

THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL PARISH OF SAINT HELEN, ASHBY-DE-LA-ZOUCH

England & Wales · Charity number 1200922

Details

Other names	ST HELEN'S CHURCH
Status	Registered
Legal form	Other
Registered	2022-11-07
Register	View on the Charity Commission register

Contact

Address	4 Church Yard Ashby-De-La-Zouch LE65 1AA
Phone	01530411607
Email	sthelensashby@gmail.com
Website	https://sthelensashby.net/

Activities

Objects: PROMOTING IN THE ECCLESIASTICAL PARISH THE WHOLE MISSION OF THE CHURCH

Activities: The PCC has the responsibility of promoting in the ecclesiastical parish, the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelical, social and ecumenical. The PCC undertakes their mission through prayer, worship, learning and action. It also has responsibility for the maintenance of the church building and the Community Heritage Centre and its associated grounds.

Classification

- **How:** Makes Grants To Individuals, Makes Grants To Organisations, Provides Buildings/facilities/open Space, Provides Services, Provides Advocacy/advice/information
- **What:** Religious Activities
- **Who:** Children/young People, Elderly/old People, People With Disabilities, Other Charities Or Voluntary Bodies, The General Public/mankind

Geography

- Leicestershire

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2025-12-31	£126,096	£143,980	-	-
2024-12-31	£158,184	£142,680	-	-
2023-12-31	£120,664	£125,062	-	-

Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
Annabel Clara Fraser		2026-04-21
Caroline Marie Fraser		2026-04-21
Catalina Yuen Ling Chan		2024-04-16
Dr JOHN MARTIN VAUGHAN		2025-10-21
Eileen Coombs		2021-04-20
Elizabeth Rosemary Forster Smith		2021-04-20
JULIAN ANTHONY WILLIAM BOARDMAN-WESTON		2026-04-21
John Edward Steward		2025-04-01
LYNDA PRICE		2021-05-18
Laura Tucker		2024-04-16
PETER ROSE		2024-04-16
Rev Susan Field		2023-05-10
Shan Dyer		2021-05-18

Accounts

Charity Registration No: 1200922

**ST. HELEN'S CHURCH
ASHBY-DE-LA-ZOUCH**

Annual Report and Financial Statements

For the year ended

31 December 2025



The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of
Saint Helen, Ashby-de-la-Zouch

The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of
Saint Helen, Ashby-de-la-Zouch
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FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2025**

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The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of
 Saint Helen, Ashby-de-la-Zouch
PCC REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2025

PCC Name: The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Saint Helen, Ashby-de-la-Zouch

Charity Registration No: 1200922

Address: St Helen's Church
 3 Lower Church Street
 Ashby-de-la-Zouch
 Leicester
 LE65 1AA

Parochial Church Council Members:

Ex-officio member – Team Rector	Rev'd Susan Field	
Ex-officio member – Churchwarden	Judith Lewis	Resigned 1 April 2025
Ex-officio member - Churchwarden	Vacant	
Ex- officio member / Reader – also Safeguarding Coordinator	Elizabeth Smith	
Deanery Synod Rep	Maureen Clark	Appointed 1 April 2025
Elected members:		
Vice Chair	Lynda Price	
Standing Committee member	Shân Dyer	
Treasurer	Catalina Yuen Ling Chan	
	Sam Blatherwick	Resigned 1 April 2025
	Caroline Millward	Resigned 1 April 2025
	Emily Darlington	
	Peter Rose	
Also Electoral Roll Officer	Eileen Coombs	
	Malcolm Salter	Resigned 18 April 2025
	Laura Tucker	
	John Steward	Appointed 1 April 2025
	Martin Vaughan	Co opted by PCC October 2025

All the PCC are also Trustees of the charity.
 The Parish Administrator has been operating as PCC Secretary but is not a member of PCC.

Independent Examiner: Simon Latham
 Gelsmoor
 Rempstone Road
 Coleorton, Leicestershire
 LE67 8HQ

Bankers: CAF Bank
 25 Kings Hill Avenue
 Kings Hill
 West Malling
 Kent
 MR19 4TA

The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of
Saint Helen, Ashby-de-la-Zouch
PCC ANNUAL REPORT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2025

The PCC is pleased to present their report and financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2025.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Charity Commission's Receipts and Payments basis.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The PCC is a corporate body established by the Church of England. The PCC registered with the Charity Commission on 7 November 2022. The PCC operates under the Parochial Church Councils (Powers) Measure 1956 (as amended) and the Church Representation Rules (contained in Schedule 3 to the Synodical Government Measure 1969 as amended). The members of the PCC are the charity's trustees under charity law.

The PCC members are responsible for making decisions on all matters of general concern and importance to the parish, including deciding on how the funds of the PCC are to be spent.

PCC Membership

Appointment of PCC members are governed by the Church Representation Rules. The Team Rector, other clergy licensed to serve in the Parish, the churchwardens and the Deanery Synod members are automatically members. Other members are elected at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting by church members who are on the Electoral Roll of the Parish. We encourage everyone (aged 16 and over) who attends church regularly to register on the Electoral Roll.

Churchwardens are elected each year at the Annual Meeting of Parishioners, which is open to all residents of the Parish. They serve from the date they are subsequently admitted to office by the Bishop and continue in office until their successor is admitted by the Bishop following election.

Elected members of the PCC serve for a term of 3 years from the date of election. They may stand to be re-elected for a further 3-year term.

Under the Church Representation Rules, the PCC has the power to co-opt additional members to fill casual vacancies. Co-opted members serve until the next Annual Parochial Church Meeting when they may stand for election.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

The PCC has the responsibility of promoting in the ecclesiastical parish, the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelical, social and ecumenical. The PCC undertakes their mission through prayer, worship, learning and action. It also has responsibility for the maintenance of the church building and the Community Heritage Centre and its associated grounds.

When planning our activities, the PCC has considered the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit, including the guidance 'public benefit: running a Charity (PB2)'. Our services and worship put faith into practice through prayer and scripture, music and sacrament. We try to enable people to live out their faith as part of our community.

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(continued)

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES (continued)

Our objectives are to:

- nurture and sustain growth in the Christian life by teachings, worship and prayer to develop knowledge and trust in Jesus;
- enable existing churchgoers to be confident in their witness to the ongoing life of Jesus Christ;
- engage with the local community in Ashby-de-la-Zouch in loving service, working with others.

To facilitate this work, it is vital that we maintain the fabric of the Church, the Churchyard, and the Heritage Centre and its associated grounds.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

PCC Secretary Report

The PCC met 9 times during 2025 beginning with an Away Day held on a Saturday at the Congregational Church with members of the Ministry Team. During that day, we did some work on our vision statement for St Helen's and revised our strapline to 'Faith, Love and Community'. We also did some brainstorming about what we wanted from our church building and looked at the new Safeguarding Standards.

At the APCM, Sam Blatherwick and Caroline Millward stepped down with our thanks for their time on the PCC. Mo Clark was elected to Deanery Synod (so also became a PCC member) and John Steward was elected on to the PCC. Shortly after the APCM, Malcolm Salter stepped down but shortly afterwards Martin Vaughan was co opted on to the PCC.

During the year, we continued to keep a sharp eye on our finances, and have had regular reports on some of the activities and new initiatives in the church. We also gave donations to Ashby Youth for Christ, Hoveraid, Open Doors and Loughborough Town of Sanctuary and some smaller donations to Ashby Foodbank and the Phoenix foundation.

Tim James

Team Rector's Report

I want to begin by thanking all who have contributed to this report booklet which shows how many people are involved and how much is going on in our church, both in the building itself but also more widely in the community. I am hugely grateful to all of you and to many others who help with all sorts of activities in and around the church. It is great to be working with you and to have the privilege of leading and being part of such a fantastic team of people.

The observant amongst you will notice that, this year, there is no churchwardens' report and that is because for the past year we have had no churchwarden! Judith Lewis stepped down at the APCM having fulfilled the role and seen through the vacancy very conscientiously and for a couple of years was the sole Warden. Since then, I have been blessed with the support and assistance of the three Assistant Wardens – Lyn Price (also Vice Chair of the PCC), Eileen Coombs and Martin Vaughan. I am

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Team Rector's Report (continued)

grateful to many others who fulfil parts of what could be a Warden's role but it would be great to have one and ideally two Churchwardens as their absence has made my role considerably harder.

The Ministry Team of our Licensed Readers and Choral Director has continued to meet every two months to support and encourage one another and to plan services and other events. I am grateful for their ministry not just at St Helen's but across the Flagstaff Team. During the year, Rev. Preb. John Allan was given his Permission to Officiate and he has helped us both at St Helen's and across other churches in the Flagstaff Team. I am very grateful to him and Rev. Canon Richard Andrews for their support and for covering me whilst I am on holiday or required elsewhere.

Our worship has continued in 2025 as in 2024 but, having discussed it with the Ministry Team and with PCC, we decided to 'rest' the All Age Service on a Sunday afternoon as it was not reaching young families and instead to focus on inviting young families to specific services and events. At the same time, Messy Church, in a new format and at a new time, has really flourished as has Little Fishes. With limited resources, it felt best to focus our energies on those activities which are bearing fruit. The numbers at other services remained constant but our numbers at Christmas increased substantially.

During Lent, we had Sunday evening services following John Mark Comer's book, 'Practicing the Way' and moved round the Flagstaff churches. We have also continued with having Team services on a fifth Sunday but both these and the Lent services have not been particularly well attended and it does seem that there is a general reluctance to attend a church other than the one people mainly worship at. This is with the exception of a small group of people who are prepared to travel and support other churches in the team.

We continue though, to function as a Flagstaff Team and during 2025 we had regular meetings of representatives of each of the churches over a meal. This used to be the Wardens' meeting but with the absence of Wardens in 4 of the parishes, this has become a reps meeting. We also had meetings of Treasurers and Parish Safeguarding Coordinators across the Team to look at various aspects of the role and to share wisdom.

During the year, Eileen Barradell stepped down as Sacristan and Head Server after many years of service but I am delighted that she is still willing to step in when we need her and that she still serves for us. Alison Andrews has stepped into those roles seamlessly and I am very grateful to her for being willing to step up. We continue to value our paid staff – the musicians, Pete Hyland as Verger, Tim James as Administrator and Communications Officer and Elaine Shaw, our bookings officer. All of these go above and beyond what we pay them to do.

The Pastoral Care team has continued to flourish during the year, offering care and support to those who are in need or to newcomers on a Sunday. One of them is always located by the font to welcome those who are new to church and we arrange visits to those who are housebound or who need support. We meet every couple of months. At the end of October, we started offering prayer ministry after communion and we now do that on the fourth Sunday of the month. A member of the Pastoral Team works with a member of the clergy to offer prayer and anointing for those who would like it.

St Helen's has an important civic presence in the town. Remembrance Sunday continues to be a significant occasion and I also officiated at a Commonwealth Day service and an Armistice Day service in the town centre.

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Team Rector's Report (continued)

Personally, I completed a Professional Diploma in Pastoral Supervision during the year and now offer Pastoral Supervision to three clergy in the Diocese. I also became Vice Chair of the Diocesan Advisory Committee which does give me some inside knowledge useful for our building! Although both of these roles involve me in things outside of our parishes, I hope there will be some benefit to my ministry here.

We face a considerable period of change in the not too distant future. The Minster Community process stalled for various reasons in 2025 but we will be encouraged to move towards becoming part of a Minster Community in 2026. Please pray for wisdom and discernment for those of us involved in this as we will have to make important decisions.

Rev. Canon Sue Field, Team Rector

Safeguarding

'Safeguarding' means the action the Church takes to promote a safer culture in all our churches. St Helen's has a commitment to ensuring high standards in the safeguarding and care of children, young people and adults. For St Helen's church in 2025 there were no concerns reported.

As the DBS administrator I continue to complete new checks and renew checks for the Flagstaff family of churches. DBS certificates must be renewed every 3 years.

Training and keeping knowledge and understanding alive is key to a safer environment for all. Online Safeguarding training continues to be available, but this is not always accessible for all, and there is still a need to provide some opportunities for other methods of accessing training. Training is required to be updated every 3 years.

As from July 2025 the Church of England's Parish Safeguarding Handbook was officially phased out and replaced by the online Safeguarding e-manual which provides all policies and practice guidance. It will be regularly updated and is not yet complete. This e-manual is designed to support the day-to-day work of safeguarding and those that have a role with children, young people and adults who may be vulnerable.

St Helen's follows the Safer recruitment process set out by the Church of England for all new volunteers and employees.

Information about Safeguarding and reporting concerns /seeking help and advice is displayed in the church and the St Helen's Community Heritage Centre.

St Helen's is working within the Church of England National Safeguarding Standards. The standards reflect and identify all aspects of safeguarding within the church and its community. The PCC has adopted these standards and is working within them.

St Helen's church is registered with the Parish Safeguarding Dashboard which enables up to date information to be received and provides a plan of any actions required. This dashboard is to be updated in line with national changes in safeguarding in January 2026

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Safeguarding (continued)

“The Diocese of Leicester views safeguarding as a core, proactive responsibility rather than just a policy, focusing on fostering a safe, welcoming environment where all people are valued as made in God's image. They are committed to protecting children, young people, and vulnerable adults, with a "whole church" approach that prioritizes immediate, transparent responses to concerns.”

For us as a church family we must strive to follow the guidance of the Leicester Diocese. Safeguarding us all, children, young people and adults at St Helen's must be a thread alive in everything we do. We must create a healthy church culture in which people feel confident to share concerns and where all people feel safe in every respect

The safety of children, young people and all adults is “Everyone's business “

Elizabeth Smith, Parish Safeguarding Coordinator

Fabric Report

Here's the report on the state of the fabric of the church and the work that has been carried out during 2025. We strive to be good custodians of our Grade 1 listed church and so a huge thank you to the Buildings Team and all those who help to maintain, clean, repair, and generally care for the church and also the Heritage Centre, the churchyard borders, and the Heritage Centre garden.

All routine testing of the security alarm, roof alarm, fire extinguishers, lightening conductors, our portable electrical equipment, and the emergency lighting and fire alarm in the Heritage Centre, have been carried out so that we are fully compliant. In August our conservation architect did the quinquennial inspection a few months early to provide the most up to date condition to inform our project work.

Many of you are aware that the church is in need of some major repairs, especially to the tower, and that the church is now on the Historic England Heritage at Risk Register. A plan for this work and how it can be funded, forms part of the brief for the St Helen's for the Future committee, and so the buildings team are currently focusing on smaller projects. However, we are monitoring the building carefully especially the water ingress during some of the winter storms.

Work to rewire the lighting in the Chancel was completed in February and March so we have now removed all the old cabling from the church, and repairs have been carried out to the concrete base at the High Altar.

In the summer we had a problem with pigeon infestations in the tower which had to be dealt with by pest control over a number of visits. Wire mesh panels have now been installed inside the tower louvres by heritage builders, and repairs carried out to worn doorways, to prevent access by birds in the future.

Damp remains an issue in the church and this year, as part of a major clean, we removed all the salting from pillars and external walls to prevent it being reabsorbed back into the stonework. We have also cleared weeds and leaves from the surface gullies on the south side of the church to enable rainwater to flow away from the building – this job will need doing regularly.

As mentioned, a team of people helped to spring clean the church and Heritage Centre, to declutter the vestry, and to deep clean the kitchen. We have also sorted and identified all the various church keys and created an up-to-date key register.

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Fabric Report (continued)

Our Community Heritage Centre is no longer a new building and this year the lobby lights, office window shutter, and dishwasher have all needed to be repaired. We do as much preventative maintenance as we can but over time more repairs will be needed.

As ever if you do notice any problems with our buildings, please let us know.

Helen Smith, Chair of the Buildings Group

St Helen's for the future

This group of 10 members of St Helen's has continued to meet during 2025 to formulate and discuss major repairs and developments to our church building. Early in the year we visited the parish church at Barrow on Trent – a church which has undergone a major reordering in order to be of use to the community. This was a useful visit to hear what they had done and to get some advice.

Having got some rough ideas and consulted the PCC, we held two congregational and community events to try to engage others in these discussions. Despite many emails or letters being sent, only a few from the community came but the feeling was positive. We had a further discussion after the Annual Meeting which was also positive.

We have been grateful for support from two Diocesan Officers – Gill Elliott whose focus is on Building Development and Atarah Adams whose focus is on churches that are on the Heritage at Risk Register. We also had a site visit from members of the Diocesan Advisory Committee to get some early advice in how to proceed.

At the end of 2025, we were preparing to send a Project Enquiry Form to the National Heritage Lottery Fund.

Sue Field, Chair of the St Helen's for the Future group.

Report from the Parish Office

As a (part-time) employee but not a member of the church I perhaps am bringing a different perspective on the church year. Whether alone or with people present in the office and building, the work is non-stop, which emphasises what an active church community this is. All the church people I have regular contact with are fabulously friendly and supportive, and the office facilities would be envied by many church administrators, making working here a positive experience.

This year we have had the replacement of the printer/photocopier with a similar but updated version as the previous contract had completed. A mobile phone has been purchased to facilitate everything from two-factor authentication to checking on Facebook posts while out-and-about. The office has registered for free access to a "professional" Canva account, which is used extensively for producing posters etc, and two church members have also taken up the opportunity to benefit from this for their church related design work.

Besides the obvious times of Easter and Christmas, the other busy times have been during the preparation of volunteer rotas in January, May and September, and surprisingly in the summer with the fantastic range of activities which take place over the holiday period.

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(continued)

Report from the Parish Office (continued)

The time in the office is just about sufficient for the support of existing church activities. The challenge going forward is to develop new approaches or introduce new systems, which would make office activities more efficient and compliant with the increasing complexity and legal responsibilities of the modern world.

Tim James

Servers

The Serving Team have continued to be present at our regular 10.30am Sunday Eucharist services, as well as supporting services at Festival Times.

One of the Team has been in attendance at the midweek communion.

Eileen Barradell stood down during 2025 as Head Server and Sacristan after many years of very loyal service. Thankfully, she remained in the serving team, sharing her wisdom and knowledge.

Thank you so much Eileen for all that you have done and given to St. Helen's over the years. May you continue to wrestle with the acolyte candle for many years to come!

Alison Andrews, Head Server/Sacristan

Willesley School visits

It continues to be an enormous privilege and source of joy to be able to welcome children from Willesley Primary School to our church and to our church family.

It enables the opportunity to work with the children and their adults, within the school R E curriculum providing experiences and activities that can explore the beliefs and teaching, practices and way of life of our Christian community. One of the key aspects of the time that the children spend in church, is opening up the building for them to explore, showing that it is a place of worship to be respected, but ensuring that we show the warmth of welcome for all.

Celebrating Harvest: The roof of the church was once again raised with the singing of Key Stage 2 children and their families at their harvest celebration held in St Helen's in October. Reverend Sue Field and I attended Key stage 2 Christmas nativity productions for Willesley and also Woodcote primary.

From September 2025 significant changes have been introduced to the primary RE curriculum which has had an impact on planning and arranging dates for the year groups to come to our church. We will, however, be welcoming and sharing time with Years 3,4 and 5 in the spring and summer terms of 2026.

It is a privilege provided by God to welcome and include children to our church. They are our tomorrow, so, let us welcome them today.

Elizabeth Smith

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(continued)

Messy Church and children's workshops

St Helens and VB Coleorton Messy church

It has been a very exciting year for Messy Church. During the year it was decided that it was time to review messy church. In the summer a consultation was launched to find out the views and ideas of children and families. A picnic took place in the Heritage Centre giving time and space for people to think and share their thoughts and ideas. These were collected on a large piece of paper with people adding their ideas on post-its.

One definite thing that emerged from this process was to change the time of Messy Church from a Sunday afternoon. A new time was introduced for the autumn: 4.15pm-5.30pm on the first Friday of every month. It was also agreed by St Helen's PCC that Messy Church would be under St Helen's PCC but retain the partnership with St Mary's Coleorton.

The review coincided with BRF Ministries Messy Momentum project funded by the Church of England, launched in 2025. The project is to boost engagement with young people in Messy Churches across the UK.

The project has six pilot approaches aiming to help deepen the faith of children as they grow older and continue their faith journey.

Our Messy church is signed up for the Messy Momentum pilot "Intentionally Intergern (aye-aye)"

The journey is for 2 years.

As part of this –

I am attending a Youth Escape essentials course.

We will submit regular data which will be collected from all pilots over the 2 years.

Complete an annual survey (December 2025 has been submitted)

The PCC of St Helens also receives £250 to be used in resources for messy church.

This is an exciting time for Messy Church and it is hoped that more growth will occurring next year and links made with other outreach groups that are part of the St Helen's community e.g. PRG, Little Fishes, We're in Stitches.

Elizabeth Smith

Choir and Music

Choral Director's Report

Full Choir

During 2025, the regular core choir consisted of four sopranos, five altos, three tenors and, with Will's voice settling, two basses. Two of our former trebles, Emily and Aimie, headed off to university in the autumn but it was wonderful to have them back at Christmas together with our other regular 'extras'. It has been great to have Jenny return to the fold as well to sing whenever she is able.

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(continued)

Choir and Music (Continued)

Special Services

We were delighted to be joined by Christopher Ouvry-Johns and members of the Leicester Cathedral Choir for our Candlemass Evensong. It was wonderful to join our voices together in rich and vibrant praise with pieces that required the boosted number of singers.

Sunday Soirées continued to be very successful during 2025. We were treated to performances by Hannah Matthews (trumpet), The Capriccio Ensemble, Andrew Chapman (organ), Caroline Essex & Caroline Summers (vocal duet), Sue Field & Jeremy Kimber (Two pianos) and Loca Wind Quintet. The highlight was very definitely Music for Two Pianos not only in a musical sense but with a packed church who were generous in their donations.

In June we took part in a special service to commemorate the anniversary of VE Day and in December we were pleased to sing for the Carol Service at Staunton Harold and the Ashby Strings Christmas Concert as well as our usual Advent and Christmas Carol Services.

Music

We purchased two new pieces of music for the choir during the year and introduced nine other new pieces either from currently held stock or borrowed from other choirs.

The new hymn books came into use in 2025 having been purchased through generous donations from the congregation, topped up from the Music Fund. These, together with our printed booklet of songs, have enabled us to keep enriching our worship with the introduction of new hymns.

I would like to express my thanks to Anna and Andrew for their continued support during the year and to the choir, including our lovely 'extras', for their hard work and dedication which is what keeps the choral tradition at St Helen's going strong.

