

Sunderland Minster Parochial Church Council
(Registered Charity 1203743)
Annual Report for the period 1st January to 31st December
2025

Aims and Purposes

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) is the governing body of the Parish of Sunderland Minster and has the responsibility of cooperating with the ministry team in promoting the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. It is also responsible for maintaining the fabric of Sunderland Minster.

The PCC have had regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on their legal duty to public benefit, and are satisfied that Sunderland Minster delivers public benefit, and due regard is paid to the guidance on public benefit when deciding on what new projects the church should undertake.

Objectives and Activities

The mission of the Church of England in the Diocese of Durham is to 'Bless our communities in Jesus' name for the transformation of us all.' At Sunderland Minster, we express this through our own local-context mission statement, 'Open to God, Open to All.'

As part of the Diocese of Durham, our objectives and activities are further shaped by the four Diocesan priorities of challenging poverty, energising growth, caring for God's creation, and engaging with children, youth and 18-25s.

Sunderland Minster engages in a wide range of activities in support of these objectives, many of which overlap. These include a regular and varied pattern of worship and discipleship opportunities, ecumenical partnership to support refugees and asylum seekers; living out what it means to be a fully Inclusive Church; providing a focal-point for community cohesion events in the city, and the marking of civic events and national celebrations; running regular baptism and confirmation preparation classes, in both English and Farsi; and supporting families facing holiday hunger.

Achievements and Performance

For an overview of the charitable activities of Sunderland Minster in 2025 please see the Provost's report later in this document.

The Electoral Roll (at 31st December 2025) is 53, with one addition and one removed (due to a death in December).

Further information is given in the reports that follow.

In 2025 we conducted 21 baptisms (11 adults, 10 infants), 3 weddings, and 11 funerals (5 at the Minster, 6 at the crematorium) and 1 burial of ashes.

Financial Review

See accompanying accounts.

Structure, governance and management

The PCC is a corporate body established by the Church of England and operates under the Parochial Church Council Powers Measure.

The appointment of PCC members is governed by and set out in the Church Representation Rules.

The PCC is registered with the Charity Commission and has Registered Charity Number 1203743.

Administrative information

Sunderland Minster is located on High Street West, Sunderland, SR1 3ET. It is part of the Diocese of Durham within the Church of England. The correspondence address is as above.

The members of the Parochial Church Council (PCC) are:

Canon Provost	Revd. Canon Clare MacLaren
Associate Priest	Revd. Jacqui Tyson
University Chaplain	Revd. Chris Howson
Curate	Revd. Ray Leonard
Minster Wardens	Heather Crawford Elaine Lawson
Deanery Synod Reps	Heather Crawford Gillian Walker
Treasurer	Robert Stenlake (co-opted)
Elected members	Kath Carruthers Annick Carruthers Jacqui Johnson Graeme Jobes Hollie Jobes Ann Craig Sarah Hill (to June 2025) Ekene Ejiofor

Vacancy

Fabric report (Heather Crawford, Church Warden; Brogan McKenna, Director of Operations)

Lighting: A major upgrade of Sunderland Minster's lighting system began in January 2025 and was completed within the six weeks predicted timescale and within budget. This work included updates to the electrical system, fuse boxes etc. The new energy-efficient lamps should cost less to run than the older lamps. The work has greatly improved the versatility of lighting, which should make the Minster an attractive venue for future events. The emergency lighting is now serviced yearly by an external provider, tested weekly in-house and recorded in the Minster fire safety logbook.

Fire alarm: The fire alarm system was upgraded at the same time as the lighting to benefit from economies of scale. The new system is digital and is more cost-effective than the old system. The fire alarm is tested once per week and serviced every six months.

Café: Prior to the new café tenant moving in, the PCC agreed to replace the old hatch shutter. The new shutter is now automatic and meets fire regulations. Safety flooring was fitted to the strip of concrete in the café floor which houses heating pipework.

Heating: The boilers have been repaired and are now regularly serviced. Gas safety checks are up to date as per statutory regulations.

