the winter, though investigation in January after it failed to light automatically suggested that an electrical relay was failing, which would cost upwards of £1100 to replace. It seemed to cause difficulty only in the coldest of weather, and so the boiler has been checked on those predictable occasions with a view to lighting it manually if needed. The problem seems to have arisen again just this week, though, and so a repair may have to be done.

Some preliminary work has been done on **alternative heating systems**. The Church of England aims for next zero carbon emissions from its plant by 2030, and so electrical heating of one kind or another is much in vogue; permission can be gained to instal new gas boilers, though, if a case can be made that they are the best available option. A nearby church fitted with under-pew convector heaters has been visited, and the results were not entirely impressive; another visit to a church in Bradford with infra-red heaters hanging from the ceiling was more encouraging. This looks set to be a major concern in the medium term, alongside repairs to the tower.

Institute

The main news is of course the successful completion of Phase 2 of the **development work**: the upstairs office has been divided into a snug new office and a meeting room, now with its own executive toilet; the upstairs loft space has been insulated; and the area behind the hall has been remodelled to create two new toilets, a cleaner's store, and a general storeroom. Many thanks go to Bill Katakya, our indefatigable architect, and to Sheila Hingley, Roz Layton, and Boyd Sims-Williams, the development group — *especial* thanks being due to Roz for negotiating grant support.

Final building regulations sign-off for the work is being delayed by the need for an enhanced **fire detection and warning system**: the regulations have changed, it seems, while the project has been in progress. A Fire Risk Assessment was obtained in April 2025, and tenders are being sought for a wireless fire alarm system.

Phase 3 — the remodelling of the **kitchen** — is in the planning stage at the moment.

The Institute **central heating** works, but the pressure in the water circuit has been dropping

regularly and irritatingly since October. The fault appears to be a leak — the pipework under the hall has been inspected quite thoroughly without finding one, which seems to suggest that the problem is under the concrete floor that's now part of the new storeroom. Investigations are ongoing...

Churchyard

Particular thanks go to Jacob Knight for treating the David Knight memorial bench with wood preservative recently — anyone who frequents the churchyard can testify to how much visitors use and value the bench. Grateful thanks too to Steve Lindsay and Roz Layton for their quiet and unsung maintenance work around the churchyard, to Carol and Stewart Forster for clearing leaves, and many thanks also to the several stalwart citizens who regularly pick up litter on their way through. And thanks, too, to everyone who quietly does things and whom I don't happen to have bumped into and caught in the act!

A group of rough sleepers took up residence on the western edge of the churchyard in May 2024, and the last of them remained till July. Some of them had been evicted from Oswald Ct. for anti-social behaviour and criminality, and one was on the streets after release from prison. They all proved conversable and respectful of the church itself, and DCC Rough Sleepers Unit, the police, and the Probation Service combined to find them accommodation in the end. They did leave a series of messes, and DCC Clean and Green cleared up after them (along with volunteers). Warm thanks are due to the services mentioned above for their effective liaison and assistance.

On the advice of the Diocesan Registrar, small notices have gone up at the entry points to this and the other churchyards welcoming visitors, and forbidding them from camping or lighting fires.

In June, a spare wheely bin was removed, and our free rubbish collection was regularised by agreement with the council.

The Perspex-fronted noticeboards in front of the vicarage and the east end of the church have been mended, and the two main noticeboards at either end of the churchyard have been repaired, repainted, and re-lettered. Many thanks to John Davies, the Treasurer at St. Mary's Coxhoe, for linking us with the contractors for this.

Two lime trees are causing the retaining wall north of the church to bulge towards the Church St. pavement, and this has caused concern to DCC Highways Dept., Durham Diocese, and to DCC Bereavement Services (!) who are responsible for the upkeep of the graveyard (it being closed to coffin burials). The diocese and Bereavement Services would gladly remove the trees — their removal is also recommended in the 2023 QI report — and Highways have brought forward a charming variety of schemes over the months for both doing so and not doing so. A potential benefit of removal would be the ability to widen the pavement at this, its narrowest point. DCC's Senior Tree Officer is set against the trees' demise, though, and as Highways have now stated that the wall is *not* in danger of collapse, nothing seems likely to be done, particularly as a costly road closure would be required for which no budget exists.