Caroline Essex, Choral Director

Choral Assistant's Report

Junior Choir

Whilst I enjoyed my last few weeks of maternity leave, Junior Choir began the year in the expert hands of Caroline Essex. They sang 2 songs on Mothering Sunday including Rutter's anthem "For the Beauty of the Earth" with the main St Helen's Choir. We also welcomed new member, Alice.

Over the summer several Junior Choir members said their goodbyes: Delilah, Jessica and Ruth (who is now a probationer chorister at Derby Cathedral). Everyone at St Helen's wishes them all the best as they continue their musical journeys.

One of first jobs back after maternity leave was to aim to increase the number of Junior Choir members. As part of the Little Fishes Summer Holiday sessions with the help of Caroline (and Sam in his pushchair!) I ran a Junior Choir 'taster' session. This was attended by 3 children, including Riley, who sang with us at Harvest and Christingle along with Grace, who often comes to services at St Helens. During my October Half Term I visited Viscount Beaumont C of E to run another taster session for the whole school. This was very well received by both the pupils and staff. These sessions combined with advertising Christingle rehearsals increased Junior Choir numbers to 11 for the 2 November rehearsals.

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(continued)

Choir and Music (Continued)

4 members of Junior Choir performed 3 songs at the Harvest All-Age service and 9 members sang at the Christingle service. These numbers were slightly less than expected due to illness.

Anna Haines

Organist's Report

Music Group / Duet

- + continued to play for the All Age Service on the first Sunday of the month until December
- + Pete H (guitar), John Allan (guitar) myself (piano), being the regular musicians

Organ & Pianos

- + The organ continues to be tuned twice a year, - and is generally in pretty good order – I continue to liaise with the tuners – Cousans Organs (based in Coalville)
- + During 2024 we had quotes from Cousans Organs & Mike Thompson, for renovations to the organ. Following advice from Paul Hale, we invited Henry Groves & Son (Nottingham) to provide a further quote (received in July), which we accepted (approximately £170,000 including VAT). There is clearly some serious fund raising required, and initial discussions have taken place.
- + The piano keeps reasonably in tune, but before one our soirees (for 2 pianos), it had a thorough tuning and clean; and now is much more responsive and tonally responsive.
- + The digital piano jointly owned with Concordia Choir continues to be securely stored in the Heritage Centre - being used few times (by both owners) during 2025

I wish to acknowledge the support of Howard Marriott, Laurence Rodgers and Jeremy Kimber who have played the organ on occasions when I have been on leave.

Andrew Chapman, Organist

Connections

In 2025, we held two special day-long “Connections” sessions. These days were designed to help us spend time in God’s presence and to grow deeper in our discipleship. We focused on connecting with God, with ourselves, with others, and with creation.

The first session took place during the inspiring weekend, Crying in the Silicon Wilderness, led by Rev Dr Romola Parish. Romola’s ministry centres on using creative arts to help people explore faith and experience God more deeply. She shared her beautiful, embroidered artworks, each paired with a meditation on themes of brokenness and restoration. She also led us in a day of quiet reflection and creative expression, which many found deeply rewarding.

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(continued)

Connections (continued)

Later in the year, in October, we welcomed Revd Dr Rhona Knight. As the clocks went back and the evenings grew darker, she reminded us that this season can be a good time to slow down and reflect. She introduced us to a simple prayer practice called the Examen, shaped by the teaching of Ignatius of Loyola. Rhona encouraged us to “Pause to Breathe” and showed us how even five minutes of prayerful reflection can bring surprising depth and insight.

We plan to continue our Connections sessions in 2026. We will begin with a Lent Course, followed by two or three further gatherings during the year.

These will be simple opportunities to come together, be still, and remember the words of Psalm 46:10: “Be still and know that I am God.”

Grace and Peace

Andy Smith

Events and Activities Team (EAT)

The Events and Activities team met twice during 2025 with the purpose of overseeing the various events that happen at St Helen’s so that we can work together and also to avoid any clashes or near misses with dates!

Those who attend the meeting represent Heritage, We’re in Stitches, Young people’s workshops, Social Committee and concerts. During the year we have hosted a few external concerts including those by LUMOS, a national company which is a commercial organisation, and two concerts by Ashby Strings. Because of the Soirées and these concerts, the church now has a Performing Rights Society licence.

On the weekend of the early May Bank Holiday, we were able to host an exhibition by the embroidery artist and priest, Romola Parish. The church was open from Saturday to Monday with a preview event on the Friday evening. Members of the public visited throughout the weekend and refreshments were served on two of the days. Romola led a workshop on the Saturday and the event concluded on the Monday with a piano duet lunchtime concert.

The other areas covered by EAT have their own reports in this booklet.

Sue Field

Social Committee

SOCIAL COMMITTEE (Alison Andrews, Shan Dyer, Eileen Coombs, Adrienne Sedgeman)

We are a small but perfectly formed committee! Our first full year in operation has been busy and sometimes challenging as we find our way. The church held a Bring and Share Lunch when we were visited by Hoveraid, the lunch co-ordinated by us. We were able to support the Embroidery Exhibition in May which was organised by Helen Smith, by providing refreshments from the Ringing Chamber. In July we hosted a barbecue at the Heritage Centre, making the most of the lovely summer weather. We held our second Christmas Cracker evening in December and it was lovely to see increasing

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Social Committee (continued)

attendees at that occasion. The Social Committee Also provided the refreshments served at the Soirées. We would like to say a big Thank You to everyone who has supported our social events and for volunteering when we need help. We have already discussed what events we will be planning for 2026 so keep a look out!

Alison Andrews

St Helen's Bellringers

In 2025, the bells were rung for 4 weddings thanks to the continued support of ringers from neighbouring churches and the local ringers.

We welcomed 3 groups of visiting ringers in May, June and December.

We sadly said goodbye to two ringers during the year, Michael Davidson passed away on 21st September 2025, he was the Tower Captain at St. Helen's for 25 years. A quarter peal of Grandsire Triples was rung on 10th October immediately after the service to celebrate his life. On 11th October a peal of Bristol Royal was also rung for him. He was very well respected by all the ringers at St Helen's and all the local towers he rang at and a long-term friend to many. Peggy Adams passed away on 10th October 2025, Peggy had been a keen ringer for many years at St. Helen's.

During the year, we have managed to ring for the majority of Sunday Services with the support of ringers from other towers, and again with outside help, we rang on Christmas morning. I would like to express my thanks to all the ringers for keeping St. Helen's bells ringing.

In November, Taylor's Bell Foundry carried out an inspection on the bells. This is a free service they offer on an annual basis. I am pleased report there was very little work required, a couple of headstock bolts needed tightening, and the tenor rope needed replacing. Thanks to Dave Gammon and Sarah Hale from Packington for helping me to replace the rope, however, when we changed the rope, it was raining heavily and the rain was pouring through the roof, and as a result of this we now need to ring down the treble, 2nd and 3rd bells to stop the rain getting into them. Once the roof has been fixed, we will arrange for Taylor's to do a full inspection which will incur a cost and which could highlight any issues due to prolonged water damage.

Unfortunately, the ringers are no longer able to put up and take down the flags due to other family commitments and health issues, with the help of local ringers any minor repairs to the bells can be undertaken by ourselves.

Catherine Baker, Acting Tower Captain

Heritage Centre

The Community Heritage Centre continues to give us an opportunity to engage with our wider community and is a valuable resource for the church. Outreach activities hosted by St Helen's in the Heritage Centre include Little Fishes, Messy Church, Street Pastors, Heritage Talk series, Warm Hearted Space and We're In Stitches. Activities are well attended and through them we are able to extend our hospitality to people who don't normally attend church and to get to know them.

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Heritage Centre (continued)

Room hire helps to cover the running cost of the Heritage Centre, as do contributions from many of the activities mentioned above. The centre is popular with local fitness, wellbeing, and language tutors as well as being the venue for Ashby Strings and The Civic Society. One off bookings are for parties, workshops, and bookings associated with events in church such as baptisms, funerals, and concerts.

The Community Heritage Centre is also well used for church activities throughout the year and provides the base for our staff. Apart from the weekly refreshments after Sunday services the centre is booked for meetings of the PCC, Ministry Team, St Helen's for the Future, We're In Stitches planning meetings, Buildings Group, study groups and marriage preparation. PRG love having the opportunity to cook and eat together and the Social Committee makes full use of the catering facilities for social gatherings.

So, although the Centre is well used there are still a lot of people in Ashby who don't know what a great facility we have behind that wooden gate. In 2025 we received a grant from The Ferrers and Ivanhoe Lodge to help us promote the facility and to increase the use by hirers and community groups.

Helen Smith

Community Heritage Garden

Volunteers:

Regulars - Peter Maunder, Martin Vaughan, Simon Starkey, Rob & Caroline Millward,

Activities:

Mainly trimming, pruning, cutting back, grass mowing & strimming, watering, repairing/removing worn posts alongside the central path, WEEDING, & planting in the gaps!

The roofing felt from one of the sheds still needs replacing. The central pathway and area at the top of the garden is very hard to keep weed free, and could really do with improving/replacing.

I have not been very much involved during 2025, and most of the regular maintenance has been carried out by Rob & Caroline.

Andrew Chapman

Heritage Events

We are privileged to use the Heritage Centre to showcase the fascinating heritage of our site, with a regular winter programme of talks plus an additional heritage talk during the July Festival of Archaeology. Our talks have an average audience of around 40 people and up to 60 on occasion. From January to March 2025, we hosted three speakers: Claire Strachan talked about 'Small things forgotten: Churches & the little stories of parish life in post-medieval England'; Peter Liddle spoke on 'Roman Villas & peasant farms' and Lesley Rowe talked about a seventeenth century vicar, 'Samuel Shaw (1635-1698): Little man with a big impact'. In July we welcomed John Thomas from the University of Leicester Archaeological Services to talk about Burrough Hill Iron Age Hill Fort.

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(continued)

Heritage Events (continued)

Anne Heaton and I delivered two successful tours in July as part of the Festival of Archaeology, one of the church and one on the churchyard. The churchyard tour continues to be very popular.

For 'Hello Heritage' in September, we designed an A2 board for the churchyard gates, this year on the archaeology beneath our feet. On Saturday 13th September we held an Open Day for both church and heritage centre, alongside the annual 'ride & stride' event. We offered mini-tours of the church, information about our archaeology and archaeology explore boxes for children.

At the end of September, our winter series of 6 heritage talks began. Gay Evans returned to talk about Albert Isaiah Coffin, a 19th century doctor or – possibly – a quack; in late October Susan Kilby gave a fascinating talk on place names in Charnwood Forest and in Moira Ackers spoke on Henry Grey's monument at Bradgate.

Research into the history of St Helen's Church and its people is ongoing. Our current active research strand is into the history of the churchyard and the people who rest there.

Julie Starkey

Prior Park Ministry

Attendance at Tea Time over the last year has continued to fall as some had passed away, others moved to care/nursing homes and some too frail to come down to the hall. The few who came enjoyed the delicious homemade cakes and the companionship of others.

On the second Wednesday of each month, we have a communion service in the small community hall and the attendance has been very encouraging over the last year, averaging 14-18 each time. After each service, tea/ coffee and biscuits are always served for further fellowship.

A Christmas Carol service was held in the big Community Centre led by Revd. Sue Field, followed by refreshments.

Eileen Coombs

Welcome and Hospitality

The church is open every day during daylight hours, welcoming everyone who wishes to come in, sit quietly, pray or merely to enjoy the tranquillity of our beautiful historic building. For centuries, people from all walks of life have come and worship, give thanks, pray and be blessed. This tradition is very important to us and we want to keep it going.

Flower arrangements adorn various areas of the church, lovely to be admired and an aid to worship. Colourful notice boards displaying posters and notices keep the congregation and visitors updated of services and upcoming events in church and in the wider community.

Tea lights are always available by St Michael's Chapel to remember loved ones. There are also vases by the Book of Remembrance area to put flowers in to remember loved ones on birthdays, anniversaries, or special occasions.

Eileen Coombs, Assistant Warden

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Parish Magazine

The Parish Magazine continues to be well received, with 80 copies printed and sold each month and a digital pdf being made available on the website. Readers are from the church congregation as well as the wider community. The magazine advertises upcoming church events, as well as featuring articles on topics of interest. Over the last year, we have included more overtly faith-based articles than previously and regular slots, such as the 'Gardening Tips' column, have continued to be very well received too. Wendy Freer should be thanked and commended for her many years contributing articles relating to local history. Articles about each of the charities we support prayerfully and financially have also been included in the magazine. New suggestions for articles are always welcome.

Emily Darlington (Editor)

Flower Arranging

Throughout the year, flower arrangements adorned the High Altar and the Choir Vase. At Christmas, Easter and Remembrance, there were flower pedestals or arrangements at the entrance, St Michael's Chapel, Lady Chapel, the High Altar, by the Choir Stalls and on the windowsills.

Margaret has continued to do the Advent wreath and Pastoral Candle for us and we are truly grateful.

A big Thank you to all the faithful and willing flower arrangers who, week by week, creatively and lovingly, put their skill and talent into creating works of art to adorn the church, making it warm, beautiful and welcoming to visitors.

Eileen Coombs (Flower Co-ordinator)

St Helen's Sound Team

Over the past 12 months the sound team have attempted to provide an operator for all the major services in the church. We believe this is an essential part of the church life ensuring the services can be clearly heard by all listeners. We have lost one member of the team.

We are still keen to get others involved in this part of the churches work. It's not difficult; training and support will be given. For more information, please contact Simon (simon.starkey@gmail.com) or any member of the sound team. Any feedback about the quality of the service is gratefully received.

We have done some system maintenance but are pausing any upgrade plans till the reordering project.

Simon Starkey

Priest Room Gang (PRG)

Hospitality and supporting and serving others.

There are 10 young people who are members of the PRG. The young people meet on Thursday evenings 5.00-6.30pm every fortnight in term time and more often by arrangement, in the Community Heritage Centre. It is a time for the young people to come together sharing food and friendship and importantly for them to have time to step back from their busy lives and school.

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Priest Room Gang (PRG) (continued)

Some time is always spent at each meeting reflecting and recognising the pattern of the church's year from Advent through to harvest.

During the year one member and two former members of PRG had their 18th birthdays. There was no time to celebrate due to exams (GCSE and A level) so in July we had a celebration event with drinks and canapes. A time of celebration and recognition of the all the hard work had been done and look forward to new steps in the next academic year.

In the autumn the group welcomed several members of the St Helen's family who came and shared their work and life experiences and also, their faith journey and their part in the community of St Helen's church.

In September the group visited Ashby Castle (free!) The visit included exploring the castle and the grounds and finding out more about the Hastings family and the connection to St Helen's.

The sun shone!

The plan for November was to host another meal "a time of thanks and gratitude" inviting family and those who support the group to a shared meal. After a great deal of planning and re-planning it proved impossible to find a date and time that would suit everyone, so it was agreed to postpone it until early 2026.

In 2026 it is hoped that there will be opportunists to build fellowship and partnership with other young people from the town and church communities and link in with the Messy Church pilot project "Intentionally Intergen."

My thanks go to everyone who support young people and especially to Emily Darlington.

Elizabeth Smith

Eco Group

The free supply of 2 extra 'green' bins has been withdrawn by NWLDC: Ashby Town Council offered to provide a 1100 litre wheeled skip - an impractical replacement. Therefore, a church member offered to fund the 2 extra 'green' bins (cost £57/yr). We will now have to apply for these 2 permits each year. Work has been ongoing throughout the year, cutting back and tidying the churchyard circular beds and borders, and the Heritage Centre garden, and weeding around the Heritage and church buildings and churchyard walls and paths. Supported by church members, garden working parties were held on 12/4/25, 5/7/25 & 2/8/25. A member of the congregation donated 200 Spring flowering bulbs which were planted in the Heritage Centre garden in October. A request was sent to Ashby Town Council asking for action/support in improving the planted area at east end of the churchyard; in June, a church member and I met Ashby Chief Groundsman for suggestions of how to tidy this border along Upper Church Street wall. His plan is to gradually cut down the weeds, level the ground and return the whole area to grass, then to be strimmed and mowed.

On 19/9/25, a meeting was held to discuss the group's next steps and actions: we decided to share weekly 'eco tips' in the pew sheets in the lead-up to Christmas. An article was published in December's Parish Magazine with a summary of our suggestions of ways to promote a 'greener' Christmas. Checks have been made to ensure that cleaning materials used on-site are eco-friendly, and a receptacle has been placed in the Heritage Centre kitchen for soft plastic/film recycling.

Caroline Millward

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Friends Fellowship and Faith Group

The group met twice a month throughout 2025 at my home. Numbers attending were between 6–8 each session. We continued to get to know one another in a relaxed and informal way always with the added bonus of tea and cake!

Jenny Hedges

Pause for Paws

Pause for Paws has now been running for over a year since its launch in October 2024. It runs on the first Saturday of each month, offering an open door to the church building and a warm welcome for dogs and people.

There is a small team of volunteers and usually a team of 3 for each session.

It is going well with a positive response to those that pass by both with and without dogs.

During the year the time of opening was changed from 10.15-12.15pm to 9.30-11.30am as it seemed that people generally walk their dogs earlier.

The use of the west door is a great advantage and people with and without dogs are more inclined to stop and wonder/ have a chat and then come in and look. People are now taking time in church. For one person it has been a place for her to come for quiet reflection and friendship following the passing away of her dog.

Each session begins with a time of prayer at 9.25am and there is a notebook for reflections by volunteers from each session.

We are planning a pet service in June 2026. We are looking forward to spreading the welcome message further in 2026.

Elizabeth Smith

We're in Stitches

We're in Stitches is an outreach group to our local community. It is a friendly, supportive place where ladies meet and stitch (in its many forms,) with expert help on hand, by a team who kindly share their talents. We now meet twice a month on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday afternoons. We regularly get between 12 and 20 attending. We have also had 2 separate full day workshops when all the sewing machines have been available, and again, expert advice/ help shared.

Last summer we were pleased to offer 4 evening talks on textile related subjects, in the Heritage centre, which were appreciated by the folks who attended.

Mo Clark

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Little Fishes

Little Fishes continued to thrive during 2025. Although numbers attending do fluctuate throughout the year, we continued to average around 20 children each week.

As in 2024, attendance dipped during the autumn term and, noticeably, so did donations; we generally receive around £1 per adult but on several occasions, this was closer to 50p per adult. This meant that on a number of weeks we did not cover our costs (providing a healthy snack and giving a donation to PCC for use of the hall). However, we do not want to compromise on what we offer and, as we have a healthy buffer in the Little Fishes fund, we have no plans to alter anything at present, though we will keep an eye on our income vs expenditure during 2026.

In June we organised a social evening for parents/grandparents; Helen Smith very kindly organised a flower arranging activity and we then provided a meal. The evening was much appreciated and we hope to hold a similar event early in 2026.

It was sad to say goodbye to some long-standing members of Little Fishes in July. As is our custom, we marked the occasion with gifts for the children and were delighted to receive cards and gifts of appreciation in return.

During the summer holiday we held two sessions which, again, were very well received. We also took the opportunity to promote Junior Choir with Anna Haines leading a singing session in church for older siblings who attended.

As part of our mission to try and encourage our Little Fishes families to become more involved in our church services, we linked craft activities to some of our special services (Harvest, Christingle etc) and invited families to come to the services where the results were displayed.

As ever, we are grateful to all the volunteers who generously give their time each week to make Little Fishes happen.

Caroline Essex

"Pilgrim Group"

"Pilgrim" – Learning together to be disciples.

The Pilgrim group has continued to meet most Monday evenings and, as in previous years, have studied a range of topics. We began the year with a look at Women of the Old Testament and then moved on to the videos which accompany the book which the church studied during Lent – Practicing the Way, which I think challenged us all about how seriously we take our discipleship. We went on to look at The Nicene Creed, given that 2025 is its 1700th anniversary. We concluded the year with an Advent course which reflected on the Journey of the Magi. It's fair to say that one doesn't always know how well any material will work until we try it! But overall, we have been encouraged and challenged in our discipleship, both by the various materials and by one another. Between each set of studies, we usually set aside an evening to relax over a shared meal. Although we now have 11 members [one has moved away], not everyone is able to come every week and we would warmly welcome additions to the group – please talk to Judith Lewis if you would like to know more.

Judith Lewis

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Warm Hearted Space

This initiative has been going for 2 years now and every Friday afternoon sees some regulars and some new visitors. The Heritage Centre provides a warm, safe and welcoming space for anyone to drop in, enjoy cups of tea/coffee, catch up with friends, and make new friends. It is adult and child friendly. There is no charge and it is an excellent way to meet people and socialise in a safe and warm environment.

The last session of the year was an Intergenerational one as Messy Church was held after this event and many stayed behind to observe or help.

Do come to the Heritage Centre, bring a friend or two, EVERY Friday from 2-4pm and enjoy the warm and hospitality.

Eileen Coombs & Elizabeth Smith

St Helen's Website & Facebook

There have been very few changes to the website over the past year. Tim James and Julie Starkey continue as website administrators. Between us, we keep the 'What's On' pages up to date, add a list of services each month, upload the Parish Magazine and add short reports of previous activities.

The Heritage pages continue to develop, with new research articles added from time to time, creating an online resource for visitors and researchers.

Julie Starkey & Tim James

Deanery Synod

The deanery synod has met 4 times over the last year. Mostly what has been discussed has been about the Minster communities, and also about keeping updated on safeguarding. There have been a few laity group meetings arranged, for folks to ask questions about the proposed minister communities. In May there was a Deanery day event where there were workshops, and shared meals, and a time of outdoor worship and time for prayer.

Over the year we said goodbye to our Area Dean and chair, the Revd Canon Gill Pinnington and wished her well in her retirement. In December we welcomed our new Area Dean and chair, Revd Darren Walker.

Mo Clark

Treasurer's Report – Financial Year 2025

2025 has been a challenging year financially. As of 31 December 2025, St. Helen's funds totalled £119,343, with a deficit of £17,884 for the financial year.

- ◆ Our expenditure has increased by only £1,300 from the previous year (up by 0.9%).