Quinquennial Inspection June 2024: We have completed all works identified in the Quinquennial Inspection as 'urgent' and 'within one year' priorities, and are working towards those priorities identified as needing to be addressed within two years.

Health and Safety: All statutory compliance is fully up to date and all urgent actions from fire risk assessment completed.



Deanery Synod report 2025 (Gillian Walker, Deanery Synod representative)

The Deanery Synod met on Thursday, 26th June at St Matthew's Silksworth. The meeting was given over to guest speakers from Communities Together Durham (CTD). CTD is the chosen partner of Durham Diocese helping us to engage with the Diocesan priority of "Challenging Poverty" in all its forms.

Parochial reports for 2025

Canon Provost's report (Revd. Canon Clare MacLaren)

2025 was quite a rollercoaster of a year for Sunderland Minster – and you will see from reading all the reports that follow, that a huge amount has gone on both “front of house” and behind the scenes.



The 1st of January 2025 was the day that the Minster officially got its parish back – covering most of Sunderland City Centre, and the whole of Millfield – a parish of over 6000 people and in the highest 4% of deprivation in the country. During the summer, we delivered 2000 welcome postcards through their doors – inviting them to come and get to know their new parish church, as a first step to exploring a fresh journey of faith.

Much of the first half of the year was spent, for me at least, knee-deep in paperwork, writing all the policies and procedures necessary for us to be able to appoint to the four fully-funded posts that the Church of England had given us grant money for. I am delighted to say that in May we interviewed and appointed to the roles of Director of Operations (Brogan McKenna) and Administrative Officer (Ellie Clewlow) – both of whom have been huge assets to the Minster and have lifted a great weight of administration from my shoulders.

In May, also, a new tenant, Angie Lang, took up the running of the Minster Café, providing not only a welcome monthly income stream, but an invaluable social hub and opportunity to welcome visitors and tourists into our beautiful building. Angie's presence has been good for the Minster, and it has been wonderful to see her business gradually get established and begin to grow.

We seemed to be very much in demand in 2025 as a placement parish, and so we welcomed Julie Gana, Ronald Kock, Phoebe Power, and Sean Barrington into our midst – each offering their own rich and diverse gifts, as they learned with and from us.

It was a great joy, at the end of June, to welcome back Ray Leonard as our Minster Curate for his first diaconal year with us. Very much on course to be priested in 2026, Ray has been a joy to have as part of the team – rolling up his sleeves and getting stuck in, and taking seriously the call of the Deacon both to service and to pastoral care.

After we also advertised the two Mission Enabler posts for which we had received funding, and made an excellent appointment in Marie Fern-Peltz, with the brief for Spirituality, Creativity and Well-being. Starting in October, she quickly got her feet under the table, and her innovative new role was just beginning to show its potential as the year drew to an end.

October 2025, as members of the PCC are already aware, however, we received some shock news from the Diocese. Apparently, the funding grant of which we had been assured, had not been properly signed off in London, and we were told that we were going to have to resubmit the bid, and that no further funding would be forthcoming until we had done this.

Subsequently, we were advised that the salaries of our Director of Operations and our Administrative Officer would be honoured – as would what we had already spent on upgrading our lighting and heating systems – but the salary of our new Mission Enabler would no longer be paid, and neither would the balance of the money we had been promised for spending on the building.

This was a body blow to our plans – and a terrible piece of news to have to break to Marie, whose dignity and grace through this whole process has been a testament to her deep faith and courage. We were advised that the bid would need to be resubmitted by around Easter 2026. Fortunately, the Diocesan Secretary persuaded the Bishop's Council to commit to paying Marie until September 2026. In the meantime, the Diocesan Mission Team told us that they would rewrite the bid in consultation with us and share it with us before it is resubmitted in April 2026.