A key conservation feature of the churchyard is that it has never been treated with modern fertilisers, and so is in effect a relic of ancient meadow supporting an assemblage of once-common grassland plants. For many years, it has been managed with a cutting schedule that mimics old-fashioned hay-cutting to try and preserve this threatened habitat. Over the past quarter of a century, though, the free cover has grown to the point where it is starting to threaten the meadowland by starving it of light, and a small working group ('Friends of St. Oswald's Churchyard') met a few times in the autumn to consider how to manage it, using the latest DCC Tree Report on the churchyard (2021) as a basis. In a separate conversation, the Senior Tree Officer has noted that most of the ash trees are suffering from ash die-back, and will need to be removed for safety reasons; while the 2023 QI recommended drastic reduction of the two hollies which block the south door. These issues remain to be taken forward.

John Kirkpatrick stepped down as occasional groundsman in September, and Tim Biddlecombe of English Garden Landscapes is now our contractor, though on a slightly more occasional basis as his charges are on a more professional scale. Our thanks go to John for his steadfast service over the years.

Stockton Rd. Cemetery

Stockton Rd. continues to be maintained by volunteers from Durham University ably and energetically managed by Roz Layton, and our very best thanks are due to her and to them.

The cemetery had two of its own **rough sleepers** April–June and August–October 2024, one of them a pit bull cross of uncertain eyesight and temper. Kelvin and Dog left equably for the second time after it was represented to him that the University would not permit its volunteers to work while he and the animal were in residence, and shortly after that DCC Rough Sleepers Unit found him accommodation in Sunderland. On neither occasion was there any appreciable clearing up to be done afterwards, for which we are very grateful.

Bow Cemetery

Bow Cemetery is the parish's operational graveyard, and is shared with the University and the Cathedral Chapter. It continues to see coffin burials, and **interment** of ashes with a headstone has become quite popular.

Boggy conditions render much of the unused area unusable. By the time this report lands, Bow will have had its own **QI inspection** (it was inadvertently omitted from the 2023 survey), and this will perhaps form a basis for negotiating a solution with our partner organisations.

Andy Jones
Churchwarden

Safeguarding report 2024-5

Safeguarding means the action the Church takes to promote a safer culture. We need to promote the welfare of children, young people and adults, seek to protect those who are at risk of being abused and respond well to those who have been abused as well as identifying where a person may present a risk to others and offer support to them while taking steps to mitigate any risks. Church Officers and anyone who comes into contact with children, young people and adults all have a role to play in safeguarding.

Our annually revised Church Safeguarding Policy is on the ACNY website and is displayed in Church and institute with contact details.

The Diocese of Durham has introduced [Parish Safeguarding Dashboards](#) to support Parish Safeguarding Officers, Clergy and PCCs in reviewing and monitoring their local safeguarding policies and procedures. The dashboard is rooted in safeguarding actions which are necessary under the Church of England 'Promoting a Safer Church' policy and the [Durham Diocesan Safeguarding Policy](#). The Dashboard system is in use by over 7,000 churches across 38 dioceses throughout the Church of England.

St Oswald's dashboard is currently showing progress at 100% with "No action currently required".

PARISH SAFEGUARDING POLICY

The following policy was originally agreed at the Parochial Church Council (PCC) meeting held in March 2019 and in subsequent meetings, most recently by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting in April 2024.

In accordance with the Church of England Safeguarding Policy our church is committed to:

- Promoting a safer environment and culture.
- Safely recruiting and supporting all those with any responsibility related to children, young people and vulnerable adults within the church.
- Responding promptly to every safeguarding concern or allegation.
- Caring pastorally for victims/survivors of abuse and other affected persons.
- Caring pastorally for those who are the subject of concerns or allegations of abuse and other affected persons.

- Responding to those that may pose a present risk to others.

The Parish will:

- Create a safe and caring place for all.
- Have a named Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) to work with the incumbent and the PCC to implement policy and procedures.
- Safely recruit, train and support all those with any responsibility for children, young people and adults to have the confidence and skills to recognise and respond to abuse.
- Ensure that there is appropriate insurance cover for all activities involving children and adults undertaken in the name of the parish.
- Display in church premises and on the Parish website the details of who to contact if there are safeguarding concerns or support needs.
- Listen to and take seriously all those who disclose abuse.
- Take steps to protect children and adults when a safeguarding concern of any kind arises, following House of Bishops guidance, including notifying the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser (DSA) and statutory agencies immediately.
- Offer support to victims/survivors of abuse regardless of the type of abuse, when or where it occurred.
- Care for and monitor any member of the church community who may pose a risk to children and adults whilst maintaining appropriate confidentiality and the safety of all parties.
- Ensure that health and safety policy, procedures and risk assessments are in place and that these are reviewed annually.
- Review the implementation of the Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Practices at least annually.

Each person who works within this church community will agree to abide by this policy and the guidelines established by this church. This church appoints Gordon Mitchell as the Parish Safeguarding Officer.

PSO Gordon Mitchell 0191 378 1014