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Treasurer's Report – Financial Year 2025 (continued)

- ◆ There were a few unexpected expenses.
 - In July, we noticed that some of the mesh in the tower had come loose, which drew some pigeons to nest in it. We spent £2,250 on the pest control.
 - The tower repair to keep the pigeons out cost £1,638.
 - The cleaning fees for the Heritage Centre had not been invoiced for three years. The bill amounted to £2,916. From 2026, the cleaning fees will be paid for within the same year.
 - The repair of the dishwasher in the kitchen cost £690.38.
- ◆ Our income has significantly dropped by 20% in 2025.
 - We received £77,766 from Planned Giving and Gift Aid, which was 6% higher than the previous year.
 - The other donations were reduced by £15,948.
 - Activities for Generating Funds (mainly income from room hire and events) decreased by £14,666. The primary reason for the change was the decrease in room hire.
- ◆ £4,000 donation was made to eight organisations: Ashby Youth For Christ, Loughborough Town of Sanctuary, Open Doors, HoverAid Trust, Ashby Street Pastors, The Phoenix Children's Foundation, Ashby Foodbank and Leicester Diocesan Guild Bell Restoration Fund.

St. Helen's current finances remain fine. The church has more than £34,313 in its general funds, and the PCC policy is to keep £14,000 of it "in reserve" in case of an unexpected event or set of circumstances. There is also £70,421 in the Legacy Fund, which will be used for major building works.

When planning for 2026, the PCC continues to allocate resources carefully to meet our needs and achieve our mission. This includes:

- ◆ £14,650 on church buildings (2% decrease from 2025)
- ◆ £4,300 on charitable donations (5% of the income from giving and general donations in 2025)
- ◆ £51,000 on Parish Contribution (3.8% increase on 2025)
- ◆ £24,234 on salaries (1% increase on 2025 – based on National Living Wage – with the organist reducing his rota)
- ◆ £3,782 on Services (The payments to occasional organists will be put under Services.)

Assuming we do not increase our planned giving and donations, this budget estimates a £21,000 deficit. To establish a healthy financial situation, we must increase our income through personal giving and activities that generate funds. Let us pray and reflect on whether we can increase our contributions.

Catalina Chan

Heritage Centre

Under the provisions of the PCC (Powers) Measure 1956, the PCC does not own property in their own right. The Heritage Centre is vested in the Leicester Diocesan Board of Finance (LDBF). LDBF acts as the custodian trustee for the Heritage Centre while the PCC retains operational control.

The Heritage Centre is therefore not included as an asset in the accounts.

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STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES

The members of the PCC, who are also trustees of the charity, are responsible for preparing the trustees' report and the accounts in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

The trustees are required to prepare accounts for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the PCC and of the incoming resources and application of resources of the PCC during the year.

In preparing those financial statements, the PCC is required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- prepare the financial statements in accordance with the Church Representation Rules;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the PCC will continue in operation.

The PCC is responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time, the financial position of the PCC and to enable the PCC to ensure that the financial statements comply with the requirements referred to above. The PCC is also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

This report has been prepared in accordance with the Church Representation Rules and applicable UK Accounting Standards

Approved by the PCC on 17th March 2026 and signed on its behalf by:



[Sue Field \(Mar 30, 2026 12:23:13 GMT+1\)](#)

Rev'd Canon Sue Field
PCC Chair

The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of
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**INDEPENDENT EXAMINERS' REPORT TO THE PCC/TRUSTEES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2025**

I report to the PCC on my examination of the Receipts & Payments Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2025 which are set out on pages 25 to 32.

Responsibilities and basis of report

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

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

Independent Examiner's Statement

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

(1) accounting records were not kept in respect of the Trust as required by section 130 of the Act; or

(2) that accounts do not accord with those records; or

(3) that accounts do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than the requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair view' which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

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



[Simon Latham \(Mar 30, 2026 13:01:29 GMT+1\)](#)

Simon Latham
Gelsmoor
Rempstone Road
Coleorton
Leicestershire
LE67 8 HQ

**ST HELEN'S CHURCH, ASHBY DE LA ZOUCH
PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL**

**Receipts & Payments Account
for the year ended
31 December 2025**

RECEIPTS	Note	2025			2024		
		Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total
Donations & Legacies							
Planned Giving		60,747	-	60,747	58,569	-	58,569
Loose Plate Collections & Donations		5,602	-	5,602	4,040	-	4,040
Legacies		-	-	-	-	-	-
Other giving	5	3,219	2,029	5,248	2,008	20,750	22,758
Gift aid		15,973	1,046	17,019	14,522	-	14,522
Total Donations & legacies		85,541	3,075	88,616	79,139	20,750	99,889
Grants	6	-	598	598	-	6,693	6,693
Other income							
Activities for generating funds	7	19,703	1,253	20,956	33,982	1,640	35,622
Fees - Weddings & Funerals		12,549	-	12,549	10,724	30	10,754
Bank interest		2,349	-	2,349	3,152	-	3,152
Collections funds		-	968	968	-	1,843	1,843
Sundry income		60	-	60	231	-	231
Total receipts		120,202	5,894	126,096	127,228	30,956	158,184
PAYMENTS							
Charitable Activities							
Parish Contribution		49,130	-	49,130	44,660	-	44,660
Charitable Donations		4,050	-	4,050	6,050	433	6,483
Employment Costs		24,022	-	24,022	19,412	-	19,412
Running Costs		37,032	1,695	38,727	31,679	4,120	35,799
Fees - Weddings & Funerals		6,723	-	6,723	5,846	140	5,986
Building Maintenance & Development		4,734	15,738	20,472	816	27,444	28,260
Collections funds		-	856	856	-	2,080	2,080
Total payments		125,691	18,289	143,980	108,463	34,217	142,680
Net receipts/ (payments)		(5,489)	(12,395)	(17,884)	18,765	(3,261)	15,504
Transfers between funds		(5,900)	5,900	-	(5,195)	5,195	-
Cash funds @ 31.12.2024		51,405	85,822	137,227	37,835	83,888	121,723
Cash funds @ 31.12.2025		40,016	79,327	119,343	51,405	85,822	137,227

**ST HELEN'S CHURCH, ASHBY DE LA ZOUCH
PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL**

**Statement of Assets and Liabilities
as at 31 December 2025**

CASH FUNDS	Note	<u>2025</u>			<u>2024</u>		
		Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds
Bank Current Account		12,191	112	12,303	9,510	-	9,510
Bank Deposit Account		27,825	79,215	107,040	41,895	85,822	127,717
Total cash funds		40,016	79,327	119,343	51,405	85,822	137,227
INCOME NOT YET BANKED							
Cash	3	3,860	-	3,860	4,711	1,000	5,711
		3,860	-	3,860	4,711	1,000	5,711
LIABILITIES							
Suppliers	4	2,216	112	2,328	4,202	5,501	9,703
		2,216	112	2,328	4,202	5,501	9,703
REPRESENTED BY							
Funds	13/14	40,016	79,327	119,343	51,405	85,822	137,227
		40,016	79,327	119,343	51,405	85,822	137,227

The receipts & payments accounts were approved by the PCC on 17 March 2026 and were signed on their behalf by:

S E Field
Sue Field (Mar 30, 2026 12:23:13 GMT+1)

Rev'd Canon Sue Field
PCC Chair

**ST HELEN'S CHURCH, ASHBY DE LA ZOUCH
PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL**

**Notes to the Accounts
for the year ended
31 December 2025**

1 Basis of preparation

The financial statements of the PCC have been prepared in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations using the Receipts and Payments basis.

2 Third Party Fundraising

All funds passing through the PCC accounts are shown as income and expenditure, including specific "Collections Funds" that are collected on behalf of, and then forwarded on to, third parties.

3 Income invoiced/received not yet banked

At the end of the financial year the following income had been invoiced or received but not yet banked:

	2025	2024
Wall safe & Loose plate collections	-	915
Contribution towards Rectors expenses	580	645
Sum Up - CollectTin church donations	185	132
Gift aid	1,203	1,906
Events income	30	30
Refreshment income	10	-
Parish Magazine advertisements	480	-
Room Hire - Heritage Centre	1,372	2,083
	3,860	5,711

4 Expenditure not yet paid

At the end of the financial year the following expenditure related to 2025 but was paid in 2026:

	2025	2024
Payroll Services	75	150
Telephone	55	56
Gas	196	345
Electric	511	509
Expenses	1,228	2,317
Building repairs	-	851
Conservation work - Selina Memorial	-	4,650
Occasional Office Disbursements	151	825
Collections to be paid (restricted)	112	-
	2,328	9,703

5 Other Giving

	2025			2024		
	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total
General Fund	2,092	-	2,092	1,978	-	1,978
Building Fund	-	700	700	-	14,000	14,000
Bell Fund	-	694	694	-	4,861	4,861
Mothers Union	-	-	-	-	611	611
Organ Fund	-	635	635	-	60	60
Choir fund	142	-	142	-	-	-
Hymn Books	780	-	780	-	-	-
Little Fishes	85	-	85	-	-	-
PRG Trip	-	-	-	-	1,218	1,218
Flower Fund	120	-	120	30	-	30
	3,219	2,029	5,248	2,008	20,750	22,758

**ST HELEN'S CHURCH, ASHBY DE LA ZOUCH
PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL**

**Notes to the Accounts
for the year ended
31 December 2025**

6 Grants

	2025			2024		
	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total
Listed Place of Worship scheme	-	598	598	-	2,943	2,943
Ash Education Fund	-	-	-	-	1,376	1,376
Archbishops Council - Churchcare Grant	-	-	-	-	1,800	1,800
LPW Grant	-	-	-	-	574	574
	-	598	598	-	6,693	6,693

7 Activities for Generating Funds

	2025			2024		
	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total
Events and Activities	3,922	1,253	5,175	3,429	1,640	5,069
Room Hire	14,478	-	14,478	29,901	-	29,901
Magazine	227	-	227	370	-	370
Clergy Expenses Income	645	-	645	-	-	-
Refreshments	431	-	431	282	-	282
	19,703	1,253	20,956	33,982	1,640	35,622

8 Building Maintenance and Development

Building Maintenance refers to maintenance or repair works carried out on a planned or emergency basis to maintain or repair the buildings to allow the ongoing use of the buildings.

Building Development refers to (mainly) larger projects which improve and enhance the buildings or enable such improvements.

9 Building Fund

Given the historic nature of the church buildings, and a general lack of investment in recent times, it is important that funds are regularly transferred to the Buildings Fund to enable repairs and improvements to continue and keep the buildings in use.

10 Legacy Fund

The legacy fund is where significant sums given to the church are held. The PCC policy is for such funds to be used solely for the development of the buildings and grounds of St Helen's i.e. not for building maintenance or for day to day operating costs (unless specified by the donor).

**ST HELEN'S CHURCH, ASHBY DE LA ZOUCH
PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL**

**Receipts & Payments Account - Church
for the year ended
31 December 2025**

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	<u>2025</u>			<u>2024</u>		
RECEIPTS	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total
Planned giving	60,747	-	60,747	58,569	-	58,569
Loose Plate collection / CollectTin	5,602	-	5,602	4,090	-	4,090
Donations	3,169	2,029	5,198	1,958	20,750	22,708
Gift Aid	15,973	1,046	17,019	14,522	-	14,522
	85,491	3,075	88,566	79,139	20,750	99,889
Other income						
Occasional Offices	12,549	-	12,549	10,724	30	10,754
Charity Collections	-	968	968	-	1,843	1,843
Grants	-	598	598	-	6,693	6,693
Events	1,570	1,253	2,823	2,080	411	2,491
PRG Trip	-	-	-	-	1,229	1,229
Clergy Expenses Income	645	-	645	-	-	-
Refreshment	431	-	431	282	-	282
Parish Magazine	227	-	227	370	-	370
Room Hire	50	-	50	-	-	-
Bank interest	2,349	-	2,349	3,152	-	3,152
Other income	60	-	60	231	-	231
Total receipts	103,372	5,894	109,266	95,978	30,956	126,934
PAYMENTS						
Parish Contribution	49,130	-	49,130	44,660	-	44,660
Services	1,945	-	1,945	1,493	342	1,835
Choir/Music	3,860	48	3,908	1,574	-	1,574
Bell Expenditure	-	1,058	1,058	-	-	-
Salaries	17,470	-	17,470	13,172	-	13,172
Occasional Offices	6,723	-	6,723	5,846	140	5,986
Events & Trips	875	389	1,264	292	3,778	4,070
Refreshments	273	-	273	444	-	444
Expenses	3,334	196	3,530	2,235	-	2,235
Donations Given	4,050	-	4,050	6,050	433	6,483
Charity Collections	-	856	856	-	2,080	2,080
Utilities	3,754	-	3,754	4,882	-	4,882
Office	9,915	4	9,919	8,376	-	8,376
Insurance	6,855	-	6,855	6,227	-	6,227
Building - Cleaning	116	2,394	2,510	3	96	99
Building - planned	1,641	984	2,625	786	845	1,631
Building - repairs	-	10,115	10,115	-	23,432	23,432
Total payments	109,941	16,044	125,985	96,040	31,146	127,186
Gross receipts/(payments)	(6,569)	(10,150)	(16,719)	(62)	(190)	(252)
Transfers	(5,900)	5,900	-	(5,195)	5,195	-
Net receipts/(payments)	(12,469)	(4,250)	(16,719)	(5,257)	5,005	(252)

**ST HELEN'S CHURCH, ASHBY DE LA ZOUCH
PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL**

**Receipts & Payments Account - Heritage Centre
for the year ended
31 December 2025**

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	<u>2025</u>			<u>2024</u>		
	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total
RECEIPTS						
Donations	50	-	50	-	-	-
Events	2,352	-	2,352	1,349	-	1,349
Room Hire	14,428	-	14,428	29,901	-	29,901
Other income	-	-	-	-	-	-
Grants	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	16,830	-	16,830	31,250	-	31,250
PAYMENTS						
Salaries	6,552	-	6,552	6,240	-	6,240
Events	573	-	573	247	-	247
General Expenses	392	-	392	170	-	170
Utilities	3,516	-	3,516	4,181	-	4,181
Office	336	-	336	283	-	283
Insurance	1,404	-	1,404	1,275	-	1,275
Building - cleaning	2,951	25	2,976	27	-	27
Building - maintenance	-	1,400	1,400	-	955	955
Building - Repairs	26	820	846	-	2,116	2,116
Total payments	15,750	2,245	17,995	12,423	3,071	15,494
Gross receipts/(payments)	1,080	(2,245)	(1,165)	18,827	(3,071)	15,756
Transfers	-	-	-	-	-	-
Net receipts/(payments)	1,080	(2,245)	(1,165)	18,827	(3,071)	15,756

**ST HELEN'S CHURCH, ASHBY DE LA ZOUCH
PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL**

**Restricted Funds Analysis
for the year ended
31 December 2025**

13	Balance @ 1.1.2025	Receipts	Payments	Transfers	Balance @ 31.12.2025
Restricted Funds					
Building Fund	9,656	2,298	15,737	5,000	1,217
Mothers Union	269	-	-	-	269
Bell Fund	4,692	694	1,254	900	5,032
Legacy Fund	70,421	-	-	-	70,421
Garden Fund	314	-	-	-	314
Organ Fund	470	1,934	442	-	1,962
 <u>COLLECTIONS</u>					
Collections	-	318	318	-	-
Motor Neurone Disease Charity	-	187	187	-	-
Children's Society	-	112	-	-	112
Christian Aid	-	186	186	-	-
Mayors Collection	-	165	165	-	-
	85,822	5,894	18,289	5,900	79,327
 Designated Funds (unrestricted)					
Choir	4,486	773	2,119	2,020	5,160
PCC Charity Donations	800	-	4,000	3,200	-
Little Fishes	678	85	87	(220)	456
Hymn Books	-	780	1,182	402	-
Children & Young persons Ministry	45	-	19	-	26
Flower fund	23	220	182	-	61
	6,032	1,858	7,589	5,402	5,703
 General Funds					
Free reserves	45,373	118,344	118,102	(11,302)	34,313
Total Funds 31.12.2025	137,227	126,096	143,980	-	119,343

**ST HELEN'S CHURCH, ASHBY DE LA ZOUCH
PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL**

**Restricted Funds Analysis
for the year ended
31 December 2024**

14	Balance @ 1.1.2024	Receipts	Payments	Transfers	Balance @ 31.12.2024
Restricted Funds					
Building Fund	12,483	19,317	27,144	5,000	9,656
Mothers Union	-	611	342	-	269
Bell Fund	-	4,892	440	240	4,692
Legacy Fund	70,421	-	-	-	70,421
Garden Fund	314	-	-	-	314
Team	433	-	433	-	-
PRG Trip 2024	-	3,823	3,778	(45)	-
Organ Fund	-	470	-	-	470
 <u>COLLECTIONS</u>					
Phoenix Children's Charity	124	55	179	-	-
Children's Society	113	108	221	-	-
Christian Aid	-	407	407	-	-
Gifts	-	879	879	-	-
Fair Trade	-	94	94	-	-
Mayors Collection	-	205	205	-	-
Ripple Effect Charity	-	95	95	-	-
	83,888	30,956	34,217	5,195	85,822
 Designated Funds (unrestricted)					
Choir	2,221	1,444	817	1,638	4,486
PCC Charity Donations	800	-	6,000	6,000	800
Little Fishes	868	-	-	(190)	678
Children & Young persons Ministry	-	-	-	45	45
Flower fund	-	30	7	-	23
	3,889	1,474	6,824	7,493	6,032
 General Funds					
Free reserves	33,946	125,754	101,639	(12,688)	45,373
Total Funds 31.12.2024	121,723	158,184	142,680	-	137,227

Accounts

Charity Registration No: 1200922

**ST. HELEN'S CHURCH
ASHBY-DE-LA-ZOUCH**

Annual Report and Financial Statements

For the year ended

31 December 2024



The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of
Saint Helen, Ashby-de-la-Zouch

The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of
Saint Helen, Ashby-de-la-Zouch
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FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024**

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The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of
 Saint Helen, Ashby-de-la-Zouch
PCC REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

PCC Name: The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of
 Saint Helen, Ashby-de-la-Zouch

Charity Registration No: 1200922

Address: St Helen's Church
 3 Lower Church Street
 Ashby-de-la-Zouch
 Leicester
 LE65 1AA

Parochial Church Council Members:

Ex-officio member – Team Rector	Rev'd Susan Field	
Ex-officio member – Churchwarden	Judith Lewis	
Ex-officio member - Churchwarden	Anne Heaton	Resigned 16 April 2024
Treasurer	Catalina Chan	Co – opted 16 January 2024 and Appointed 16 April 2024
Ex- officio member / Reader – Parish Safeguarding Coordinator	Elizabeth Smith	
Vice Chair	Lynda Price	
PCC Secretary	Christopher Lewis	Resigned March 2024
Deanery Synod Rep	Maureen Clark	Co opted by Synod in June 2024
Deanery Synod Rep	Eileen Coombs	Until 16 April 2024
Electoral Roll Officer	Eileen Coombs	Elected as PCC member 16 April 2024
Giving Officer	Cornelia Wright	Resigned from PCC 16 April 2024 but still PGS officer
	Sam Blatherwick	
	Emily Darlington	
	Shan Dyer	
	Caroline Millward	
	Peter Rose	Appointed 16 April 2024
	Malcolm Salter	Appointed 16 April 2024
	Laura Tucker	Appointed 16 April 2024

All the PCC are also Trustees of the charity.

Independent Examiner: Richard Vann
 9 Saxon Way
 Ashby-de-la-Zouch
 Leicestershire
 LE65 2JR

Bankers: CAF Bank
 25 Kings Hill Avenue
 Kings Hill
 West Malling
 Kent
 MR19 4TA

The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of
Saint Helen, Ashby-de-la-Zouch

**PCC ANNUAL REPORT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024**

The PCC is pleased to present their report and financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2024.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Charity Commission's Receipts and Payments basis.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The PCC is a corporate body established by the Church of England. The PCC registered with the Charity Commission on 7 November 2022. The PCC operates under the Parochial Church Councils (Powers) Measure 1956 (as amended) and the Church Representation Rules (contained in Schedule 3 to the Synodical Government Measure 1969 as amended). The members of the PCC are the charity's trustees under charity law.

The PCC members are responsible for making decisions on all matters of general concern and importance to the parish, including deciding on how the funds of the PCC are to be spent.

PCC Membership

Appointment of PCC members are governed by the Church Representation Rules. The Team Rector, other clergy licensed to serve in the Parish and the churchwardens are automatically members. Other members are elected at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting by church members who are on the Electoral Roll of the Parish. We encourage everyone (aged 16 and over) who attends church regularly to register on the Electoral Roll.

Churchwardens are elected each year at the Annual Meeting of Parishioners, which is open to all residents of the Parish. They serve from the date they are subsequently admitted to office by the Bishop and continue in office until their successor is admitted by the Bishop following election.

Elected members of the PCC serve for a term of 3 years from the date of election. They may stand to be re-elected for a further 3-year term.

Under the Church Representation Rules, the PCC has the power to co-opt additional members to fill casual vacancies. Co-opted members serve until the next Annual Parochial Church Meeting when they may stand for election.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

The PCC has the responsibility of promoting in the ecclesiastical parish, the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelical, social and ecumenical. The PCC undertakes their mission through prayer, worship, learning and action. It also has responsibility for the maintenance of the church building and the Community Heritage Centre and its associated grounds.

When planning our activities, the PCC has considered the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit, including the guidance 'public benefit: running a Charity (PB2)'. Our services and worship put faith into practice through prayer and scripture, music and sacrament. We try to enable people to live out their faith as part of our community.

The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of
Saint Helen, Ashby-de-la-Zouch
PCC ANNUAL REPORT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024
(continued)

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES (continued)

Our objectives are to:

- nurture and sustain growth in the Christian life by teachings, worship and prayer to develop knowledge and trust in Jesus;
- enable existing churchgoers to be confident in their witness to the ongoing life of Jesus Christ;
- engage with the local community in Ashby-de-la-Zouch in loving service, working with others.

To facilitate this work, it is vital that we maintain the fabric of the Church, the Churchyard, and the Heritage Centre and its associated grounds.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

PCC Secretary Report

The PCC met 8 times during 2024. Chris Lewis resigned from the PCC and as Secretary in March 2024 and we were unable to find a replacement in 2024 so Catalina Chan and I have done most of the PCC administration, and Eileen Coombs, Shân Dyer, Laura Tucker and Emily Darlington have all assisted with taking minutes of meetings for which we are very grateful.

The PCC was delighted that, at last, we were able to appoint a Treasurer in Catalina Chan and she has got to grips with the job very quickly. We said a big thank you to Andy Smith for holding that responsibility and he is owed continued thanks as he has supported Catalina and helped her to find her feet.