To realise that this timeline now takes us beyond the technical scope of this annual report, but I think it only appropriate to advise you that in Holy Week of 2026, I was informed that the draft bid (which has still not been shared with us) was shown to the Diocese's link person in London. Apparently, she advised the Diocesan Team that there was no point resubmitting it, as there was no way that it would be successful. We – and Marie in particular – have been devastated shamefully, and while I will be working hard to try and find other sources of grant funding to secure her post beyond September, it is possible that we will have to make her redundant before September. I cannot express how angry and dismayed I am at this turn of events.]

While all this has been going on, I really want to emphasise, however, that while the institution of the Church may have let us down drastically, God has continued to be faithful – “a refuge and a strength in times of trouble.”

We have seen gradual growth in our congregations. Our Christmas services attracted twice as many people in 2025 as in 2024. New Christians have been coming to faith, and December saw us begin

to prepare 10 candidates for Baptism or Confirmation, plus the many Iranian friends who were baptised during the course of the year.

We have held engaging study and prayer groups. Our links with the city and the wider community are going from strength to strength. We are regularly holding services in the two care homes in our new parish. Thanks to Brogan's tireless work, our governance, health and safety and maintenance schedule is all under control for the first time in many years. Ellie has done a power of work to streamline our administrative systems and improve our social media presence. Our finances are beginning to turn around. God is good.

I want to pay tribute to all of my colleagues, lay and ordained, whose wisdom, prayerful and practical support has been, and continues to be, invaluable.

Colleagues with Permission to Officiate, Jonathan, Pete and Stephen, and Associate Priests, Jacqui and Chris have been so dedicated to the Minster, despite their various health challenges and other commitments.

Our wardens, deputy wardens, PCC members and fabulous team of volunteers continue to amaze me with their energy, enthusiasm and great ideas!

And today, we need to say an enormous "thank you" to Robert Stenlake, who is stepping down as our Treasurer after several years of meticulous troubleshooting, detangling and generally sorting out our "far from organised" finances. Robert – you have been not just a Treasurer but a treasure. I don't know what we'd have done without you!

As we step into 2026, may God continue to bless us. And may we remain ever faithful, and lovingly committed to one another, and to the community we serve, as we follow God's call into whatever the future may hold.

Parochial Church Council (Kath Carruthers, PCC Secretary)

There were six scheduled meetings, and one extra-ordinary meeting of the PCC held over the course of 2025, chaired by our Provost Revd Canon Clare MacLaren. At this stage sincere thanks must go to Liz Tinker for her many years of hard work as secretary of the PCC, and my personal thanks must go to Ellie for taking the minutes at PCC meetings.

The PCC exercised its oversight of Minster finances, as well as updates to policies and Health and Safety practice, planned improvements to the building and fabric, and the thriving programme of events. It also received regular updates on mission activity, Eco-Church and Safeguarding.

Meetings of the Leadership Team take place monthly to deal with day to day running of events at the Minster, while the standing committee meets in advance of the PCC to discuss agenda items.

Friendship Group (Gillian Walker)

We met on the first Tuesday of each month for coffee other than August and the usual Summer and Christmas outings. In July we celebrated Margaret Caffrey's

80th Birthday in the Minster café with lunch followed by birthday cake. Our Christmas celebration was held at Bellini's Italian restaurant.

Choir (David Cox, Organist and Choirmaster)

The Minster Choir rehearses weekly on Thursdays and sings at the 9.45am Sunday service and at the monthly 5.00pm Choral Evensong.

During the Eucharist the Choir supports:

- the singing of hymns with an occasional descant
- a sung Eucharist setting composed by Dom Gregory Murray - People's Mass
- a Gospel Acclamation with alleluias sung by all and a sung Gospel refrain during Lent and Advent
- the set Psalm from *The Parish Psalter* with occasional different chants and revision of wording when necessary
- an Anthem sung during Communion.

At Choral Evensong the Choir supports the singing of:

- Hymns and Ferial Responses
- the set Psalm for the evening
- Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis
- an Introit and an Anthem appropriate to the season.

Recently, more modern songs have been introduced to the morning Eucharist accompanied by Pete Vivash using piano/keyboard.