The PCC has made some changes to staff appointments this year. On the recommendation of our musicians, Andrew Chapman reduced his hours and salary and relinquished his role as Director of Music to become the organist and Caroline Essex became Choral Director in a paid capacity. She is assisted by Anna Haines who particularly looks after the junior choir. This arrangement seems to be working very well.

The PCC also decided to recruit a verger at 8 hours per week and were pleased to appoint Pete Hyland from Breedon in that role from April. Following the resignation of Carole Nettles, we reshaped the administrator role to be a Parish Administrator and Communications Officer. This is now ably filled by Tim James for 12 hours a week. Elaine Shaw, our other employee continues to do sterling work as Bookings Officer for the Heritage Centre.

Having set some priorities in 2023, the PCC has continued to monitor progress with those and decided in 2024 to give a percentage of our income away to charities. The charities we supported were Embrace the Middle East, Open Doors, Hoveraid, Loughborough Town of Sanctuary, Ashby Foodbank, Ashby Street Pastors and the Phoenix Foundation. We hope to hear more about the work of these charities in 2025 so that we can support them in prayer as well as financially.

Sue Field (in the absence of a PCC Secretary)

The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of
Saint Helen, Ashby-de-la-Zouch
PCC ANNUAL REPORT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024
(continued)

Team Rector's Report

As you will see from the reports below, 2024 was quite a busy year for St Helen's and I am enormously grateful to all those who gave their time to the ministry and mission of God in and through St Helen's. I know that I function best when I am working as part of a team and there are several teams at St Helen's so it is a joy to be working with you. In this report, I just want to highlight a few areas for which I have particular responsibility.

Ministry Team – this consists of our Readers (Andy Smith, Judith Lewis, Liz Smith and Sue Brown), Caroline Essex as Choral Director and me. We meet about every two months and reflect on services we have had as well as forthcoming worship. At the end of 2024, we began thinking about the ministry of St Helen's to children and young families and how we can better map pathways from initial contact to discipleship. We had a study morning with Matt Long who is the Diocese of Leicester's Intergenerational Officer and that gave us food for thought which we are still digesting.

Rev. Canon Richard Andrews – we have been delighted that Richard (retired Precentor from Derby Cathedral) now has Permission to Officiate in the Diocese of Leicester and he and Alison attend St Helen's twice a month. I have really valued being able to share the presidency at Holy Communion with Richard and have also appreciated his preaching.

Worship – at the beginning of 2024, our pattern of worship changed across the Flagstaff team changed to enable me to be at St Helen's on the second Sunday of the month for our morning communion as well as on the fourth Sunday. It means that I have more continuity with the congregation and I am grateful to the village churches for agreeing that change. Earlier in the year, we had a Stewardship Sunday when we focussed on giving and this is something we will do annually as I feel strongly that giving of our money and our time is a core part of discipleship. As others have mentioned, the Soirées initiative seems to have been popular and means that our congregations have increased in size significantly at Evensong on those Sundays. Our Advent Carol Service doubled in size from 2023 (the weather may also have been a factor) as did many of our services around Christmas. I am hugely grateful to all of those who lead worship including our excellent choir and musicians.

Baptisms, weddings and funerals – unlike many churches, St Helen's remains popular for baptisms, weddings and funerals. In 2024, we had 14 baptisms. Liz Smith and I visit each of the families before the baptism to get to know them, to talk through the service and to give them information about the work that St Helen's does with children and young families. Liz then keeps in touch with them, notifying them of various events and services. We had 6 weddings at St Helen's in 2024 and I am very grateful to Andy and Helen Smith who worked with me to lead a Saturday Marriage Preparation Day for couples getting married at St Helen's and in the village churches. This was very much appreciated by the couples. We also conducted 14 funerals for people with a connection with St Helen's and I am very grateful to those who have volunteered to help welcome when we have had large services. We held our annual 'Time to Remember' service in October and we hope to be able to offer some more follow up pastoral care through the Pastoral Team.

We also hosted a Confirmation service in July at which two of our congregation were baptised and six were confirmed.

Pastoral Team

The Pastoral Team which had formed in 2023, was commissioned in June 2024 and we meet every couple of months. We also have a WhatsApp group to arrange any visits. Contact is via any member

The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of
Saint Helen, Ashby-de-la-Zouch
PCC ANNUAL REPORT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024
(continued)

Team Rector's Report (continued)

of the team but that is fed into the whole group and visits allocated. Every Sunday, a member of the Pastoral Team is located by the font to be available and also to look out for newcomers, and members have supported the 'Time to Remember' service at St Helen's and a similar service at Breedon in the summer.

Minster Communities

Some of us attended a day at Mountsorrel with representatives and clergy covering a large area of North West Leicestershire and from that meeting, four Minster Communities have been agreed. We are in Group A of Area 2 and our Minster Community includes Ibstock and Heather, the Woodfield Team, the Flagstaff Team, Blackfordby and Woodville, Castle Donington and Lockington. Judith Lewis and I have been part of the coordinating group for this area and the main task in 2024 was to prepare a document covering various aspects such as finance, buildings, people and ministry. This was based on the documents that each parish put together in 2023 and some research done by working groups. Further work will continue in 2025 and I imagine that, by the time I write next year's report, things will be very different.

Rev. Canon Sue Field, Team Rector

Churchwardens' Report

It is the responsibility of the Church Warden to provide to the Annual Parochial Church Meeting a report on the fabric, goods and ornaments of the church. However, as much of this has been covered in other reports, especially the Fabric Report, I am happy to refer you to them and keep my report briefer than might otherwise be the case. I do, however, wish to highlight the rewiring of the church, which has taken place this year. This has been a huge undertaking, and enormous thanks are due to Simon Starkey for project managing it and to an anonymous donor for funding it. Our electrics are now both far more reliable and much safer. Outstanding work in the chancel area is to be completed in early 2025.

2024 has been the first full year in which Rev'd Sue Field has been Team Rector of St Helen's and the wider Flagstaff Family of Churches. It has been a year marked by several new initiatives and changes of personnel.

The general trend in numbers attending services over the past year has increased, especially for usual Sunday services, with an average attendance of 65, compared with 52 in 2023. Some of this is accounted for by the numbers attending the Sunday Soirees on the first Sunday evening of the spring, summer and autumn, where Choral Evensong is followed by a short musical recital – from an average of 24 in 2023 to 58 on the Soiree evenings. Numbers attending over Easter and Christmas were also up from 2023 – from 115 to 125 and from 97 to 115 respectively. However, although our All Age services are appreciated by those who attend, growing this congregation remains a challenge, with numbers largely unchanged from 2023 – excluding special services, the average attendance in 2023 was 8 children and 30 adults; in 2024 it has been 9 children and 27 adults.

Over the past year we have said goodbye and thank you to Carole Nettles as Parish Administrator and been pleased to welcome Tim James in September. We have also been extremely pleased to have been able to appoint a new verger for 8 hours per week, spread flexibly across the week, with Pete Hyland taking up this role in April. Pete's primary responsibilities are to ensure that the church is

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Churchwardens' Report (continued)

opened and locked up on a daily basis, that the interior of the church is kept in good order and having everything set up as necessary for services, including weddings and funerals. His appointment has relieved me, as Warden, of a number of responsibilities. The other significant change in personnel this year has been Andrew Chapman stepping down as Director of Music, but remaining our regular organist, while Caroline Essex and Anna Haines have divided the Director of Music responsibilities between them.

We have had to replace our flagpole this summer, after high winds caused damage to our existing one. Sadly, this coincided with the 80th anniversary of D Day, meaning we were unable to fly the Union Flag, but at least we should be able to fly it for the anniversary of VE Day in 2025.

Appropriate and necessary annual checks and services in both our buildings have taken place over the past year – these include servicing the fire extinguishers, fire safety and emergency lighting checks in the Heritage Centre. The boilers are also serviced annually but remain unreliable, often tripping out so that the heating does not come on. Either I or Pete Hyland check on a Saturday that they are working, but they still trip out far too frequently between then and Sunday morning – our assumption is that this is related to damp in the boiler room and plans are in hand to try to remedy this.

The Church Wardens' report for 2023 refers to seeking a faculty for a commemorative plaque in honour of Canon John Bowers. As is so often the case, progress with this has been slow and took up most of 2024, but permission to do so had been granted by the end of the year and a date arranged for its installation in early 2025. The process for arranging necessary repairs to the memorial in the chancel to Selina, Countess of Hastings, has been equally slow, having started back in 2022 and which also required a faculty. The conservation work was completed just before Christmas 2024.

Looking to the future, we are in the early stages of thinking about re-ordering the interior of the church, which will be a large, lengthy and expensive project, but is an extremely exciting prospect. A number of people are already involved with this, many of whom are bringing to bear their professional skills and/or expertise from their previous working on the Heritage Centre.

Also, looking to the future, it is difficult to escape noticing that we are all getting older and that rotas are becoming harder to fill as people who have served many years are needing to step back. I was particularly struck by this when I realised that the 2 people recently clearing the leaves and debris from the gulleys on our roof were both over 70. So this seems an appropriate time both to thank all who have contributed so much and for so long to the life of our church and to ask among younger and more recent members of our congregation to consider areas where they might be able to volunteer – the stewarding rota, sound system, contributing to maintaining and caring for the grounds and the coffee rota, as well as the roof gulleys, all being areas where we would welcome and value new recruits.

I am not seeking re-election as Church Warden for the forthcoming year. It has been an immense privilege to have served in this role for the past 4 years and I have learned a great deal – including how much I still do not know. Thankfully, there are always people who do know! I could not have done this job without the support of innumerable people and could not possibly list them all. However, I would like to mention specifically the support of the Building Team, especially of Helen Smith and Simon Starkey, for their commitment to the care and maintenance of our much-loved but understandably fragile building. And thank you to Rob and Caroline Millward and to Susan Boardman-Weston and others who spend so much time looking after our grounds. I am also inordinately grateful to Anne Heaton, who has continued to do our faculty applications and review PCC policies since

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Churchwardens' Report (continued)

stepping down as Church Warden and to another former Warden, Shân Dyer, who has continued to be our point of contact with our energy suppliers. Thank you, also, to the many, many others, but especially to Eileen Coombs and Elizabeth Smith, for their willingness to be available to help with the infinite variety of major and minor tasks that make all the difference to how the church functions.

Judith Lewis, Churchwarden

Fabric Report

On behalf of the Buildings Group, I'm pleased to report on the state of the fabric of the church and the work that has been carried out during 2024. We strive to be good custodians of our Grade 1 listed church and are grateful to those who freely give their time and expertise to maintain, clean, repair, and generally care for both our buildings, the churchyard, and the Heritage Centre garden – you know who you are.

We continue to keep up to date with routine testing and servicing of the boiler, security alarms, fire extinguishers, emergency lighting and fire alarm in the Heritage Centre, room divider in the Heritage Centre, and our electrical equipment so that we are fully compliant as public buildings. Any recommendations and remedial actions are carried out.

A big focus of our work this year has been to the church electrics. In July old and failing wiring circuits which have been added to over the years were replaced with modern supply cables, wiring and a new distribution board in the Priestroom. This will make our lighting and sockets more reliable, safer, and compliant with modern standards. A further phase of the work in the Chancel area will be carried out early in 2025.

In November work on the Selina Memorial started after concerns that it had become a trip hazard and was also at risk of theft. The brass inlay was taken away for expert conservation which involved straightening the distortions in the brass, cleaning the back and face, restoring decorative work, cleaning the stonework and reattaching the brass. We were pleased that the work was completed just in time for Christmas (23rd December!) It now looks better and is more robust, but we should avoid walking on it to prevent any future damage.

We now have received condition reports from Skillingtons on some of the other memorials in the church, especially the Nundi Slab and parts of the Hastings Chapel so some big projects to tackle in the next few years. And we have a new memorial – to Canon John Bowers – which was installed at the end of the year and will be unveiled in January 2025. The flagpole on the tower roof has also been refurbished this year.

We continue to find ways to run our buildings efficiently and sustainably. In March we had work done on the heating controls in the Heritage Centre so there are now two separate zones rather than the entire building being heated.

And finally, a reminder that if you do see any issues with either of our buildings, please can you let the Buildings Team know. We do keep a look out for issues but not everything is obvious or constant – like the kitchen taps in the Heritage Centre kitchen which had to be replaced to stop the banging through the water pipes in the building which happened some of the time.

Helen Smith, Chair of the Buildings Group

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St Helen's for the future

Very soon after I arrived in May 2023, it became clear that there were substantial issues with our church building. The tower (including the clock) requires major work, the memorials and the organ need refurbishment and there are many ongoing repairs which are necessary. In addition, the word 'reordering' was mentioned and a few people who had been involved in the Heritage project said that they were now ready and had energy to embark on another project. To that end, a group of us has been meeting since August 2024 to try to assess what ours and the community's needs might be for the building in the future. We have had an adviser from the Diocese supporting us and we have been to visit St Mary's, Melton Mowbray to see how they have developed their building. Further updates will follow as we continue to form our thinking in 2025 and to consult with and listen to members of the congregation and people in the wider community.

Sue Field, Chair of the St Helen's for the Future group.

Servers

SERVERS

Since last year we have been joined by Alison Andrews, a welcome addition inasmuch as she is also capable of carrying the processional cross, making the full complement of Sue Evans, Greg Wells and myself with Lyn Price. It has not always been possible to have a full team, especially at Christmas. As Sacristan I have received some help from Laura Tucker. However, we do our best and I would like to express my appreciation to every one of our team for their loyalty.

COMMUNION ASSISTANTS

Although strictly speaking they do not come under the heading of servers, we do have some members of the congregation who have been approved by the PCC to administer the sacraments, namely Shân Dyer, Eileen Coombs, Peter Maunder, Lyn Price and Adrienne Sedgman. These are all very valuable members of our team. Sadly, Adrienne has had to relinquish this as it proved difficult with being in the choir. Again, I am very grateful to these people for their loyal help.

Sadly, the responsibility of being Sacristan is now proving a little too much and I am giving up this position as of this APCM. I thank all those who have helped me in this respect particularly when the altar frontals needed to be changed for each church season.

Eileen Mary Barradell, Head Server/Sacristan

Safeguarding

'Safeguarding' means the action the Church takes to promote a safer culture in all our churches.

St Helens is committed to high standards in the safeguarding and care of children, young people and adults. For St Helens church in 2024 there were no concerns reported.

As the DBS administrator I continue to complete new checks and renew checks for the Flagstaff family of churches. DBS certificates must be renewed every 3 years. Online Safeguarding training has been offered and accessed for new and existing volunteers and PCC members. This training is also required to be renewed every 3 years.

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Safeguarding (continued)

We are working with the Parish Handbook and the Leicester Diocesan requirements which set out the Church's approach to safeguarding. This supports the day-to-day work of safeguarding and those that have a role with children, young people and adults who may be vulnerable.

St Helens follows the Safer Recruitment process set out by the Church of England for all new volunteers and employees.

Information about Safeguarding and reporting concerns/seeking help and advice is displayed in the church and the St Helens Community Heritage Centre.

A dedicated phone number and email contact are now available for concerns to be reported 24 hours a day.

The Church of England has been in the process of developing a set of National Safeguarding Standards since 2020. These standards have now been approved and launched.

The Standards are essential for the Church to understand the quality and, most importantly, the impact of its safeguarding activity. In addition, the Standards provide a simple construct which integrates the complexity of all safeguarding activity in the Church. All such activities, at all levels across the Church, will relate to at least one Standard

St Helens church is registered with the Parish Safeguarding Dashboard which ensures that we receive up to date information and provides a plan of any actions required. This dashboard is to be updated in January 2025 to include the introduction of the national standards for Safeguarding. The PCC will start working on adopting these standards in 2025.

The safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults at St Helens Church and the Flagstaff group of churches must be a thread which runs through everything we do and the policies and practices we put in place for our church and church community. It is essential to ensure that a healthy church culture can be developed in which people feel confident to share concerns and where all people feel safe in every respect. In order to highlight this need for awareness of safeguarding culture, Safeguarding Sunday in November was the start of a series of awareness-raising sermons delivered in each church across the Flagstaff family.

The safety of children, young people and all adults is "everyone's business."

Elizabeth Smith, Parish Safeguarding Coordinator

Stepping Stones – children's group

No report received

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Children and families

Young children and families are welcomed and warmly included at the All Age service which is held at 3.30 pm on the first Sunday of every month. This is always followed by tea and cake and a time to *chat*, in the Heritage Centre. The number of families attending this service is increasing slowly, and it still seems that the afternoon is a more convenient time for families to bring their children to church. This matches the time of Messy church which also runs on a Sunday afternoon at 3.30-5.00pm on the fourth Sunday of every month, alternating between St Helens Community Heritage Centre and Viscount Beaumont School, Coleorton as the venue. Messy church continues to be a relaxed and informal time when children and families are welcomed and can engage in creative activities.

Willesley School visits

It has been an enormous privilege and source of joy to be able to welcome children from Willesley Primary School to our church and to our church family this year.

Each class spends a morning or an afternoon session engaging in activities related to the set RE curriculum for each year stage. Within this, all children (and adults) have the opportunity to explore the church both inside and outside and learn a little more about church life, the building and the church family.

The roof of the church was certainly raised with the singing of Key Stage 2 children and their families at their harvest celebration held in St Helens in October. 2024 ended with a visit from the very youngest children from foundation stage who followed a trail around the church, guided by a helpful star, to the crib where we all shared the story of Nativity.

It is a privilege provided by God to welcome and include children and their families to our church. They are our tomorrow so, let us welcome them today.

Elizabeth Smith

Choir and Music

Full Choir

We began the year with 4 regular trebles. Over the autumn it became clear Will's voice was dropping and so he ended the year as a tenor having passed briefly through the alto line. Emily F understandably needed to take a bit of a step back to focus on A level work but was able to join us for Christmas, Aimie continues to sing whenever she can and Annabel has remained a reliable regular as Head Chorister. We still have 3 regular sopranos (with Anna on maternity leave from December), 4 altos, 3 adult tenors and 1 bass. At Easter and Christmas, we welcomed our usual extras to swell the ranks plus a new face, Jo, recruited from Concordia who sang for our Advent and Christmas Carol Services and hopes to continue joining us for Evensongs in the future. It was particularly wonderful to have former trebles Anna & Jenny W and Amelie M back with us for Christmas.

During 2025 we will be looking at ways to boost the treble/soprano line before all our trebles disappear to university.

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Choir and Music (Continued)

Special Services

In addition to our usual services, in 2024 we introduced our Sunday Soirées on the first Sunday of the month from May to October (excluding August when the choir are on holiday). The Soirées consist of Choral Evensong followed by refreshments and a short recital. For our Harvest Evensong in October, we welcomed two extra tenors and a bass from Concordia to join the choir for the anthem and hope we might encourage them to join us again, perhaps more regularly. We were treated to wonderful musical performances by The Capriccio Ensemble, Tesserae, Andrew Chapman, Ashby Baroque Strings and Tori Norman & Jeremy Kimber and were delighted that the Soirées drew new people in to experience worshipping at Evensong with congregations averaging nearly 60 people.

In June we took part in a special service to commemorate the anniversary of D Day and in December we were pleased to sing for the Carol Service at Staunton Harold.

Music

We purchased three new pieces of music for the choir during the year and suggested to Ministry Team and PCC that it was time to purchase new hymn books for the congregation which would contain some of the more modern hymns we enjoy singing as well as familiar old favourites, some with updated and more accessible words. This was agreed and the order made in the autumn (though the books themselves did not appear until the new year).

In addition to the new hymn books, we have taken the time to put together a booklet of songs which do not appear in either of our books and these are due to be printed for use in 2025.

Junior Choir

Junior Choir had a wonderful start to the year under the expert tuition of Anna. We had a new singer for Mothering Sunday, Delilah, as well as singers from previous years all ably supported by Annabel and Liz. We also had a new look with T shirts purchased by Anna for Junior Choir to match the colour of the choir robes. Junior Choir also sang at Harvest and Christingle, and we are delighted that, following the Christingle Service, we have one or two new singers signed up for 2025.

The hope is always that some Junior Choir members will feel able to join the full choir at some stage, but this is not a requirement.

Thank you

Finally, I would like to thank all our singers for their hard work over the year and their support of me personally as I took over the choral reins from Andrew. Special mention to Andy S for always staying behind after choir practice to help me clear away and lock up. Thanks also to the Ministry Team and wider congregation for their appreciation and support of the choir and all we strive to bring to the worship at St Helen's. And finally, thanks to Anna for her wonderful leadership of Junior Choir and the trebles/sopranos and Mr C who not only plays the organ and piano but who sings whichever part I randomly throw at him on a Sunday!

Caroline Essex, Choral Director

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Choir and Music (Continued)

Music Group / Duet

- + continues to play for the All Age Service on the first Sunday of the month
- + a valuable additional resource to the music at St Helen's
- + Pete H (guitar) and myself (piano), being the regular musicians

Organ & Pianos

- + the organ continues to be tuned twice a year, - and is generally in pretty good order – I continue to liaise with the tuners – Cousans Organs (based in Coalville)
- + during 2024 a few more problems occurred – sticking keys in particular & tuning the reeds (oboe, corneopean, trumpet & trombone pipes) was more challenging
- + the last major overhaul and upgrade was during 1985/86 – almost 40 years ago; in October we invited our organ builders (& tuners) – Cousans Organs & Mike Thompson (Organ Builder, Burton on Trent, – who tunes Breedon & other instruments in the area) to quote for restoration work – mechanical, electrical & electronic work, plus some tonal improvements
- + the quotes and specifications were quite different (financially as well as structurally); we then invited Anne de Graeve (Leicester Diocesan Organ Adviser) to visit St Helen's and comment on the quotes – further advice will be sought from Paul Hale who has a similar role in the Southwell Diocese [tragically, Mike Thompson died a few weeks ago]
- + we envisage the restoration work being a part of the wider reordering projects being explored at St Helen's
- + any visiting organists comment very favourably about the current instrument, it would be a great loss if the instrument were not to be overhauled, and left to gradually decline & eventually be replaced by an electronic instrument – particularly as we continue to develop our soirees and use of St Helen's as a concert venue
- + the piano keeps in tune well, but some work on the case of the piano still needs undertaking; during times when the church heating is off, or we have prolonged cold spells, some notes/keys become damp and 'sticky' making playing a little more unpredictable/adventurous!
- + the digital piano jointly owned with Concordia Choir continues to be securely stored in the Heritage Centre - being used few times (by both owners) during 2024

I wish to acknowledge the support of Howard Marriott and Laurence Rogers who have played the organ on occasions when I have been on leave.

Andrew Chapman, Organist

Connections

In 2024, we trialled a session called "Connections". These were reflective sessions and activities to help us to spend time in God's presence and to "connect" – with God, with Ourselves, with Others and with Creation – and so deepen our discipleship.

We began by marking the feast day of Ignatius of Loyola by trying out the principles of Ignatian spirituality, led by Debbie Challenor, from the St. Beuno's Jesuit Spirituality Centre.

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Connections (continued)

We also looked at the Return of the Prodigal Son, through the work of Henri Nouwen, and considered our “call to obedience” to mark the feast day of St. Hilda of Whitby.

We’ll be getting underway with Connections again in 2025, possibly in a more regular spot, and there will be some special guests coming too – as part of the textile exhibition “Crying in the Silicon Wilderness”, May 2nd–5th, the artist Romola Parish will lead a quiet session for us. And later in the year we hope to have sessions led by Natalie Twigg, who encourages reflection through oboe improvisation, and also by the Revd. Dr. Rhona Knight.

And we’ll have some sessions when we simply gather to “be still and know that I am God”. If you’d like to know more, please ask Andy Smith.

Andy Smith

Events and Activities Team (EAT)

In 2023, this became more of an oversight group than a team which organised events and I took over chairing this group from Caroline Essex. We met twice during 2024 – in January and July and we shared details about events planned for the year. Members of the group represent different areas of church life as follows – Helen Smith (Sew it don’t throw it and follow up), Liz Smith (children’s workshops and Eco group), Julie Starkey (Heritage), Peter Rose (concerts), Anna Haines (children’s workshops), Jill Chapman (publicity) and Sue Field (chair and Soirées). We meet to consider any issues we need to bring to the PCC but also to ensure that there are no clashes or too many events in quick succession.

Towards the end of the year, a Social Committee was formed and met once in 2024 under the leadership of Alison Andrews. They organised a very successful Christmas Cracker evening in December featuring carols, Christmas readings and mince pies.

Sue Field

St Helen’s Bellringers

In 2024, the bells were rung for 4 weddings thanks to the continued support of ringers from neighbouring churches as there are still currently only 3 St. Helen’s ringers.

The bells were rung on Thursday, 6th June to commemorate the 80th Anniversary of the D-Day landings.

During the year, we have rung for Evensong with support from ringers from other towers who also supported us with ringing for the Sunday morning, and for the first time in over 40 years, the bells were rung on Christmas morning.

The roof continues to be inspected periodically and maintenance such as weeding and sweeping carried out as necessary by local ringers who also put up the flags.

In November the clapper shaft on the 3rd bell broke during Sunday Evening ringing, with the help of 3 of the ringers, the clapper was repaired and installed in time for the wedding on the following Saturday and ringing for Remembrance Sunday, whilst the ringers installed the clapper on the 3rd,

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St Helen's Bellringers (continued)

they checked all the bells and carried out any necessary maintenance. I would like to thank them very much for their help in getting the bell repaired in such a short time.

Since December we have started to have a monthly 10 bell practice on the 1st Tuesday of the month which has been well supported.

Catherine Baker, Acting Tower Captain

Heritage Centre

The Community Heritage Centre is well used for church activities throughout the year. It is regularly used for refreshments after services on Sunday and for the popular Friday afternoon Warm Space. We make use of the centre for church meetings including the Ministry Team, Building Project Team, and PCC, and to support events in church such as concerts, tours and, school visits.

There are lots of other church supported activities which use the venue regularly including Little Fishes, We're In Stitches; Street Pastors; the Heritage Talk series; PRG and sometimes Messy Church. All these are well attended and as such the Heritage Centre is important for our role in the local community.

Unfortunately, in June the NHS stopped their booking of the Heritage Centre which they had been using two or three times each week so that has implications for our revenue. We do however still have many regular hirers who run a variety of exercise and language lessons at the centre each week, as well as monthly bookings by Ashby Strings and Ashby Civic Society.

One off bookings are also important to us and include various local artists and crafters running workshops, private parties, and bookings associated with baptisms and funerals in church. All these give us an opportunity to showcase the venue. The Community Heritage Centre continues to serve us well as a nice space to be, a source of income, and place in our local community.

Helen Smith

Community Heritage Garden

Volunteers:

Regulars - Peter Maunder, Martin Vaughan, Simon Starkey, Rob & Caroline Milward, Chris Wood & Hugh Millward (hope I haven't missed anyone)

Activities:

Mainly trimming, pruning (some of it quite severe), cutting back, grass mowing & strimming, watering, WEEDING, & planting in the gaps!

Helen & Andy did some tidying up & clearing out of 'stuff' along the side by the children's water play area.

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Community Heritage Garden (continued)

During the storms in early December, the roofing felt on one of the sheds became detached. It was temporarily secured. It will need replacing in the better weather, at some point in the spring – we hope. I believe there should be adequate funds to cover the costs.

Andrew Chapman

Heritage Events

We are privileged to use the Heritage Centre to showcase the fascinating heritage of our site, with a regular winter programme of talks plus an additional heritage talk during the July Festival of Archaeology. Our talks have an average audience of around 40 people and up to 60 on occasion. From January to March 2024, we hosted three speakers: Peter Little talked about death and burial in Leicestershire over the past 5000 years, Ursula Ackrill spoke on the Parish Libraries of Leicestershire, including our own, and Lesley Rowe came to talk about Puritanism in Leicestershire. In July we welcomed Mathew Morris from the University of Leicester to talk about the recent Leicester Cathedral dig. In early October Gay Evans visited to talk about genealogical research, in late October Rachel Askew spoke on the Anglo-Saxon Sculptures at Breedon Church and in November Anthony Yates came to talk about his ancestors, the Bate and Kirkland families of Ashby.

Anne Heaton and I delivered two successful tours in July as part of the Festival of Archaeology, one of the church and a brand new tour of the churchyard. This has proved to be very popular, with several subsequent bookings from local groups.

For 'Hello Heritage' in September, we designed an A2 board for the churchyard gates, also on the subject of the churchyard, which was our main Heritage focus for 2024. A small group, under Anne's guidance, spent several Saturday's cleaning and re-recording some of the graves which were last recorded around 20 years ago by an Ashby Museum team. This work is ongoing.

Julie Starkey

Prior Park Ministry

Attendance at Tea Time over the last year has dwindled as some residents have died, and many have moved to Care/ Nursing Homes. The faithful few who did manage to come regularly continued to enjoy each other's company and all the delicious homemade cakes.

Thank you again to the loyal team who bake sumptuous cakes, make and serve tea and of course wash up. Without their invaluable support, our church's outreach to the community would not be possible.

On the second Wednesday of each month, we have a communion service in the small community hall and the attendance has been very encouraging in the past year, averaging 14-18 each time, including some church members,

A Christmas Carol service was led by Canon Sue Field, followed by mince pies and a wee drop of sherry.

Eileen Coombs

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Welcome and Hospitality

The church is open every day during daylight hours, welcoming everyone who wishes to come in, sit quietly, pray, or enjoy the tranquillity of our beautiful and historic building. For centuries, people from all walks of life have come and worship, give thanks and be blessed. This tradition is very important to us and we want to keep it going.

Flower arrangements adorn various areas of the church, with additional ones during Christmas and Easter, lovely to behold and an aid to worship.

Colourful notice boards displaying posters and notices keep the congregation and visitors updated of upcoming events and services.

Tea lights are always available by St Michael's Chapel to remember loved ones. There are also vases by the Book of Remembrance area for people to put flowers in to remember loved ones on birthdays or anniversaries.

Eileen Coombs, Assistant Warden

Parish Magazine

The Parish Magazine continues to offer a reflection of the life of our church, with columns focusing on groups/ ministries within the church and on the varied ways we live out our faith in everyday life. These sit alongside other regular articles from members of the community, such as a gardening column and one on local history. The magazine draws attention to upcoming events and services and promotes regular missional activities such as the Heart Warming Space and Pause for Paws. 80 copies of the magazine are printed and sold each month, and it is also uploaded to the website. Sincere thanks go to everyone who has contributed an article to the magazine over the last year, and to those who have helped to assemble and deliver them each month.

Emily Darlington (Editor)

Flower Arranging

Throughout the year, flower arrangements adorned the High Altar and the Choir Stall. At Christmas and Easter, there were flower pedestals at the entrance, St Michael's Chapel, the High Altar, Lady Chapel and by the Choir stalls.

Margaret Lawrence has continued to do the Advent wreath and Paschal Candle for us and we are truly grateful. We are very thankful that two new, but very experienced members of the congregation have joined our team this year. A big Thank You to all the faithful and willing flower arrangers who, week by week, creatively and lovingly, arrange flowers to adorn the church, making it warm, beautiful and welcoming to visitors.

If you are interested and feel this is a ministry you can help with, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Eileen Coombs (Flower Co-ordinator)

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St Helen's Sound Team

Over the past 12 months the sound team have attempted to provide an operator for all the major services in the church. We believe this is an essential part of the church life ensuring the services can be clearly heard by all listeners. We have welcomed another member to the team which eases pressure.

We are still keen to get others involved in this part of the churches work. It's not difficult; training and support will be given. For more information, please contact Simon (simon.starkey@gmail.com) or any member of the sound team. Any feedback about the quality of the service is gratefully received. We will be looking at upgrading some components of the system over the next 12 months.

Simon Starkey

Priest Room Gang (PRG)

Hospitality and supporting and serving others.

There are 10 young people who are members of the PRG. The young people meet on Thursday evenings 5.00-6.30pm every fortnight in term time and, more often by arrangement, in the Community Heritage Centre. It is a time for the young people to come together sharing food and friendship. Some time is always spent at each meeting reflecting and recognising the pattern of the church's year from Advent through to harvest.

A thread running through the group is a focus on considering and supporting the needs of others and supporting charitable organisers. In 2025 the focus will be on MND.

Following the introduction of a PRG Book group in autumn 2023 and the book chosen being "the Diary of Anne Frank" the group agreed that they would like to visit Amsterdam – And they did!

27 May to 30 May 2024.

Seven young people and 3 adults made the trip with the help of a grant from the Ashby Education trust, generous donations and support from the church family members and a great deal of fundraising activity. The main focus for the trip was to visit the house of Anne Frank but also, to engage in the culture of the city, and we were able to link with an Anglican church in the city and spend some time meeting their young people.

In June the group shared their experiences with the church family in a service of Morning worship in church followed by a thank you lunch and quiz, to which everyone was invited.

There are plans for a fundraising sleep out in 2025.

In the autumn the group cooked and hosted a Thanksgiving meal, to which family and friends were invited.

PRG continue to support the provision of the after-service refreshments on the first Sunday of every month after the All Age service.

Thank you to the young people and thank you to Emily Darlington and the adults who have helped. The PRG are a positive star of hope for the future of our church and the community we will serve.

Liz Smith

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(continued)

Eco-Initiative Group

At the end of 2023, 500 spring flowering bulbs were obtained from Ashby Town Council and were planted in the church grounds.

The Group met in December 2023 to make initial plans for our proposed Fairtrade Promotion. The date for this event was agreed by the Ministry Team as Sunday 12 May 2024, to coincide with Christian Aid Week. The event incorporated a brunch breakfast, held before morning worship, with around 30 attendees. The work of the Fairtrade Foundation was highlighted, and their produce was promoted. £100 worth of goods was sold on behalf of Fair2All of Ashby, and £55 was received in donations. The sermon included reference to the work of Fairtrade and its positive effects on the lives of poorer people of the world. We were also promoting the availability of the household cleaning products refill system and the importance of trying to reduce plastic waste.

On 14 September 2024, Liz Smith and Caroline Millward attended an Eco Church Event, held in Holy Trinity Church, Leicester. Representatives from eco organizations and nature welfare groups gave presentations and advice, and we obtained a lot of useful information, tips and inspirational ideas.

In November 2024, 1,500 spring bulbs were donated by Ashby Town Council, and these have now been planted in the churchyard circular beds, borders and the Heritage Centre Garden.

Caroline Millward

Friends Fellowship and Faith Group

This is an informal friendship group, continuing to meet every second and fourth Tuesday each month, from 2.30pm until 4pm. The meetings are supported by up to eight attendees; we don't follow a formal agenda, but we feel free to share together, and encourage and support one another.

Jenny Hedges

Pause for Paws

Pause for Paws, an outreach initiative to reach the wider community, was launched in October 2024

It runs from 10.15-12.15 pm on the first Saturday of every month. The west door of the church is opened and passing dog walkers are invited to come in and to take a look inside the church and see that it is a friendly and welcoming place where all are welcome.

Refreshments are available -tea/coffee and squash and biscuits and dog biscuits /treats and water. A poo bin is set up outside the church door with a plentiful supply of poo bags available.

There are three volunteers at each session who provide a friendly face and can engage in conversation – be ready to listen and, where appropriate, to pray with and/or for people.

We look forward to the growth of this initiative in the year to come.

Elizabeth Smith

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(continued)

We're in Stitches

We are in stitches, stitch and chat group.

We meet monthly in the Heritage Centre. The group is well attended by keen stitchers who are very happy to share expertise with one another. Some knit and crochet, but others stitch, and if wanted they can have use of a sewing machine. They enjoy a chat with a cuppa and biscuits. We also now have a WhatsApp group which is well used and helping to develop a community feel to the meetings. Some of the stitchers, wanting to meet more often, now go to the Warm-hearted space on a Friday afternoon with their stitching, but in a more limited way.

Mo Clark

Little Fishes

Little Fishes had a good start to 2024 with numbers attending remaining at an average of 25 children with their parent or carer each week. We continued to see new faces and learned that, though we have never officially advertised, Little Fishes was being recommended by local health visitors as well as by word of mouth between mums. It was also a joy to welcome 3 new babies, siblings to established Little Fishes!

In July we said goodbye to 7 children, 4 who were moving up to school and 3 to nursery/playgroup, celebrating this as is our usual custom with small gifts and prayers for both them and their mums.

During the year we purchased some new aprons, a mat, books, craft materials, storage boxes and replaced a few smaller toys. No major expenditure was required.

In the autumn term, our numbers dipped to 10-15 children attending each week. This meant our income from donations dropped but despite this, and a noticeable increase in the price of snacks we provide, we were able to maintain our policy of "no charge but donations welcome" and our provision of healthy snacks, small Christmas gifts for children and parents/carers and our donation to PCC of £15 per week with heating and £10 per week without heating.

Little Fishes continues to run with five main volunteers plus two occasional volunteers to help cover absences. We have also been pleased to have Annabel Fraser attending for an hour once a fortnight as part of her school enrichment for university. We are very grateful to all our volunteers for their time.

Mothers' Union

Sadly, in January this year, at our AGM it became necessary for us to consider our way forward because we had lost so many of our members due to various reasons and it was not viable to invite speakers to address so few people. It was therefore agreed that after over 100 years, the St Helen's Mothers' Union Branch be closed. Members were urged to become Diocesan Members where they would still receive the magazines and information on what was happening in the MU. Eileen Coombs was happy to be a point of contact within the Church for any service that may be required that was previously provided by members of the Branch. The MU bank account was duly closed and the monies transferred to the PCC account to be kept solely for the purchase of bibles that will still be provided

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Mothers' Union (continued)

for wedding couples at St Helen's – we are happy to continue providing this outreach service as in the past.

Eileen Barradell, Diocesan Member

Open Bible Discussion Group (Monday House Group)

After many years of hosting this group and meeting together to help us understand more about our faith, and learn more about the Bible, it was with regret that we had to close down our group at the end of last year as we were down to just 3 people.

Many people have been with us over the years. Some of them have now departed this life and some have moved away. I can't remember when we first started but it was a long time ago. One thing I can remember very well is the year when Rev. Ken Toovey joined us and led our Lenten meetings. We had 18 people here for some of those meetings – where did I put them all?

We have had some very good discussions and different people leading the sessions. Thanks very much to those who are still with us. I was pleased to be able to join these and host them.

Margaret Worrall

"Pilgrim Group"

"Pilgrim" – Learning together to be disciples.

The "Pilgrim" discipleship group has continued to meet most Mondays during 2024. We now have 12 members, although not everyone is always able to be present. We have studied and reflected on a range of study materials over the past year, including a series of studies on prayer, the Beatitudes and the film "The Way" about a group of people walking the Camino de Santiago di Compostella and the impact that pilgrimage can have on one's relationship with oneself, others and with God. We would be happy to welcome new members and it would be lovely to have enough people to form 2 groups. We would also be very grateful for any suggestions as to other resources we might be able to use.

Judith Lewis

Warm Hearted Space

Launched in 2023, this initiative continued to grow in popularity. The Heritage Centre provides a warm, safe and welcoming space for anyone to drop in, enjoy cups of tea/ coffee and cakes and make friends. It is adult and child friendly too. Apart from the regulars, a few newcomers gave it a try, liked it and stayed. There is no charge and it is an excellent way to meet new people, socialise and have fun.

So do come to the Heritage Community Centre, bring a friend or two, EVERY Friday from 2-4pm, and enjoy the warmth and hospitality.

Eileen Coombs & Liz Smith

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St Helen's Website

There have been very few changes to the website over the past year. Tim James has joined Jill Chapman and Julie Starkey as a website administrator. Between us, we keep the 'What's On' pages up to date, add a list of services each month, upload the Parish Magazine and add short reports of previous activities.

The Heritage pages continue to develop, with new research articles added from time to time, creating an online resource for visitors and researchers.

Julie Starkey

Deanery Synod

Deanery synod meetings were held in -

June 2024 (where I was co-opted as a new member), and an inspiring presentation was given about outdoor worship/ forest church.

October 2024 meeting had a guest speaker talking about Diocesan Finance where he tried to answer some concerns and questions. Also, an update on the progress of the Minster community.

December 2024 meeting was held at St John's Donisthorpe to hear about and view their recent refurbishment. Discussions also continued about concerns around the Minster community.

Over the summer there had been a prayer walk between some churches which I was unable to attend.

Mo Clark

Treasurer's Report – Financial Year 2024

As of 31 December 2024, St. Helen's funds totalled £137,227, up £15,504 over the previous financial year.

- ◆ The enclosed accounts showed an overall increase of £18,969 in **Donations and Legacies**.
 - The increase in using Parish Giving Scheme income compensated for the decrease in Direct debit/Standing donations.
 - Donations via contactless device (CollectIn) offset a decline in cash collection from Wall Safe & Loose Plate.
 - The Bellringers' Fund £4,839 and the Mothers Union Fund £611 were put under the management of the PCC.
- ◆ **Activities for generating funds** (mainly income from room hire and events) increased by £14,372. However, £10,311 in rental payments were delayed and brought forward from 2023.
- ◆ £28,260 was spent on church buildings, primarily for repairs. Designated donations of £14,000 and special grants of £5,317 (Archbishops Council ChurchCare Grant and the Listed Places of Worship Grant) were obtained to cover some costs.
- ◆ **Running costs** dropped by 11%, with a £6,530 reduction in utility costs.

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Treasurer's Report – Financial Year 2024 (continued)

- ◆ £6,000 donation was made to nine organisations, including AYFC, Loughborough Town of Sanctuary, Open Doors, HoverAid Trust, Ashby School Welfare Fund, Ashby Street Pastors, The Phoenix Children's Foundation, Ashby Foodbank and Embrace the Middle East.

The net income in 2024 was a surplus of £15,504. However, this included delayed rental income and funds entrusted to the PCC. Moreover, we spent £17,618 more in 2024 than in 2023, representing a 14% increase.

St. Helen's current finances remain sound. The church has more than £45,000 in its general fund, and the PCC policy is to keep £14,000 of it "in reserve" in case of an unexpected event or set of circumstances. There is also £49,000 in the Legacy Fund, which will be used for major building works. As a result, when planning for 2025, the PCC continues to allocate resources carefully to meet our needs and achieve our mission. This includes:

- ◆ £21,220 on church buildings (25% decrease on 2024)
- ◆ £4,000 on charities donations (38% decrease on 2024 – based on 2024 donations income)
- ◆ £49,120 on Parish Contribution (10% increase on 2024)
- ◆ £25,742 on salaries (33% increase on 2024 – based on National Living Wage)

This budget estimates a deficit of £18,000. Our current funds can sustain this deficit, but to maintain a healthy financial situation, we must raise our income from Activities for generating funds and personal giving. Let us pray and reflect on whether we can increase our contributions.

This being my first Treasurer's report, I would like to give grateful thanks to Andy Smith for his initial instruction on the treasurer's role as well as his continuing assistance throughout the year. I would also like to thank the PCC and the congregation for their support and understanding.

Catalina Chan

Heritage Centre

As the Heritage centre is owned by St Helen's Church, the Trustees have considered and resolved that it should be included in the Statement of Assets and Liabilities. A valuation will need to be undertaken, and this will then be included in the year ended 31st December 2025 accounts.

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STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES

The members of the PCC, who are also trustees of the charity, are responsible for preparing the trustees' report and the accounts in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

The trustees are required to prepare accounts for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the PCC and of the incoming resources and application of resources of the PCC during the year.

In preparing those financial statements, the PCC is required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- prepare the financial statements in accordance with the Church Representation Rules;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the PCC will continue in operation.

The PCC is responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time, the financial position of the PCC and to enable the PCC to ensure that the financial statements comply with the requirements referred to above. The PCC is also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

This report has been prepared in accordance with the Church Representation Rules and applicable UK Accounting Standards

Approved by the PCC on 18 March 2025 and signed on its behalf by:

S E Field

[S E Field \(Mar 19, 2025 07:22 GMT\)](#)

Rev'd Canon Sue Field
PCC Chair

The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of
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**INDEPENDENT EXAMINERS' REPORT TO THE PCC/TRUSTEES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024**

I report to the PCC on my examination of the Receipts & Payments Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2024 which are set out on pages 26 to 33.