The Choir also sang at special services, including: Deanery Confirmation, Welcome Service for Revd. Ray Leonard, Ascension Day, Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, the Mayor's Carol Service and the Minster Carol Service:

A huge thank you to our loyal Choir members who have sung so well during the year. We look forward to future challenges as Provost Clare updates our service booklets and introduces more modern hymns.

Our Choir, although small in number, are big in heart and voice! New members would always be welcome!

FEAST (Revd. Chris Howson)

FEAST has seen numbers steadily drop over the last year, (20-30 weekly, 4-8 children) with a significant decrease in Iranian members due to changes in local area demographics. Asylum seeker numbers have been frozen in much of the North East since September 2025 which means less of a throughput of Sanctuary Seekers in the area – and a big drop in Iranian numbers as a percentage of those who are here. Continued changes in Government policy have impacted on international student numbers arriving in the city, making it impossible for students to come with their families, and reducing the time they

can stay at the end of their studies. There have also been no new baptism families at FEAST for over a year now, but we would love to see new families come along and would love to baptise their children during our FEAST services.

FEAST continues to welcome all and tries to provide a taste of the kingdom whilst people are with us. Ray has moved on to be an integral part of the team since his ordination. Shiny Princess also continues to help with our craft table. Mariam and Hooman are our trusty translators for our Farsi speakers.

FEAST gives folk a chance to talk about their faith and react to the Gospel stories in a fresh way, and we hope it can continue, but is always open to change and letting the spirit move us. We are always looking to improve our offering, and always welcome suggestions. If you would like to help in any way, please talk to Clare, Chris, Jacqui or Ray.



Open Table (Rev. Jacqui Tyson)

Although attendance varies month to month, we have been blessed with a growing congregation pool and a deepening sense of community this last year. It has been a joy to have members involved in leading prayers, reflections, and discussions, over the last year and look forward to more of the same in the coming year.

Mission Enabler for Creativity, Spirituality and Wellbeing (Marie Stern-Peltz)

I started at Sunderland Minster as the Mission Enabler for Creativity, Spirituality and Wellbeing in October of 2025, and quickly got involved with the existing activities of the Minster, including Unity in the Community. I also spent time getting to know the various groups at the Minster, from the Leadership to the Friendship group, to FODI and the SMart group, and going out to meet other organisations, to get a sense of the local area and the work that is happening in the city.

In December, I started Collect, a weekly prayer group which met on a Wednesday between 12 and 1pm. Envisioned as a drop-in prayer space, Collect has a small group of regular visitors, who attend every week, but also casual

drop-ins, and people who have stayed and taken part after coming in to the Minster. During Lent, I had led a more formalised version of Collect in person and also online which had between 4 and 10 attendees every week across the two platforms.

I am also working to develop a series of accessible worship events, following the success of the 2024 Accessible Carol Service. The 2025 “Haway in a Manger” was very successful, and we had some lovely feedback from people who attended, who felt welcomed and at home in the Minster. I am planning to make these accessible services part of a regular pattern in 2026.



As part of the work we’re doing around accessibility, we have begun to collaborate with Becoming Visible and the National Deaf Society, including Canon Clare leading a Christmas reflection service we co-organised with Becoming Visible.

Part of the joy of my job has also been developing relationships with other churches and learning from them. I have had the opportunity to visit churches across the diocese and find inspiration in the work they are doing. One of the aspects that has grown out of this has been a Pilgrimage Project. Initially started with funding awarded from Sunderland Council, following a visit to GATHER church in Bishop Auckland, I am now working with them to develop something a bit different, and more directed.

I am continuing to learn and develop as I go, getting to know the parish and finding new connections and opportunities. I look forward to seeing what might be next!

Sanctuary Seekers (Revd. Chris Howson)

The Minster continues to be a place of refuge and support to all those seeking sanctuary in the city of Sunderland. We are a fortnightly home to FODI, a drop-in for asylum seekers and refugees, and we host the important annual United Nations Human Rights Day event in December which often has speakers who have been forced to seek sanctuary due to war and oppression. We also hosted a Walk of Friendship at the start of Refugee Week and held a Refugee Week celebration on the Sunday afternoon.