Responsibilities and basis of report

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

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

Independent Examiner's Statement

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

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

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

Richard Vann
9 Saxon Way
Ashby-de-la-Zouch
Leicestershire
LE65 2JR

R P Vann

R P Vann (Mar 18, 2025 09:21 GMT)

Dated:

**ST HELEN'S CHURCH, ASHBY DE LA ZOUCH
PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL**

**Receipts & Payments Account
for the year ended
31 December 2024**

RECEIPTS	Note	2024			2023		
		Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total
Donations & Legacies							
Planned Giving		58,569	-	58,569	55,728	-	55,728
Loose Plate Collections & Donations		4,040	-	4,040	3,771	-	3,771
Legacies		-	-	-	-	2,216	2,216
Other giving	5	2,008	20,750	22,758	4,801	-	4,801
Gift aid		14,522	-	14,522	14,404	-	14,404
<i>Total Donations & legacies</i>		79,139	20,750	99,889	78,704	2,216	80,920
Grants	6	-	6,693	6,693	1,087	3,223	4,310
Other income							
Activities for generating funds	7	33,982	1,640	35,622	20,681	569	21,250
Fees - Weddings & Funerals		10,724	30	10,754	10,135	-	10,135
Bank interest		3,152	-	3,152	2,124	-	2,124
Collections funds		-	1,843	1,843	-	1,478	1,478
Sundry income		231	-	231	447	-	447
Total receipts		127,228	30,956	158,184	113,178	7,486	120,664
PAYMENTS							
Charitable Activities							
Parish Contribution		44,660	-	44,660	40,600	-	40,600
Charitable Donations		6,050	433	6,483	3,250	-	3,250
Employment Costs		19,412	-	19,412	14,205	2,994	17,199
Running Costs		31,679	4,120	35,799	37,509	2,659	40,168
Fees - Weddings & Funerals		5,846	140	5,986	6,090	-	6,090
Building Maintenance & Development		816	27,444	28,260	766	15,219	15,985
Collections funds		-	2,080	2,080	-	1,770	1,770
Total payments		108,463	34,217	142,680	102,420	22,642	125,062
Net receipts/ (payments)		18,765	(3,261)	15,504	10,758	(15,156)	(4,398)
Transfers between funds		(5,195)	5,195	-	(12,292)	12,292	-
Cash funds @ 31.12.2023		37,835	83,888	121,723	39,369	86,752	126,121
Cash funds @ 31.12.2024		51,405	85,822	137,227	37,835	83,888	121,723

**ST HELEN'S CHURCH, ASHBY DE LA ZOUCH
PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL**

**Statement of Assets and Liabilities
as at 31 December 2024**

CASH FUNDS	Note	<u>2024</u>			<u>2023</u>		
		Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds
Bank Current Account		9,510	-	9,510	3,906	237	4,143
Bank Deposit Account		41,895	85,822	127,717	33,929	83,651	117,580
Total cash funds		51,405	85,822	137,227	37,835	83,888	121,723
INCOME NOT YET BANKED							
Cash	3	4,711	1,000	5,711	11,406	-	11,406
		4,711	1,000	5,711	11,406	-	11,406
LIABILITIES							
Suppliers	4	4,202	5,501	9,703	3,156	1,203	4,359
		4,202	5,501	9,703	3,156	1,203	4,359
REPRESENTED BY							
Funds	13/14	51,405	85,822	137,227	37,835	83,888	121,723
		51,405	85,822	137,227	37,835	83,888	121,723

The receipts & payments accounts were approved by the PCC on 18th March 2025 and were signed on their behalf by:

S E Field
[S E Field \(Mar 19, 2025 07:22 GMT\)](#)

Rev'd Canon Sue Field
PCC Chair

**ST HELEN'S CHURCH, ASHBY DE LA ZOUCH
PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL**

**Notes to the Accounts
for the year ended
31 December 2024**

1 Basis of preparation

The financial statements of the PCC have been prepared in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations using the Receipts and Payments basis.

2 Third Party Fundraising

All funds passing through the PCC accounts are shown as income and expenditure, including specific "Collections Funds" that are collected on behalf of, and then forwarded on to, third parties.

3 Income invoiced/received not yet banked

At the end of the financial year the following income had been invoiced or received but not yet banked:

	2024	2023
Wall safe & Loose plate collections	915	114
Contribution towards Rectors expenses	645	-
Sum Up - CollectTin church donations	132	450
Gift aid - claimed January	1,906	1,195
Events income	30	
Room Hire - NHS	-	9,647
Room Hire - Heritage Centre	2,083	-
	5,711	11,406

4 Expenditure not yet paid

At the end of the financial year the following expenditure related to 2024 but was paid in 2025:

	2024	2023
Payroll Services	150	75
Telephone	56	49
Gas	345	621
Electric	509	860
Expenses	2,317	1,022
Building repairs	851	921
Conservation work - Selina Memorial	4,650	-
Photocopier rental	-	310
Occasional Office Disbursements	825	265
Collections to be paid (restricted)	-	236
	9,703	4,359

5 Other Giving

	2024			2023		
	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total
General Fund	1,978	-	1,978	4,801	-	4,801
Building Fund	-	14,000	14,000	-	-	-
Bell Fund	-	4,861	4,861	-	-	-
Mothers Union	-	611	611	-	-	-
Organ Fund	-	60	60	-	-	-
PRG Trip	-	1,218	1,218	-	-	-
Flower Fund	30	-	30	-	-	-
	2,008	20,750	22,758	4,801	-	4,801

**ST HELEN'S CHURCH, ASHBY DE LA ZOUCH
PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL**

**Notes to the Accounts
for the year ended
31 December 2024**

6 Grants

	2024			2023		
	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total
Leicester Diocese - Grant towards increased energy costs	-	-	-	1,087	-	1,087
Leicestershire County Council - Sew it, don't throw it project	-	-	-	-	1,798	1,798
Listed Place of Worship scheme	-	2,943	2,943	-	1,425	1,425
Ash Education Fund	-	1,376	1,376	-	-	-
Archbishops Council - Churchcare Grant	-	1,800	1,800	-	-	-
LPW Grant	-	574	574	-	-	-
	-	6,693	6,693	1,087	3,223	4,310

7 Activities for Generating Funds

	2024			2023		
	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total
Events and Activities	3,429	1,640	5,069	5,236	569	5,805
Room Hire	29,901	-	29,901	14,841	-	14,841
Magazine	370	-	370	604	-	604
Refreshments	282	-	282	-	-	-
	33,982	1,640	35,622	20,681	569	21,250

8 Building Maintenance and Development

Building Maintenance refers to maintenance or repair works carried out on a planned or emergency basis to maintain or repair the buildings to allow the ongoing use of the buildings.

Building Development refers to (mainly) larger projects which improve and enhance the buildings or enable such improvements.

9 Building Fund

Given the historic nature of the church buildings, and a general lack of investment in recent times, it is important that funds are regularly transferred to the Buildings Fund to enable repairs and improvements to continue and keep the buildings in use.

10 Legacy Fund

The legacy fund is where significant sums given to the church are held. The PCC policy is for such funds to be used solely for the development of the buildings and grounds of St Helen's i.e. not for building maintenance or for day to day operating costs (unless specified by the donor).

**ST HELEN'S CHURCH, ASHBY DE LA ZOUCH
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**Receipts & Payments Account - Church
for the year ended
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	<u>2024</u>		Total
	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	
RECEIPTS			
Planned giving	58,569	-	58,569
Loose Plate collection	4,090	-	4,090
Donations	1,958	20,750	22,708
Gift Aid	14,522	-	14,522
	79,139	20,750	99,889
Other income			
Occasional Offices	10,724	30	10,754
Charity Collections	-	1,843	1,843
Grants	-	6,693	6,693
Events	2,080	411	2,491
PRG Trip	-	1,229	1,229
Refreshment	282	-	282
Parish Magazine	370	-	370
Bank interest	3,152	-	3,152
Other income	231	-	231
Total receipts	95,978	30,956	126,934
PAYMENTS			
Parish Contribution	44,660	-	44,660
Services	1,493	342	1,835
Choir/Music	1,574	-	1,574
Salaries	13,172	-	13,172
Occasional Offices	5,846	140	5,986
Events & Trips	292	3,778	4,070
Refreshments	444	-	444
Expenses	2,235	-	2,235
Donations Given	6,050	433	6,483
Charity Collections	-	2,080	2,080
Utilities	4,882	-	4,882
Office	8,376	-	8,376
Insurance	6,227	-	6,227
Building - Cleaning	3	96	99
Building - planned	786	845	1,631
Building - repairs	-	23,432	23,432
Total payments	96,040	31,146	127,186
Gross receipts/(payments)	(62)	(190)	(252)
Transfers	(5,195)	5,195	-
Net receipts/(payments)	(5,257)	5,005	(252)

**ST HELEN'S CHURCH, ASHBY DE LA ZOUCH
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**Receipts & Payments Account - Heritage Centre
for the year ended
31 December 2024**

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	<u>2024</u>		Total
	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	
RECEIPTS			
Events	1,349	-	1,349
Room Hire	29,901	-	29,901
Other income	-	-	-
Grants	-	-	-
Total receipts	31,250	-	31,250
PAYMENTS			
Salaries	6,240	-	6,240
Events	247	-	247
General Expenses	170	-	170
Utilities	4,181	-	4,181
Office	283	-	283
Insurance	1,275	-	1,275
Building - cleaning	27	-	27
Building - maintenance	-	955	955
Building - Repairs	-	2,116	2,116
Total payments	12,423	3,071	15,494
Gross receipts/(payments)	18,827	(3,071)	15,756
Transfers	-	-	-
Net receipts/(payments)	18,827	(3,071)	15,756

**ST HELEN'S CHURCH, ASHBY DE LA ZOUCH
PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL**

**Restricted Funds Analysis
for the year ended
31 December 2024**

13	Balance @ 1.1.2024	Receipts	Payments	Transfers	Balance @ 31.12.2024
Restricted Funds					
Building Fund	12,483	19,317	27,144	5,000	9,656
Mothers Union	-	611	342	-	269
Bell Fund	-	4,892	440	240	4,692
Legacy Fund	70,421	-	-	-	70,421
Garden Fund	314	-	-	-	314
Team	433	-	433	-	-
PRG Trip 2024	-	3,823	3,778	(45)	-
Organ Fund	-	470	-	-	470
 <i><u>COLLECTIONS</u></i>					
Phoenix Children's Charity	124	55	179	-	-
Children's Society	113	108	221	-	-
Christian Aid	-	407	407	-	-
Gifts	-	879	879	-	-
Fair Trade	-	94	94	-	-
Mayors Collection	-	205	205	-	-
Ripple Effect Charity	-	95	95	-	-
	83,888	30,956	34,217	5,195	85,822
 Designated Funds (unrestricted)					
Choir	2,221	1,444	817	1,638	4,486
PCC Charity Donations	800	-	6,000	6,000	800
Little Fishes	868	-	-	(190)	678
Children & Young persons Ministry	-	-	-	45	45
Flower fund	-	30	7	-	23
	3,889	1,474	6,824	7,493	6,032
 General Funds					
Free reserves	33,946	125,754	101,639	(12,688)	45,373
Total Funds 31.12.2024	121,723	158,184	142,680	-	137,227

**ST HELEN'S CHURCH, ASHBY DE LA ZOUCH
PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL**

**Restricted Funds Analysis
for the year ended
31 December 2023**

14	Balance @ 1.1.2023	Receipts	Payments	Transfers	Balance @ 31.12.2023
Restricted Funds					
Building Fund	14,277	1,425	15,219	12,000	12,483
Heritage Fund	2,995	-	2,995	-	-
Legacy Fund	68,205	2,216	-	-	70,421
Garden Fund	314	-	-	-	314
Team	433	-	-	-	433
Sew it, Don't Throw it	-	2,367	2,659	292	-
	-				-
<u>COLLECTIONS</u>	-				-
Phoenix Children's Charity	-	137	13	-	124
Children's Society	145	112	144	-	113
Christian Aid	-	434	434	-	-
M Greg Gift	53	-	53	-	-
Toilet twinning	330	-	330	-	-
Mayors Collection	-	236	236	-	-
Bishops Appeal	-	350	350	-	-
Rainbow Hospice	-	209	209	-	-
	86,752	7,486	22,642	12,292	83,888
Designated Funds (unrestricted)					
Rector's Discretionary Fund	2,050	-	-	(2,050)	-
Choir	1,955	350	684	600	2,221
PCC Charity Donations	1,950	-	3,200	2,050	800
Little Fishes	868	-	-	-	868
	6,823	350	3,884	600	3,889
General Funds					
Free reserves	32,546	112,828	98,536	(12,892)	33,946
Total Funds 31.12.2023	126,121	120,664	125,062	-	121,723

Accounts

Charity Registration No: 1200922

**ST. HELEN'S CHURCH
ASHBY-DE-LA-ZOUCH**

Annual Report and Financial Statements

For the year ended

31 December 2023



The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of
Saint Helen, Ashby-de-la-Zouch

The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of
Saint Helen, Ashby-de-la-Zouch
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FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023**

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The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of
Saint Helen, Ashby-de-la-Zouch
PCC REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

PCC Name: The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of
Saint Helen, Ashby-de-la-Zouch

Charity Registration No: 1200922

Address: St Helen's Church
3 Lower Church Street
Ashby-de-la-Zouch
Leicester
LE65 1AA

Parochial Church Council Members:

Ex-officio member – Team Rector	Rev'd Susan Field	Appointed 10 May 2023
Ex-officio member – Churchwarden	Judith Lewis	
Ex-officio member - Churchwarden	Anne Heaton	Appointed 18 April 2023
Co-opted onto the PCC - Treasurer	Catalina Chan	Appointed 16 January 2024
Safeguarding Officer	Elizabeth Smith	
Lay Chair	Steph Whiten	Resigned 1 August 2023
Vice Chair	Lynda Price	
PCC Secretary	Christopher Lewis	Appointed 18 April 2023
Deanery Synod Rep & Electoral Roll Officer	Eileen Coombs	
Giving Officer	Cornelia Wright	
	Alison Cross	Resigned 18 April 2023
	John Dennis	Resigned 18 April 2023
	Caroline Essex	Resigned 18 April 2023
	Sam Blatherwick	
	Caroline Millward	
	Peter Rose	Resigned 18 April 2023
PCC Secretary to 18 April 2023	Malcolm Salter	
	Shan Dyer	Appointed 17 January 2023
	Emily Darlington	Appointed 18 April 2023

All the PCC are also Trustees of the charity.

The PCC are supported in their work by Andy Smith as Bookkeeper.

Independent Examiner: Richard Vann
9 Saxon Way
Ashby-de-la-Zouch
Leicestershire
LE65 2JR

Bankers: CAF Bank
25 Kings Hill Avenue
Kings Hill
West Malling
Kent
MR19 4TA

The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of
Saint Helen, Ashby-de-la-Zouch
PCC ANNUAL REPORT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

The PCC are pleased to present their report and financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2023.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Charity Commission's Receipts and Payments basis.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The PCC is a corporate body established by the Church of England. The PCC registered with the Charity Commission on 7 November 2022. The PCC operates under the Parochial Church Councils (Powers) Measure 1956 (as amended) and the Church Representation Rules (contained in Schedule 3 to the Synodical Government Measure 1969 as amended). The members of the PCC are the charity's trustees under charity law.

The PCC members are responsible for making decisions on all matters of general concern and importance to the parish, including deciding on how the funds of the PCC are to be spent.

PCC Membership

Appointment of PCC members are governed by the Church Representation Rules. The Vicar, other clergy licensed to serve in the Parish and the churchwardens are automatically members. Other members are elected at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting by church members who are on the Electoral Roll of the Parish. We encourage everyone (aged 16 and over) who attends church regularly to register on the Electoral Roll.

Churchwardens are elected each year at the Annual Meeting of Parishioners, which is open to all residents of the Parish. They serve from the date they are subsequently admitted to office by the Bishop and continue in office until their successor is admitted by the Bishop following election.

Elected members of the PCC serve for a term of 3 years from the date of election. They may stand to be re-elected for a further 3-year term.

Under the Church Representation Rules, the PCC has the power to co-opt additional members to fill casual vacancies. Co-opted members serve until the next Annual Parochial Church Meeting when they may stand for election.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

The PCC has the responsibility of promoting in the ecclesiastical parish, the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelical, social and ecumenical. The PCC undertakes their mission through prayer, worship, learning and action. It also has responsibility for the maintenance of the church building and the Community Heritage Centre and its associated grounds.

When planning our activities, the PCC has considered the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit, including the guidance 'public benefit: running a Charity (PB2)'. Our services and worship put faith into practice through prayer and scripture, music and sacrament. We try to enable people to live out their faith as part of our community.

The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of
Saint Helen, Ashby-de-la-Zouch
PCC ANNUAL REPORT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023
(continued)

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES (continued)

Our objectives are to:

- nurture and sustain growth in the Christian life by teachings, worship and prayer to develop knowledge and trust in Jesus;
- enable existing churchgoers to be confident in their witness to the ongoing life of Jesus Christ;
- engage with the local community in Ashby-de-la-Zouch in loving service, working with others.

To facilitate this work, it is vital that we maintain the fabric of the Church, the Churchyard, and the Heritage Centre and its associated grounds.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

PCC Secretary Report

Becoming PCC Secretary at last year's APCM seemed initially quite a daunting task unaware as I was of all the complex minutiae of the Church of England. However, one year on I have to say I am getting more familiar with how it works and am quite enjoying the administrative role of being PCC Secretary.

This year the PCC has met a total of 11 times since the 2023 APCM. Attendance has been good with few absences from our meetings. As well as updates from the various areas of the life of St Helen's we have given special consideration throughout the year to the Minster Community project, at the time of writing the final outcome of this remains unknown.

We have also considered various new initiatives including:

- Forming a children's group during the morning service at St Helen's. 'Stepping Stones' is now up and running thanks to the stalwart efforts of Caroline and Sam Blatherwick together with Cornelia Wright and Liz Smith. How good it is to see and hear children in church!
- A Priest Room Gang (PRG) trip to Amsterdam in May 2024 to see Anne Frank's house. A grant has been received for this and generous support from the congregation will enable 8 of our older young people take part in this event.
- 'Pause for Paws' our new outreach starting on Saturday mornings after Easter 2024 where we will be running a cafe and engaging with the many dog walkers and their dogs that regularly frequent our churchyard.

Last but by no means least the PCC has been regularly updated by Andy Smith and Catalina Chan on the state of our finances. We are grateful to you both for all your detailed hard work on both our finances and our budgets.

The minutes of our meetings (held on the 3rd Tuesday of each month) at 7pm in The Heritage Centre are made available on the PCC notice board near the St Michael's Chapel. I would encourage people to read these and let me know if you have any queries.

Chris Lewis

PCC Secretary

The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of
Saint Helen, Ashby-de-la-Zouch
PCC ANNUAL REPORT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023
(continued)

Team Rector's Report

I want to begin by thanking all who took on new responsibilities and bore the brunt of the extra tasks during the clergy vacancy. I am genuinely amazed at what you managed to sustain during that time and I am very grateful.

I also want to thank you all for your very warm welcome as I arrived in the Flagstaff Team with not a lot of notice, and for your patience as I have tried to get to grips with the way you do things here. It is really good to be working as part of such an able, faithful and willing team of people.

During the year a number of people have changed roles. Having offered valuable ministry during the vacancy, Rev'd Margaret Jacques decided to fully retire and we said goodbye to her in December. Also in December, Andrew Chapman stepped back from being Director of Music after many years of service but thankfully remains our organist. Caroline Essex and Anna Haines are sharing the role of leading our choir going forwards. Steph Whiten and Carol Eyley decided not to renew their licences as Pastoral Assistant and Reader respectively and Steph stood down from the PCC. We are hugely grateful for the ministry of all of these people.

As I arrived, I was very keen to be as present as possible across the five churches I serve most closely, and I was grateful to the people of All Saints, Isley Walton who were prepared to move their monthly service to the second Sunday of the month, allowing me to be at St Helen's for Evensong. We consulted on further changes in the villages to enable me to be at St Helen's for two mornings a month and this new pattern of services began on 1 January 2024. Again, I am very grateful to those in our village churches for accommodating this request.

In addition to the regular meetings, the PCC held a special Saturday meeting in September to learn more of our responsibilities as charity trustees, to have a heritage tour of the Church building and to identify some priorities for future work. These included discipleship, outreach, pastoral care and developing more informal worship in addition to our current worship.

Pastoral care was soon flagged up as an area that needed attention and, out of a PCC working group, has come a Pastoral Care team. We are in the process of safely recruiting them and we hope to authorize them very soon.

One of the missional opportunities we have as a Church of England congregation arises out of our contact with those who come for baptisms, weddings and funerals. Liz Smith and Eileen Coombs both work with me to connect with baptism families and to maintain that connection through our activities and services for families and young children. During the year we had two large funerals of younger people and I was hugely grateful for the support and welcome provided by a team of people from St Helen's on both of those occasions. We hope to develop this and our ministry to wedding couples during the coming year.

Contacts with schools and other groups in the town are another means of connection and mission. Liz Smith has built a really good relationship with Willesley school, and groups of children regularly visit St Helen's. Liz has been supported by a team from church in this. Tim Phillips and I have visited all the Headteachers of schools in Ashby and we hope to develop a stronger connection with all the schools between us.

During the year, we received the news that our area would be the next to form Minster Communities and our PCC was tasked with doing some preparation work for this process. We will learn more in 2024 about what that will mean for us and for future mission and ministry in Ashby.

The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of
Saint Helen, Ashby-de-la-Zouch
PCC ANNUAL REPORT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023
(continued)

Team Rector's Report (continued)

I want to end as I began by thanking all those who offer so much time and energy to the building, the life of the congregation and the mission and ministry of St Helen's. You are all so much valued and appreciated as together we live out our life as part of the Body of Christ in Ashby.

Sue Field

Team Rector

Fabric Report

The Buildings Group are pleased to report on the fabric of the church and works done during 2023. Yet again we say a huge thank you to those who freely give their time and skill to help care for our Grade 1 listed church and modern Community Heritage Centre and to the PCC for making funds available for maintenance and repair.

All the annual safety checks have been carried out to keep both buildings compliant and in good order including servicing of the boiler, security alarm, roof alarm, and fire alarm in the Heritage Centre. The fire extinguishers, portable appliances, and lightening conductors for both buildings have also been tested and any issues resolved so we are up to standard.

It's been a busy year on the roof. In addition to the routine clearing of leaves and weeds from the gullies and gutters we had to clear a significant blockage of silt in one of the drains which was causing water to leak through the roof near the pillars on the south aisle. And in October we discovered that one of the downpipes was failing to capture the rapid run off from the roof causing a cascade of water over the boiler room. A temporary solution is currently being trailed and if successful will be installed permanently by our roofers. A huge thank you to our team who have a good head for heights and look after the roof for us.