Our support for Iranian sanctuary seekers has continued despite the drop in Iranian asylum seeker numbers in our region. The Clergy team continue to write support letters for those who need them, and attend court hearings, as well as hosting baptism classes translated into Farsi.

Friends of the Drop-In (Heather Crawford)

Friends of the Drop-In (FODI) continues to provide practical support to refugees and asylum seekers, collecting and distributing many donated items such as clothing, household items, and toys, as well as providing support with housing advice, and vouchers for activities such as swimming, bus fares, etc. Attendees are also offered an assortment of fresh, dried and canned food, provided by FODI.

Sunderland Minster continues to host these fortnightly sessions and provides a welcoming environment for people to meet up with others in similar situations and enjoy a cuppa and a chat. FODI pays a nominal charge for room hire and refreshments.

Craft Fairs (Heather Crawford)

The monthly craft fairs, which celebrated their 10th anniversary in 2025, have continued to provide some much-needed regular income for the Minster, from the stallholder fees and visitor door charge. With the installation of a new tenant in the café, we don't make as much from refreshments but still offer a limited selection to stallholders for which they make donations.

We have a few crafters who have traded at our fairs since we began in October 2015, and we welcome new crafters, often who are trading for the first time. Thank you to all the hardworking volunteers without which the fairs could not take place.

Church Fairs (Elaine Lawson)

Two church fairs were held in 2025. It was decided to make them a little different to those of recent years – with a later start time, free entry, games for children and adults, free craft activities, Pimms or mulled wine bars, and live music the whole time. Both fairs were extremely well attended, raising a total of over £4,100. A huge thank you to everyone who helped, donated, provided the music, and attended the fairs.

Events (Elaine Lawson, Brogan Mckenna)

Another busy year at the Minster began with an Epiphany party for the congregation held by Canon Clare and Lyndon.

Special services in 2025 included the 80th VE Day Commemoration, Deanery Evensong with Durham Cathedral choir, the Institution of the Archdeacon of Sunderland, and a welcome service and celebration of Ray Leonard being ordained deacon. There were memorial services for the Holocaust, City of

Benares Tragedy, Connection Recovery, and former bell ringer, Major R C Hudson.

Our Christmas Carol Services for various organisations were, as always, well attended. The Minster “walking” Carol Service attendance doubled in 2025, all following the “Star”, Canon Clare.

In the year that Sunderland became a Music City, the Minster contributed by hosting a variety of concerts – from



Bishopwearmouth Choral Society, Sunderland College Candlelight Classics, an evening of jazz with “After Evensong”, The Bunker, Rock Choir, Houghton Brass, the Boundaries Festival, and The Old Black Cat Jazz Club which holds monthly evenings at the Minster.

Other events were the Mayor’s Civic Celebration of Unity, Tinderbox Film Day, the launch of the Sunderland Heritage Trail by the 620 Group, Recovery Connections Women’s Event, Covid Day of Reflection, International Workers Day, Climate Action Sunderland Supporters meeting, Sunderland Lit and Phil Evening, SAFC Heaven Branch, Bishopwearmouth Choral Society Singing Day, the Art Room Sunderland urban sketching session, Human Rights Day Vigil, Minster coffee morning to raise funds for new tables, Activism Against Domestic Violence art exhibition, Standing

Together exhibition.

For Mothering Sunday, we were given permission to set up a stall in The Bridges Shopping Centre, asking people to “Hold a Candle” and write a prayer for their mothers or those who looked after them. The prayers were displayed and the candles lit in the church on Mothering Sunday. The annual Cider and Carols charity event was held at the Ivy House.

The “Kingdom Kids” Summer Club was a great success on Tuesdays in August with children taking part in a wide range of activities. The annual Big Lunch was attended by many people enjoying food, music and games on a lovely summer’s day. Once again, a Unity in the Community day was held in October, bringing together our city’s wonderful diverse community.

The biennial Major Churches Conference was held at the Minster from the 24th- 26th September and was a huge success, as we welcomed delegates from around the country to the Minster and to our city.

Once again, the VCAS Open Arms awards ceremony was held at the Minster, and we were honoured to receive two Influence and Collaboration awards: for Large Group, and for the Unity in the Community event.



The Minster now sees a regular pipeline of income from repeat events and continues to perform strongly in November and December.

A wonderful busy year which was only possible with the hard work of the clergy, office staff, caretaker and cleaner, and volunteers.

Bellringing (David Cox, Elaine Lawson)

Thank you to Revd. Richard Brown for leadership as Tower Captain of the Belfry team during 2025, monthly Monday night practices continued over the year. Thanks too to Christine Richardson and her team of ringers at St Andrew's Church, Roker for their continued support.



One of our regular bellringers, Gillian Lathan, died suddenly in 2025. Gillian rang regularly on practice nights, rang for weddings, and tolled a bell for funerals (when requested).

Major Robert Challis Hudson Memorial Service 6th November 2025

A short service was held in November in memory of Major Hudson who died 100 years before in the church belfry. Major Hudson was a church warden and bell ringer. He was killed in a terrible accident whilst muffling the bells in preparation for them to be rung on the day of Queen Alexandra's funeral.

At the service, which was conducted beside the Memorial Lectern in the South Transept, we also heard about Major Hudson and his family's life in Sunderland, and, in remembrance, our young bell ringer, Ben Hundley, tolled the 7th bell under the supervision of former Tower Captain, David Cox.

The following named Ringing has taken place this year:

Rung by local D&N members and visiting ringers

- Friday 10th January: 2025 Grandsire Caters in 1 hour 18 minutes
Date touch to celebrate the New Year
- Sunday January 19th: 1282 Yorkshire Surprise Royal in 47 minutes
In memory of Sir Paul Nicholson, former Lord Lieutenant
- Friday 21st February: 1350 Grandsire Caters in 49 minutes
Arranged and rung in Memory of Rachel H Dyson
- Sunday 22nd June: 1250 Plain Bob Minor in 44 minutes
For the Deanery Confirmation Service and in loving memory of the Revd. Dick Bradshaw, sometime Rural Dean of Wearmouth
- Monday 25th August: 5040 Yorkshire Surprise Royal in 2 hours 53 minutes.

Rung by the Yorkshire Association of Bellringers

- Saturday 30th September: 1296 Plain Bob Caters in 50 minutes
Rung prior to the Collation and Institution of the Revd. Canon Katherine Bagnall as Archdeacon of Sunderland.

Eco Church & Net Zero 2025 (Graeme Jobes)

The focus of the Eco Church group has been to embody the Diocesan priority:
"Caring for God's Creation."

Together, as individuals, parishes and a Diocese we will Care for God's Creation, taking action and using our resources, gifts, time and prayers to:

- 1. Cultivate a shared Christian vision for God's creation and our call to steward, nurture and protect it, in Jesus' name, for the good of everyone, everywhere*
- 2. Promote responsible consumption & behaviour as individuals and churches*
- 3. Work together to challenge environmental indifference and injustice.*

This has been reflected at the Minster in several ways throughout 2025, including but not restricted to:

- Services and sermons which have reflected shared Christian vision for God's creation stewardship, nurture and protection for all
- Ongoing discussions at FEAST and in other spaces in respect of our individual practices which support nature recovery and reflect responsibility in consumption
- The Leadership team has incorporated recycling initiatives for waste, paper and cardboard as part of the ongoing commitment and practice of the community in the church
- A survey for the proposed installation of swift boxes in partnership with Durham Wildlife Trust took place in late autumn and forms part of the Minster's commitment to meaningful action in nature and stewardship. The boxes will be installed in 2026, and this will be promoted alongside a reframing of our eco church group
- Engagement by members of the community in local litter picking, volunteering with environmental groups and charities (including Tunstall Hill Protection Group, Durham Wildlife Trust and Groundwork)
- The PCC agreed to move utility (gas and electric) provision to sustainable suppliers in alignment with the community's ethical framework and commitment to God's creation
- Attending meetings and public gatherings which challenge environmental indifference and injustice
- We held a big lunch in June which is also part of the Eden Project's commitment to community engagement, hospitality and sustainability.