Water ingress and damp present a serious issue for St Helen's and as part of an ongoing programme to alleviate this we have had three of the cast iron downpipes restored by a local welding company experienced in heritage work. The pipes in the worse condition were removed in February, and temporary drainage installed while cracks were repaired, joints made good, and a thorough clean and repaint carried out. The refurbished pipes were returned in May and we plan to work through the remaining 10 downpipes as funding allows.

Also in May B and J Blacksmiths carried out some urgent repairs to the boiler room door and have refurbished the gate so the access to the boiler room is more secure. There have also been some repairs to the boiler and remedial electrical works following last year's electrical installation inspection.

Also following on from last year's report Skillingtons carried out their conservation inspection of the safety of the wall mounted memorials (and removed cobwebs!); the condition of the Nundi Slab; and Hastings Chapel memorials. We are hoping to receive their conservation condition report very soon and have secured an extension to the ChurchCare grant which will pay for some of this work. The work on the Selina slate slab in the Chancel is still outstanding and so we are discouraging people from walking over the area as it does present a trip hazard. We have so far been unsuccessful in securing grant funding for this work but have another couple of applications submitted. And the final update from last year's report is that the insurers are happy with the repairs carried out to the fixings of the Sanctuary Lamp in the Lady Chapel so we are pleased to see that area back in use.

The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of
Saint Helen, Ashby-de-la-Zouch
PCC ANNUAL REPORT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023
(continued)

Fabric Report (continued)

The exterior paintwork of the Heritage Centre was redone last autumn which should protect the timber for a few more years. Volunteers from our congregation are always busy carrying out repairs such as replacing the guttering on the Heritage Centre and fixing the gate lock; as well as routine maintenance painting, gardening, and fixing.

The buildings group have an ongoing list of issues – large and small – to work on but if you do spot anything unusual with either of our buildings, please do let us know. The priority for 2024 will be electrical works which will improve safety and energy efficiency, but there will be other work going on too as we continue to be good custodians of our lovely buildings.

Helen Smith

Fabric Officer

Churchwardens' Report

The year started with the APCM on April 18th 2023, following which we were rapidly plunged into preparations for the Service of Welcome for our new Rector, Rev'd Canon Sue Field, on May 10th. Never having done this before, and with just three weeks ahead of us, we were dependent on the knowledge and help of others to make sure that everything was put in place. The service went well, with a full church from across the Diocese and further afield, with refreshments afterwards. Many thanks to everyone who was involved in any way.

Thanks, are also due to the many assistants at services, especially the stewards and assistant wardens and those who count the donations every week. We couldn't manage without you.

In addition to the weekly services and monthly meetings ('Vestry' when we meet with Sue; Standing Committee, a sub-committee of the PCC who deal largely with financial matters and the PCC agenda; and the PCC meeting itself), we have dealt with a number of building-related matters, which include:

- The fire extinguishers in both buildings were serviced.
- The electric meters in both buildings were switched for second generation smart meters, which took several days. It seems that the Heritage Centre has a 'ghost' meter and persuading the company and its meter fitters that this did not exist but that there was another one which did need switching, took up several days. We are indebted to Shan Dyer for hours of her time!
- A faculty for a plaque to Canon John Bowers, who many people will remember, is being sought, at the request of the family and with the PCC's support. Only the Wardens and Rector can apply for a faculty. At time of writing, it has taken nearly 6 months. We are fortunate that most of the Diocesan permissions connected with the building (for rewiring and other repairs) can be dealt with much more quickly.
- We are inordinately indebted as a church community to the Building's group. They climb onto the church roof regularly to clear the gulleys of leaves and check where rainwater is getting into the building; fix things which break in both buildings; and implement the recommendations of the Quinquennial inspection of the building. Thank you with all our hearts Helen, Simon, Martin, Neil, Peter and others; this is by no means a small job!

The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of
Saint Helen, Ashby-de-la-Zouch
PCC ANNUAL REPORT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023
(continued)

Churchwardens' Report (continued)

- Their work notwithstanding, some parts of the church building are in poor condition, as will be obvious from the plaster falling from above in places and the crumbling columns. Some of the stonework on the tower is also in poor condition. With this in mind, the Diocese has suggested we contact Historic England with a view to having the church put on the Heritage at Risk Register. This sounds scary, but will push us up the list when applying for grants. We are awaiting a visit at time of writing.
- Over the past year, our numbers at services, which had been slow to recover from the impact of Covid, have gradually increased. It has been particularly pleasing to see an increase in numbers of children and young families at our monthly all-age afternoon services, as well as at a packed Messy Nativity service on Christmas Eve. Attendance at our carol services, Midnight Communion and Christmas morning services was also closer to pre-Covid numbers. It has been lovely to see new faces joining us at our services, and we are grateful that some have offered their help with stewarding and assisting Eileen Barradell to set up for services.
- Finally, and echoing the words of the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews when he writes "time would fail me to tell of ...", time would fail us to tell of the innumerable people who so generously contribute their time, energy and skills to the life of our church in both obvious ways and quietly behind the scenes. We could not carry out our role as Wardens without you. If we have not mentioned you or your role in our report, please forgive us – it does not mean we are not immeasurably thankful to you all.

Judith Lewis & Anne Heaton

Churchwardens

St Helen's Bellringers

In 2023, the 3 bells were rung for 6 weddings thanks to the support of ringers from neighbouring churches as there are currently only 4 St. Helen's ringers.

The roof continues to be inspected periodically and maintenance such as weeding and sweeping carried out as necessary by local ringers who also put up the flags. The roof has minor leaks that could be repaired with tar by the ringers.

The bells were rung on Saturday 6th May to mark the coronation of King Charles III.

Since November, we have rung for Evensong with support from ringers from other towers who also support with ringing for the Sunday morning services.

A gallery would make ringing the bells much easier for all the ringers, but especially inexperienced ringers or teaching new ringers.

Catherine Baker

The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of
Saint Helen, Ashby-de-la-Zouch
PCC ANNUAL REPORT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023
(continued)

Children and Young People

Stepping Stones – children's group

After the PCC "away day" in September 2023 a group of us started to explore rekindling the Lanterns children's group that existed pre-pandemic within the church. We eventually got this off the ground in the New Year with Sam, Caroline and Cornelia running the first two sessions, which are happening on the second Sunday of each month. We have had 8 children in total across the first two sessions and hope to grow from there. Children are exploring Christianity and their place in the world around them through stories and crafts. At the end of each session, they feedback to the congregation, and the response from the church community has been fantastic.

Sam Blatherwick

Priest Room Gang (PRG)

Hospitality and supporting and serving others.

There are now 12 young people who are members of the PRG. The young people now meet on Thursday evenings 5.00-6.30pm twice a month in the St Helen's Community Heritage Centre, and more often by arrangement.

We are currently using the materials provided by Roots Resources for churches, to support thinking about faith, the life of Christ and living in today's world.

The group still wishes to keep a focus on issues and concerns of poor mental health and the impact it has on people's lives and in particular young people.

During the summer the group reviewed the children's area inside St Helens Church and provided some ideas for improvement, making it more welcome for children and young people.

The group enjoyed a trip to Melbourne in the summer travelling on the public bus. A great day was spent visiting the church, the village and Melbourne pool.

PRG continue to provide the after-service refreshments on the first Sunday of every month after the All- Age services.

Thank you to the young people and thank you to Emily Darlington and the adults who have supported me during the year. The PRG really is a star group. Watch out for next year's activities.

Elizabeth Smith

Deanery Synod

Deanery Synod meetings were held in March and June, including a Fish and Chip dinner, and in October at various venues in the Deanery. The issues discussed or identified included how to live out our everyday faith in and among our families, friends and colleagues; the Parish Contributions which had seen a slight increase overall; the Deanery Tour by the Area Dean, Noreen and Avril which collected comments and suggestions from various parishes; an update from the Pilot Minster Community.

The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of
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PCC ANNUAL REPORT
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(continued)

Deanery Synod (continued)

Foremost on people's minds are two questions: Will Minster Communities affect Parish commitment in the future? Will there still be a Deanery? But then, these are still unresolved and unanswered.

Eileen Coombs

Deanery Synod Lay Representative

Eco-Initiative Group

A Green Survey Questionnaire was completed and returned by 25 church members. This has been assessed by the Group: in summary - respondents favour 'special' Sunday eco-themed service but do not want to be a 'single-issue' church. They are aware of the issues and implications surrounding climate change and are actively addressing ways of making a difference. They would like to know more about renewable energy. Catherine Jacques has completed an environment audit – to be reviewed and assessed.

LED lighting is now in use in church and Heritage Centre. Fewer paper pew sheets are being printed. Environmentally-friendly cleaning products, obtained from Fairtrade shop, are used. We are avoiding single-use plastic wherever possible. Recycling of packaging and food scraps in the kitchen. Composting facilities have been installed in the HC garden for gardening waste. Churchyard and HC gardens are well-stocked with nature- and wildlife-friendly plants. 500 Spring bulbs, obtained from the Town Council, have been planted in the churchyard and HC gardens.

Lent Sermons and TeamTalks for Easter 2023 followed eco-themed topics, using Tearfund material. Environmentally-aware books are now in the children's corner. Intercessory prayers have regularly been including reflection on our responsibility to stewardship of the planet.

A plant-based Lunch was held on 26/02/23 which was well supported; 40 appreciative diners. Although no charge was requested, generous donations were made to church funds. A vegetarian/organic/locally-sourced produce Brunch was held on 10/09/23. More than 30 people attended and expressed their gratitude and enjoyment of the event. Over £80 was donated towards church funds.

The Group met in December 2023 to discuss plans for a Fairtrade Promotion Event, to be held in 2024.
Caroline Millward

Friends Fellowship and Faith Group

Jenny Hedges kindly invites anyone who wants to come to an afternoon twice a month in her home for Friendship, Fellowship and Faith.

We gather together to get to know one another and share our lives and faith in a spirit of friendship and respect. Now one of the main features however is tea and cake! Lots of cake!!

As time has gone on, the group has evolved and included people who previously did not have contact with church. We have been blessed by coming together and just allowing the Holy Spirit to be amongst us, in a gentle quiet way.

Mo Clarke, a member of the group

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PCC ANNUAL REPORT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023
(continued)

Sew it don't throw it

This project was developed by three retired textile tutors who are involved with the 'We're In Stitches' group working with the EAT team. It was made possible by a Leicestershire County Council Shire's Environmental Grant which we were awarded in January 2023, and aligns with our Eco Church initiative.

The project was introduced via an exhibition in the Community Heritage Centre of vintage sewing equipment alongside a set of posters challenging people to think about textile waste, recycling, and sustainability. The formal launch in March was an event with displays, demonstrations, meet the makers, have a go, and a garment swap rail. Attended by 50 people the event generated a lot of excitement about the project, which people felt has been needed in Ashby for a long time, and some great conversation about recycling and repurposing textiles.

Throughout the summer our tutors delivered a total of 22 workshops each with eight places available. These included sessions on how to use a sewing machine, garment repair, visible mending, and alterations. The aim was to give people the skills to repair and recycle different textiles. In addition, there was a series of workshops repurposing fabrics – from making patchwork out of fabric scraps to using redundant material to make useful items such as aprons and bags. Towards the end of the programme people brought in items of clothing to repair, alter or repurpose. The sessions were engaging, and people really enjoyed learning new skills, making new friends, and improving their wellbeing through creativity, social activity, saving money and being more sustainable.

We hosted two talks in July.

'Making with Waste A Conversation' when Di Kendall and Alice Burnhope talked about clothing and sustainability and the use of pre-loved textiles and natural dyes. The audience of 30 joined the challenging conversation about the environmental impact of textile manufacture, care, and disposal and what changes we can make to our behaviours and purchasing decisions such as the benefits of buying natural fibres, having fewer items that will be worn for longer, preloved clothing, and rejuvenating garments from our wardrobe. These conversations are still going on. For instance, in 'How Learning to Sew Changed My Life' when Great British Sewing Bee contestant Gill Thomas shared her inspirational story with an appreciative audience of 76 people.

In September 10 experienced dressmakers from around the country came together for a sewing day to create the most surprising textile transformations. On October 7th the project finale was a pop-up fashion show in church featuring the reused, repurposed, and recycled garments made by our talented team and supported by project participants who acted as models and dressers. The Fashion Show was part of Ashby's annual Ashby Fabulous and also the national Sustainable Fashion Week.

Our 11 models wowed audiences as they brought 22 different looks to the catwalk - the 90 people who saw the show commented that they were impressed and inspired.

And for our younger people we used fabric scraps from the project, old wooden curtain rings and ribbon offcuts to create 35 rag wreath kits for Loughborough City of Sanctuary, who support refugee families living in hotels, as an autumn half term craft activity – each kit was in a paper carrier with full pictorial instructions. Volunteers also ran a customising denim workshop with teenagers giving a new lease of life to pre loved garments with fabric paints and lots of imagination.

We were able to deliver the workshops for free due to generous support including the grant paying for equipment, suppliers offering discounts, the tutors giving their time and the PCC supporting with

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Sew it don't throw it (continued)

the use the room. In addition, Julie Starkey, Jill Chapman and Helen Smith did a huge amount of 'admin' behind the scenes to help the project run smoothly and engage as many people as possible.

Participants are keen to continue their sewing journey and we have plans to run paid for courses and workshops, to offer use of the machines and to run more events in Sustainable Fashion Week to keep the recycling and repurposing conversation going.

Helen Smith

Flower Arranging

As communion has started to be distributed from the High Altar, flower arrangements now adorn the High Altar and the Choir Stall. At Christmas and Easter, there were flower pedestals at the entrance, St Michael's Chapel, the High Altar, Lady Chapel and by the Choir stalls. Carol Eyley even dressed all the window shelves with foliage.

Margaret Lawrence has continued to do the Advent wreath and Pastoral Candle for us and we are truly grateful. A big Thank You to all the faithful and willing flower arrangers who, week by week, creatively and lovingly, arrange flowers to adorn the church, making it warm, beautiful and welcoming to visitors.

If you are interested and feel this is a ministry you can help with, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Eileen Coombs

Flower Co-ordinator

St Helen's Community Heritage Centre Garden Project (SHCHGCP)

Work has progressed on the garden throughout 2023. Thanks are due to the volunteers especially Peter M, Martin V, Caroline & Rob M.

Andrew Chapman

Little Fishes

Little Fishes continued to thrive during 2023 with an average of 25 children attending each week with their parent or carer. We enjoyed seeing a nice mix of newcomers, old faces and returning mums with new babies. Our cohort of grandparents has also continued to attend enjoying spending time together.

It has been a privilege for us as volunteers to support some of our adult attendees during times of illness or difficulty and a pleasure to see the support and friendship they have built up between themselves too.

In July we said goodbye to 5 Little Fishes who were moving up to school, celebrating this as is our usual custom with small gifts and prayers for both them and their mums.

During the year we invested in some new books and toys and replaced some worn out ones. We continue to make a weekly donation to PCC funds and have agreed to cap our restricted fund at an amount that would cover replacement of larger items of equipment such as tables and chairs, with anything over the cap diverting to the PCC general fund.

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Little Fishes (continued)

Little Fishes continues to run with five main volunteers plus three occasional volunteers to help cover absences and we are very grateful to them all for their time.

Caroline Essex

Mothers' Union



The year commenced with our 2022 AGM in January. In February we had a very happy occasion at our Pancake Lunch which was held in aid of our Bible Fund. Our grateful thanks to Barry Heath once again for providing the pancakes and fillings to his usual excellent standard.

In March, Rev Linda Foot gave us a Lenten Reflection on Holy Week, referring in some parts to Julian of Norwich. Our April meeting provided us with a very interesting and enlightening insight into the Ashby Food Bank. This was given by one of our own members, Adrienne Sedgman who works with the Food Bank.

The speaker for our May meeting had to cancel due to ill health, but we still met together and had a good time generally chatting with each other over refreshments. June was our open meeting – our usual cream tea. No meetings were held in July and August.

In September we welcomed Margaret Rouse as our speaker and she gave us a most interesting history of ecclesiastical embroidery with many superb illustrations. October saw our second Open Coffee Morning.

In November we welcomed Eileen Page who was the intended speaker for the May meeting, which she had to cancel. She gave us a most interesting insight into AFIA holiday groups (Away From It All). These provide holidays for families who would otherwise not be able to enjoy a break.

Our December meeting was our usual Christmas Lunch though we had fewer people attending this. We were also asked to make posies for Mothering Sunday and make Christingles for the annual Christmas Service.

Margaret Worrall

Branch Secretary

Sadly, in January this year, at our 2023 AGM it became necessary for us to consider our way forward because we had lost so many of our Members due to various reasons and it was not viable to invite speakers to address so few people. It was therefore agreed that after over 100 years, the St Helen's Mothers' Union Branch be closed. Members were urged to become Diocesan Members where they would still receive the magazines and information on what was happening in the MU. The Members will still provide Bibles for wedding couples at St Helen's and are happy to continue providing useful services as requested in the past. Eileen Coombs was happy to be a point of contact.

Eileen Barradell

Diocesan Member

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Director of Music

Full Choir

There were 4 regular 'young' trebles, plus Liz, Michelle & Anna. In the altos, Emily D (former head chorister & 'extra' treble) joined the two Carolines & Adrienne. We welcomed Anne back to the altos and Caroline S is now a regular evensong chorister. Keith retired from the tenors in October. 3 tenors and 1 bass.

Annabel has continued her loyal and committed role as head chorister – leading the trebles, developing her musical and vocal skills, and always relishing the opportunity to keep us amused!!

We had another special Advent Carol service and a further outing to Staunton Harold for Christmas Carols. There was a lovely atmosphere and a very appreciative congregation for our Christmas Carol service. As is our custom we welcomed back former choristers - Phil C & Jenny, as well as recruiting extras – Chris L, David E, & Caroline S. Thank you all.

Junior Choir

Lead the worship for Mothering Sunday, Harvest & Christingle services;

Older singers move on, and younger ones join in, Ruth B is doing a great job

Valued support from Anna, Caroline E & Liz

Summer Concert

Our full choir, junior choir, dads n lads, 2 Carolines & Anna trio, Jenny solo & Chapmen duet, supported Great Wood choir & instrumentalists at Tean, in North Staffs.

Many of us enjoyed a day walking & exploring Dimmingsdale before turning our attention to the music!

Music Group

Continues to play for the All Age Service on the first Sunday of the month.

a valuable additional resource to the music at St Helen's

our numbers reduced during 2023 - Pete H (guitar) and myself (piano), being the regulars.

Organ & Pianos

The organ continues to be tuned twice a year, - and is generally in pretty good order – I continue to liaise with the tuners – Cousans Organs (based in Coalville) – there are a few more age-related issues that will need addressing in the not too distant future.

The piano keeps in tune well, but some work on the case of the piano still needs undertaking.

The digital piano jointly owned with Concordia Choir continues to be securely stored in the Heritage Centre - it was used quite a few times during 2023.

I wish to acknowledge the support of Howard Marriott and Laurence Rodgers who have played the organ on occasions when I have been on leave.

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Director of Music (continued)

Moving on

During the latter part of the year, Caroline E, Anna and myself, in conjunction with Rev Sue, discussed a change in the leadership of the music at St Helen's.

After 16 years in the 'Director's' role, it was time to step down from some of my responsibilities. From 1st January 2024, Caroline E became Choral Director and Anna her Choral Assistant, with me continuing as organist.

Andy Smith gave a 'special speech' during our traditional choir tea before the Christmas Carol service, which was very much appreciated. A 'photo shoot' followed the carol service; then there were the 'official presentations' in January – cards, pressies, thank you's, cakes and, of course Judith's version of Billy Joel's 'The Piano Man'. It was quite an emotional occasion. Thank you all so much.

Caroline E, Anna and Andy have been particularly supportive over the last few years. I'm very grateful.

Andrew Chapman

Director of Music (2023)

Prior Park Ministry

A line or two about Communion at Prior Park

I'm not sure when the monthly communion service started, but certainly since Mary Gregory's day, it has been the practice to combine the Wednesday Holy Communion service at St Helen's with Prior Park's monthly service on the second Wednesday of each month at 10.30 am. This has several advantages.

It means that the Prior Park residents who, with some exceptions, are not able to attend Sunday services in a local church, have a regular opportunity to join a Communion service on site. It is such an encouragement to younger ones attending to worship with those who have walked with the Lord for many years. It also facilitates fellowship between the regular Wednesday congregation of St Helen's and residents of Prior Park. And of course, it strengthens links and enables prayer and pastoral concern to flourish.

The service is simple: Margaret Worrall plays the hymn tunes; Sue Field and the other Sue share the leadership of the service, and 'the two Eileens' (you'll know who I mean) assist in various ways. Usually there are 15-20 people there, representing different church traditions, so although the service follows the Anglican liturgy, all are welcome – and in the best Prior Park tradition, there's often time for tea, coffee and chat afterwards.

Sue Brown

Lay Reader

And talking of tea.....

Another couple of lines about TEA TIME

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Prior Park Ministry (continued)

Tea Time was held eight times in the Prior Park big Community Centre in the past year. Sadly, a few residents passed away and some moved to care/ nursing homes. However, a few new residents have started to join us on these Saturday afternoon social gatherings and they thoroughly enjoyed themselves, not only each other's company but also all the delicious homemade cakes.

A special thank you to George, a 6th Former at Ashby School, who volunteered to help out on many Saturdays and was a real asset chatting to the residents. We wish him all the best as he takes his A Levels this summer, hoping to go into medical school.

Thank you again to the faithful team who bake delicious cakes, make and serve tea, and of course wash up. Without their invaluable support, our church's outreach to the community will not be possible.

Eileen Coombs
Organiser

Safeguarding Report

'Safeguarding' means the action the Church takes to promote a safer culture in all our churches.

In 2023 there were no concerns reported. A number of DBS checks have been renewed, and new DBS certificates obtained for new volunteers and PCC members across the Flagstaff Family of Churches.

As the DBS administrator I complete checks for the Flagstaff Family of Churches and it is now required for all DBS certificates to be renewed every 3 years.

Online Safeguarding training has been offered and accessed for new volunteers and PCC members. In 2023 all members of St Helens PCC completed all the Safeguarding training to the required standard.

We are working with the Parish Handbook and the Leicester Diocesan requirements which set out the Church's approach to Safeguarding. This supports the day to day work of Safeguarding and those that have a role with children, young people and adults who may be vulnerable.

Information about Safeguarding and reporting concerns /seeking help and advice is displayed in the church and the St Helen's Community Heritage Centre.

Safeguarding contact details appear on the church website and in the Parish magazine.