The year ahead should offer our community more opportunities to engage further in Eco Church and look to gaining accreditation. As proposed last year we will be looking to create a Friends of Minster Park Group with a possible launch during the installation of the swift boxes.

Safeguarding Report 2025 (Graeme Jobes, Parish Safeguarding Officer)

The Minster team has remained vigilant throughout the year in respect to its duties and responsibilities as a community. There is a strong safeguarding culture embedded in the Minster and this particularly is important as we support vulnerable adults and have a range of ages attending our various activities and services. This is embedded in PCC meetings, Leadership meetings and at the heart of the community.

Training and Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) checks: Training and up-to-date DBS checks are at the core of our safeguarding model. An update from last year is that where training has been updated, PCC and other members have been asked to link my account with theirs so I can hold a direct and up to date record of training and this in turn is fed back to the PCC and Church Leadership. Clergy have their own specific training and ongoing equivalent.

Graeme, Heather and Elaine have – as required – applied to do or attended and completed the Leadership module of the CofE Safeguarding Training. Graeme completed his training in June 2025.

All DBS were up to date.

Parish Safeguarding Dashboard: Graeme is registered on the Dashboard along with Canon Clare. It has been updated, and Graeme has held meetings with Diocesan Safeguarding Lead to discuss progress.

Reporting and Safeguarding Review: Graeme's mobile is available to all (07899008278) and his details along with those of Canon Clare have been updated with suitable pictures and are displayed in the Minster as required, along with those of the Diocesan Safeguarding Contact. The Safeguarding Policy and Safer Church statement are also displayed. Safer Recruitment and all Safeguarding 'linked' policies were put in place and or monitored by Canon Clare following a review in 2024.

Graeme was invited to speak as Safeguarding Officer as part of the Church of England Safeguarding Sunday 16th November 2025. The feedback was positive and two members of the congregation have expressed an interest in training in safeguarding and becoming part of the safeguarding team.

Any reports or concerns have been forwarded to me using my email address: gaj@hardings-solicitors.co.uk. We have had no serious safeguarding issues in the last year, but all have remained vigilant, and we still have WhatsApp group (I am aware some people need to be added to this) for sharing information and I am available whenever needed using my contact details.

Safeguarding Policy Statement

In accordance with the Church of England's Safeguarding Policy, "Promoting a Safer Church"¹, the PCC of Sunderland Minster is committed to observe best practice in:

- Promoting a safer environment and culture.
- The safer recruitment and ongoing support and management of all those with any responsibility related to children, young people and vulnerable adults within the church.
- Responding promptly to every safeguarding concern or allegation.
- Caring pastorally for victims/survivors of abuse and other affected persons.
- Caring pastorally for those who are the subject of concerns or allegations of abuse and other affected persons.
- Responding to those that may pose a present risk to others.

Sunderland Minster will:

- Continue to create a safer and more caring place for all people.
- Appoint a Minster Safeguarding Officer (CSA) and Deputy Minster Safeguarding Officer (DCSA) to work with the PCC to implement policy and procedures.
- Safely recruit, train and support all those with any responsibility for children, young people and adults to have the confidence and skills to recognise and respond to abuse.
- Ensure that there is appropriate insurance cover for all activities involving children and adults undertaken in the name of the Minster.
- Display across the Minster premises, and on the Minster website the details of who to contact if there are safeguarding concerns or support needs.
- Listen to, and take seriously all those who disclose abuse.
- Take steps to protect children and adults when a safeguarding concern of any kind arises, following House of Bishops guidance, including notifying the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser (DSA) and statutory agencies immediately.
- Offer support to victims/survivors of abuse regardless of the type of abuse, when or where it occurred.
- Care for and monitor any who relate to, and spend time in, the Minster who

¹ The PCC of Sunderland Minster has adopted 'Promoting a Safer Church' as its own safeguarding policy. The full policy may be read here: <https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-11/promoting-a-safer-church-policy-notes.pdf>

may pose a risk to children and adults whilst maintaining appropriate confidentiality and the safety of all parties.