St Helen's Church is registered with the Parish Safeguarding Dashboard which ensures that we receive up to date information and provides a plan of any actions required.

The St Helen's Safeguarding policies for both children and vulnerable adults are in place and will be reviewed annually.

The safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults at St Helen's Church and the Flagstaff Family of Churches must be a thread which runs through everything we do and the policies and practices we put in place for our church and church community.

The safety of children, young people and vulnerable adults is "everyone's business"

Elizabeth Smith
Safeguarding Officer

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Open Bible Discussion Group (Monday House Group)

We have continued to meet each Monday evening and have discussed various different topics based on different selected books of the Bible. However, we are now very depleted in numbers and I am wondering whether we can continue with the group.

Margaret Worrall

“Pilgrim” – Learning together to be disciples.

Since mid-October 2023, a group numbering up to 10 when everyone is present, have been meeting on Monday nights to pray, read and discuss aspects of our discipleship as followers of Jesus. We started with the first book in the Pilgrim course published by The Church of England – “Turning to Christ”, which explores the basics of the Christian faith. Although the course is designed primarily for people starting out in their journey of exploring Christianity, the content is relevant however long someone has been a Christian or been coming to church. Future plans include using a broader range of resources as we seek to grow in our relationship with God.

Judith Lewis

Servers

Sadly, we are so few in numbers (Sue Evans, Greg Wells and myself with Lyn Price) it has not always been possible to have a full complement. However, we do our best and I would like to express my appreciation to every one of our team for their loyalty. New Servers would be most welcome – just have a word with me.

We do desperately require a Sacristan as I am having to undertake those duties myself with some help from Laura Tucker, but it is becoming more and more difficult.

Although strictly speaking they do not come under the heading of servers but we do have some members of the congregation who have been approved by the PCC to administer the sacraments, namely Shan Dyer, Eileen Coombs, Peter Maunder, Lyn Price and Adrienne Sedgman. These are all very valuable members of our team.

Eileen Mary Barradell

Head Server

St Helen’s Sound Team

Over the past 12 months the sound team have attempted to provide an operator for all the major services in the church. We believe this is an essential part of the church life ensuring the services can be clearly heard by all listeners.

We are still keen to get others involved in this part of the churches work. We would like to extend coverage to include Evensong. It’s not difficult; training and support will be given. For more information please contact Simon (simon.starkey@gmail.com) or any member of the sound team.

Simon Starkey

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Ashby Street Pastors



Overview of the last year

We managed 54 patrols in 2023 and I am extremely grateful to our dedicated and committed team that made this possible. In addition to our Saturday patrols (50 of a possible 52) we went out on 4 of the Sundays immediately prior to a Bank Holiday (9th and 30th April, 7th and 28th May) as well as the Friday before Christmas (otherwise known as ‘Mad Friday’).

Street and Prayer Pastors

1 Street Pastor stepped down at the end of 2023 after 5 years faithful service – my thanks go to Catherine Henderson for her patrolling over the last 5 years. In January we commissioned two new street pastors (Emily Roberts and Lucy Yewlett) as well as recommissioning 9 so we have a total of 11 going forward into 2024.

We currently have 3 Prayer Pastors and I am really grateful to Frank, Joan and Steph who faithfully support us each week they are on duty, either present with us in The Heritage Centre or supporting us by phone. This work is not possible without you so a big thank you from all the Street Pastors.

Vital Statistics

Below are the statistics for 2023 with 2022 in brackets which give some idea of our effectiveness on the streets

PEOPLE HELPED 2023					
Anti Social Incidents	4 (1)	Calming Aggressive	1 (5)	Support Vulnerable	16 (19)
ITEMS GIVEN OUT					
Bottled Water	15 (13)	Flip Flops	2 (7)	Wet Wipes	2 (0)
MAKING THE STREETS SAFER					
Bottles removed	225 (250)	Glasses removed	120 (107)	Broken Glass	29 (19)
Drinking on the Street	46 (43)				
Note 2022 figures in brackets					

My thanks go to our Management Committee for all their support and especially to Adrienne for taking on the role of Secretary, Dorothy for taking on the role of Treasurer and Liz our every faithful and much needed Vice Chair.

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Ashby Street Pastors (continued)

My thanks also go to St Helen's for allowing us to use the Heritage Centre as our base every Saturday night and for supporting the Street Pastor initiative with both prayer and finance.

Chris Lewis

Coordinator 07828 463368 ashby@streetpastors.org.uk

St Helen's Website

Jill Chapman updates all church events, notice sheets and parish magazines. Julie Starkey updates heritage related events and our 'what's on' pages. We work together to cover each other's times of unavailability and we endeavour to keep the website up to date at all times.

During 2023 we used our website extensively to enable booking of our 'Sew It Don't Throw It' events. Setting up the information pages for the events and the booking pages and, where necessary, payment pages was a huge learning curve, but has built our expertise and given us confidence to use the website for bookings in the future.

The website has been revised slightly to try to make the headings clearer and more intuitive. We have also added a tab at the top so that visitors to the website can immediately find our Safeguarding information. We've also added a monthly table of services, so website users can see at a glance what's happening.

The Heritage pages continue to develop, with new research articles added regularly, creating an online resource for visitors and researchers.

Jill Chapman & Julie Starkey

Welcome and Hospitality

The church is open every day during daylight hours, welcoming everyone who wishes to come in, sit quietly, pray, or enjoy the tranquillity of our beautiful and historic building. Many visited from afar, with parents or grandparents married in our church or they themselves baptised here years ago. So for centuries, people from all walks of life have come and worship, give thanks and be blessed. This tradition is very important to us and we want to keep it going.

Flower arrangements adorn various areas of the church, lovely to behold and an aid to worship. Colourful notice boards displaying posters and notices keep the congregation and visitors updated of upcoming events and services.

Tea lights are always available by St Michael's Chapel to remember loved ones. There are also vases by the Book of Remembrance area for people to put flowers in to remember loved ones on anniversaries.

Eileen Coombs

Deputy Churchwarden for Welcome and Hospitality

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Warm Hearted Spaces

This initiative, suggested by the EATS Team, approved by the PCC, was launched on Friday 14th April, 2023.

Its objective is to provide a warm, safe and welcoming space for anyone who wishes to drop in for a cup of tea/coffee and cakes, chat and enjoy each other's company. It is both adult and child friendly with board games, jigsaws, soft toys and much more. There is no charge and it is an excellent way to meet new people, socialise and have a good time.

We are at the Heritage Community Centre EVERY Friday, from 1-4pm. Please come and visit us.
Eileen Coombs & Liz Smith

Heritage Centre

The Heritage Centre is a fantastic multi-purpose building which is put to very good use by all the different church groups who use it. It houses the church office and it hosts church events such as Little Fishes, the monthly 'Knit & Natter' group, 'Warm Space,' Priest Room Gang and Messy Church as well as after-church coffee and occasional church events such as the Haggis Supper and is a base for the Ashby Street Pastors.

We have lots of regular paid bookings, such as NHS clinics, Civic Society meetings and language and exercise classes and there have been several private hires over the course of the year.

In 2023 we welcomed a new audience to take part in our 'Sew It, Don't Throw It' beginners' sewing sessions, which also involved two highly successful and popular talks, including one by a former Great British Sewing Bee contestant.

We also use the Heritage Centre to showcase the fascinating heritage of our site, with a regular winter programme of talks plus an additional heritage talk and a children's archaeology workshop during the July Festival of Archaeology.

It is a very useful multi-purpose space which is well used by both church and community.
Julie Starkey

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Treasurer's Report – Financial Year 2023

At 31st December 2023, St. Helen's funds totalled £121,723, a decrease of £4,398 across the course of 2023. The key points to note from the enclosed accounts are:

- There was no growth in Planned Giving, while increases in other giving and Gift Aid claimed offset declines in Loose Plate Collections and Donations. No significant legacies were received in 2023 either.
- Activities for generating funds (mainly income from room hire and events) showed healthy growth (at £21,250 65% up on 2022).
- Running costs increased by 73%, with an increase of nearly £ 10,000 in the cost of gas and electric the main driver of this.
- Money invested in the church buildings also increased in 2023, up by £12,000 on the previous year.

Although the church spent nearly £4,400 more than it received in the year, this is not in itself a cause for concern. The church still has well over £30,000 in its general fund, and the PCC policy is to keep £14,000 of that "in reserve" in case of an unexpected event or set of circumstances.

In addition, as you can see from the Funds Analysis at the end of the accounts, we have £70,000 in the legacy fund – though PCC policy is to use this for major works on our buildings.

So, St. Helen's finances remain on a sound footing. But the PCC wishes to embody the spirit of living generously and to continue to invest the fabric of the ancient monument that has been entrusted to our care (the church) and so the budget for 2024 includes:

- Planned investment of £32,700 on the church buildings (104% increase on 2023).
- An increased Parish Contribution to the Diocese of £44,660 (10% increase on 2023).
- Increased PCC Giving of £6,000 (85% increase on 2023).

As a result, the PCC has budgeted for a deficit of £9,745. The church's funds can sustain deficits like this for another year or two, but if we are to continue to invest in our mission and our heritage, we need to continue to increase our income, both from activities from generating funds, but also from our own individual giving. Hence the recent appeal to review the amount we give to St. Helen's.

This is my last report to you as Treasurer as I prepare to hand over the abacus to Catalina Chan who has kindly volunteered to take on the role of Treasurer. I am immensely grateful to her and have enjoyed working alongside her for the last few months, I am sure she will enjoy your support, and I wish her good luck as I look forward to spending time on ministry, rather than money!!

Yours In Christ



Andy Smith
Treasurer

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STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES

The members of the PCC, who are also trustees of the charity, are responsible for preparing the trustees' report and the accounts in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

The trustees are required to prepare accounts for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the PCC and of the incoming resources and application of resources of the PCC during the year.

In preparing those financial statements, the PCC is required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- prepare the financial statements in accordance with the Church Representation Rules;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the PCC will continue in operation.

The PCC is responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time, the financial position of the PCC and to enable the PCC to ensure that the financial statements comply with the requirements referred to above. The PCC is also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

This report has been prepared in accordance with the Church Representation Rules and applicable UK Accounting Standards

Approved by the PCC on 19 March 2024 and signed on its behalf by:

S. E. Field

[S. E. Field \(Apr 21, 2024 07:05 GMT+1\)](#)

Rev'd Canon Sue Field
PCC Chair

The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of
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**INDEPENDENT EXAMINERS' REPORT TO THE PCC/TRUSTEES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023**

I report to the PCC on my examination of the Receipts & Payments Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2023 which are set out on pages 24 to 31.

Responsibilities and basis of report

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

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

Independent Examiner's Statement

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

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

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

Richard Vann
9 Saxon Way
Ashby-de-la-Zouch
Leicestershire
LE65 2JR

R P Vann

[R P Vann \(May 1, 2024 23:07 GMT+1\)](#)

Dated:

**ST HELEN'S CHURCH, ASHBY DE LA ZOUCH
PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL**

**Receipts & Payments Account
for the year ended
31 December 2023**

RECEIPTS	Note	2023			2022		
		Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total
Donations & Legacies							
Planned Giving		55,728	-	55,728	55,335	-	55,335
Loose Plate Collections & Donations		3,771	-	3,771	4,312	5,469	9,781
Legacies		-	2,216	2,216	-	14,146	14,146
Other giving	5	4,801	-	4,801	1,331	30	1,361
Gift aid		14,404	-	14,404	9,148	-	9,148
Total Donations & legacies		78,704	2,216	80,920	70,126	19,645	89,771
Grants	6	1,087	3,223	4,310	-	-	-
Other income							
Activities for generating funds	7	20,681	569	21,250	12,853	-	12,853
Fees - Weddings & Funerals		10,135	-	10,135	13,566	-	13,566
Bank interest		2,124	-	2,124	414	-	414
Collections funds		-	1,478	1,478	-	2,936	2,936
Sundry income		447	-	447	-	-	-
Total receipts		113,178	7,486	120,664	96,959	22,581	119,540
PAYMENTS							
Charitable Activities							
Parish Contribution		40,600	-	40,600	37,100	-	37,100
Charitable Donations		3,250	-	3,250	4,700	-	4,700
Employment Costs		14,205	2,994	17,199	10,478	5,217	15,695
Running Costs		37,509	2,659	40,168	23,264	-	23,264
Fees - Weddings & Funerals		6,090	-	6,090	9,921	-	9,921
Building Maintenance & Development		766	15,219	15,985	1,586	2,330	3,916
Cultural Recovery Fund Grant 2		-	-	-	-	-	-
Collections funds		-	1,770	1,770	-	2,846	2,846
Total payments		102,420	22,642	125,062	87,049	10,393	97,442
Net receipts/ (payments)		10,758	(15,156)	(4,398)	9,910	12,188	22,098
Transfers between funds		(12,292)	12,292	-	(14,344)	14,344	-
Cash funds @ 31.12.2022		39,369	86,752	126,121	43,803	60,220	104,023
Cash funds @ 31.12.2023		37,835	83,888	121,723	39,369	86,752	126,121

**ST HELEN'S CHURCH, ASHBY DE LA ZOUCH
PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL**

**Statement of Assets and Liabilities
as at 31 December 2023**

CASH FUNDS	Note	<u>2023</u>			<u>2022</u>		
		Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds
Bank Current Account		3,906	237	4,143	5,031	528	5,559
Bank Deposit Account		33,929	83,651	117,580	34,338	86,224	120,562
Total cash funds		37,835	83,888	121,723	39,369	86,752	126,121
INCOME NOT YET BANKED							
Cash	3	11,406	-	11,406	3,652	-	3,652
		11,406	-	11,406	3,652	-	3,652
LIABILITIES							
Suppliers	4	3,156	1,203	4,359	2,884	737	3,621
		3,156	1,203	4,359	2,884	737	3,621
REPRESENTED BY							
Funds	13/14	37,835	83,888	121,723	39,369	86,752	126,121
		37,835	83,888	121,723	39,369	86,752	126,121

The receipts & payments accounts were approved by the PCC on 19th March 2024 and were signed on their behalf by:

S. E. Field

[S. E. Field \(Apr 21, 2024 07:05 GMT+1\)](#)

Rev'd Canon Sue Field
PCC Chair

**ST HELEN'S CHURCH, ASHBY DE LA ZOUCH
PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL**

**Notes to the Accounts
for the year ended
31 December 2023**

1 Basis of preparation

The financial statements of the PCC have been prepared in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations using the Receipts and Payments basis.

2 Third Party Fundraising

All funds passing through the PCC accounts are shown as income and expenditure, including specific "Collections Funds" that are collected on behalf of, and then forwarded on to, third parties.

3 Income invoiced/received not yet banked

At the end of the financial year the following income had been invoiced or received but not yet banked:

	2023	2022
Wall safe & Loose plate collections	114	-
Collections - Rainbows Hospice (restricted)	-	209
Midnight Mass	-	62
Concert	-	72
Sum Up - CollectTin church donations	450	-
Gift aid - claimed January	1,195	3,309
Room Hire - NHS	9,647	-
	11,406	3,652

4 Expenditure not yet paid

At the end of the financial year the following expenditure related to 2022 but was paid in 2023:

	2023	2022
Payroll Services	75	150
Telephone	49	58
Gas	621	1,722
Electric	860	2,002
Expenses	1,022	600
Building repairs	921	2,126
Photocopier rental	310	310
Occasional Office Disbursements	265	-
Collections to be paid (restricted)	236	737
Bank charges	-	-
	4,359	7,705

5 Other Giving

	2023			2022		
	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total
Rector's Discretionary Fund	-	-	-	300	-	300
Choir Fund	-	-	-	-	-	-
Little Fishes	-	-	-	105	-	105
Building Fund	-	-	-	-	30	30
General Fund	4,801	-	4,801	926	-	926
	4,801	-	4,801	1,331	30	1,361

**ST HELEN'S CHURCH, ASHBY DE LA ZOUCH
PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL**

**Notes to the Accounts
for the year ended
31 December 2023**

6 Grants

	2023			2022		
	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total
Leicester Diocese - Grant towards increased energy costs	1,087	-	1,087	-	-	-
Leicestershire County Council - Sew it, don't throw it project	-	1,798	1,798	-	-	-
Listed Place of Worship scheme	-	1,425	1,425	-	-	-
	1,087	3,223	4,310	-	-	-

7 Activities for Generating Funds

	2023			2022		
	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total
Events and Activities	5,236	569	5,805	1,529	-	1,529
Room Hire	14,841	-	14,841	10,967	-	10,967
Magazine	604	-	604	357	-	357
	20,681	569	21,250	12,853	-	12,853

8 Building Maintenance and Development

Building Maintenance refers to maintenance or repair works carried out on a planned or emergency basis to maintain or repair the buildings to allow the ongoing use of the buildings.

Building Development refers to (mainly) larger projects which improve and enhance the buildings or enable such improvements.

9 Building Fund

Given the historic nature of the church buildings, and a general lack of investment in recent times, it is important that funds are regularly transferred to the Buildings Fund to enable repairs and improvements to continue and keep the buildings in use.

10 Legacy Fund

The legacy fund is where significant sums given to the church are held. The PCC policy is for such funds to be used solely for the development of the buildings and grounds of St Helen's i.e. not for building maintenance or for day to day operating costs (unless specified by the donor).

**ST HELEN'S CHURCH, ASHBY DE LA ZOUCH
PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL**

**Receipts & Payments Account - Church
for the year ended
31 December 2023**

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	<u>2023</u>		Total
	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	
RECEIPTS			
Planned giving	55,728	-	55,728
Loose Plate collection	3,002	-	3,002
Donations	5,570	-	5,570
Legacies	-	2,216	2,216
Gift Aid	14,404	-	14,404
	78,704	2,216	80,920
Other income			
Occasional Offices	10,135	-	10,135
Charity Collections	-	1,478	1,478
Grants	1,087	1,425	2,512
Events	2,154	-	2,154
Parish Magazine	604	-	604
Bank interest	2,124	-	2,124
Other income	447	-	447
Total receipts	95,255	5,119	100,374
PAYMENTS			
Parish Contribution	40,600	-	40,600
Services	2,229	-	2,229
Choir/Music	1,519	-	1,519
Salaries	11,619	-	11,619
Occasional Offices	6,090	-	6,090
Events	16	-	16
Refreshments	375	-	375
Expenses	1,517	-	1,517
PCC Donations & Grants	3,200	-	3,200
Donations Given	50	-	50
Charity Collections	-	1,770	1,770
Utilities	7,615	-	7,615
Office	8,120	-	8,120
Insurance	6,091	-	6,091
Building - planned	597	1,762	2,359
Building - repairs	71	11,266	11,337
Total payments	89,709	14,798	104,507
Gross receipts/(payments)	5,546	(9,679)	(4,133)
Transfers	(12,000)	12,000	-
Net receipts/(payments)	(6,454)	2,321	(4,133)

**ST HELEN'S CHURCH, ASHBY DE LA ZOUCH
PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL**

**Receipts & Payments Account - Heritage Centre
for the year ended
31 December 2023**

12

	<u>2023</u>		Total
	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	
RECEIPTS			
Events	3,082	569	3,651
Room Hire	14,841	-	14,841
Other income	-	-	-
Grants	-	1,798	1,798
Total receipts	17,923	2,367	20,290
PAYMENTS			
Salaries	2,586	2,994	5,580
Events	580	-	580
General Expenses	51	-	51
Utilities	7,978	-	7,978
Office	80	25	105
Insurance	1,217	-	1,217
Building - cleaning	38	-	38
Building - maintenance	-	1,667	1,667
Building - Repairs	60	524	584
Sew it don't throw it	121	2,634	2,755
Total payments	12,711	7,844	20,555
Gross receipts/(payments)	5,212	(5,477)	(265)
Transfers	(292)	292	-
Net receipts/(payments)	4,920	(5,185)	(265)

**ST HELEN'S CHURCH, ASHBY DE LA ZOUCH
PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL**

**Restricted Funds Analysis
for the year ended
31 December 2023**

13	Balance @ 1.1.2023	Receipts	Payments	Transfers	Balance @ 31.12.2023
Restricted Funds					
Building Fund	14,277	1,425	15,219	12,000	12,483
Heritage Fund	2,995	-	2,995	-	-
Legacy Fund	68,205	2,216	-	-	70,421
Garden Fund	314	-	-	-	314
Team	433	-	-	-	433
Sew it, Don't Throw it	-	2,367	2,659	292	-
	-				-
<u>COLLECTIONS</u>	-				-
Phoenix Childrens Charity	-	137	13	-	124
Childrens Society	145	112	144	-	113
Christian Aid	-	434	434	-	-
M Greg Gift	53	-	53	-	-
Toilet twinning	330	-	330	-	-
Mayors Collection	-	236	236	-	-
Bishops Appeal	-	350	350	-	-
Rainbow Hospice	-	209	209		-
	86,752	7,486	22,642	12,292	83,888
Designated Funds (unrestricted)					
Rector's Discretionary Fund	2,050	-	-	(2,050)	-
Choir	1,955	350	684	600	2,221
PCC Charity Donations	1,950	-	3,200	2,050	800
Little Fishes	868	-	-	-	868
	6,823	350	3,884	600	3,889
General Funds					
Free reserves	32,546	112,828	98,536	(12,892)	33,946
Total Funds 31.12.2023	126,121	120,664	125,062	-	121,723

**ST HELEN'S CHURCH, ASHBY DE LA ZOUCH
PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL**

**Restricted Funds Analysis
for the year ended
31 December 2022**

14	Balance @ 1.1.2022	Receipts	Payments	Transfers	Balance @ 31.12.2022
Restricted Funds					
Building Fund	1,504	30	2,257	15,000	14,277
Heritage Fund	8,212	-	5,217	-	2,995
Legacy Fund	48,809	19,396	-	-	68,205
Garden Fund	386	-	72	-	314
Team	303	130	-	-	433
Weddings	646	-	-	(646)	-
					-
<u>COLLECTIONS</u>					
Phoenix Foundation	-	89	89	-	-
Childrens Society	359	278	482	(10)	145
Christian Aid	-	487	487	-	-
Designated Funds (unrestricted)					
Rector's Discretionary Fund	1,750	300	-	-	2,050
Choir	2,176	-	221	-	1,955
PCC Charity Donations	-	-	3,050	5,000	1,950
	-	-	-	-	-
General Funds					
Free reserves	39,115	96,554	83,779	(19,344)	32,546
Total Funds 31.12.2022	104,023	119,540	97,442	-	126,121