- Ensure that health and safety policy, procedures and risk assessments are in place and that these are reviewed annually.
- Review the implementation of the Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Practices at least annually.

The PCC of Sunderland Minster has appointed:

Graeme Jobs as Minster Safeguarding Officer, and is currently seeking to fill the vacancy for Deputy Minster Safeguarding Officer.

Policy Statement reviewed by the PCC: 23 March 2026

Policy Statement to be reviewed: March 2027

Sunderland Minster

Financial Statements for the Year ended 31st December 2025

Statement of Assets and Liabilities

	£		£
Brought forward 01.01.2025	63,969.83 *	Resources used (2)	203,201.87
Incoming resources (1)	<u>210,683.46</u>	Balance carried forward 31.12.2025 (3)	<u>71,451.42</u>
Total	<u>274,653.29</u>	Total	<u>274,653.29</u>

Notes 1 See Analysis of Income and Expenditure

2 See Analysis of Income and Expenditure

3 Represented by	Current Account	Note 4	11,321.39
	Petty Cash		111.14
	Petty Cash Flower Fund		407.28
	Co-operative Deposit Account		59,485.87
	CBF Deposit Account		<u>125.74</u>
			<u>71,451.42</u>

4 Bank current account reconciliation at 31.12.2025

Balance at Co-operative Bank	25,866.07
Plus: Income due but not received	3,779.00
Less: Payments not cleared	8,252.00
Less: Accrued Expenditure	671.68
less: paid in advance for 2026	0
Less: Loan from Durham Diocesan Board of Finance	9,400.00
Less: Monies held in suspense for Inter-Faith Forum	<u>0</u>
Balance at 31.12.2025	<u>11,321.39</u>

*Restated to take account of £10,000 loan from Durham Diocesan Board of Finance

Approved by the Parochial Church Council and signed on its behalf by:

Chairman of PCC

Clare MacLaren

Churchwarden

E. Lamm

Sunderland Minster

Financial Statements for the Year ended 31st December 2025

Balance Sheet as at 31 December 2025

		2025	2024
		£	£
Current Assets	Current Account Co-operative	25,866.07	26,981
	Petty Cash	111.14	87
	Petty Cash Flower Fund	407.28	387
	Co-operative Deposit Account	59,485.87	36,848
	CCLA CBF Deposit Account	125.74	119
	Year end amounts due to us	3,779.00	19,381
TOTAL ASSETS		89,775.10	83,801
LIABILITIES	Accounts payable	8,923.68	4,881
	Payments in advance for 2026	0	951
	Durham Diocesan Board of Finance Loan	9,400.00	0
	Suspense Account (inter Faith Forum)	0	4,000
TOTAL LIABILITIES		18,323.68	9,832
NET ASSETS	(Total Assets – Liabilities)	71,451.42	73,970
BALANCE	Starting Balance *	63,969.83	33,157
	Income less Expenditure	7,481.59	40,813
	Closing balance	71,451.42	73,970

Movement in Funds during 2025

Fund	01/01/2025	Income	Expenditure	31/12/2025
	£	£	£	£
Flower Fund	386.51	20.77		407.28
Interfaith forum	895.37		895.37	0
Asylum Seeker Support	251.45		44.97	206.48
Legacy	24,547.39		5,987.59	18,559.80
SMMIB	0	109,295.92	109,295.92	0
Unity in the Community	0	5,427.75	5,427.75	0
Summer Special	0	530.00	505.13	24.87
Total Restricted and Endowment	26,080.72	115,274.44	122,156.73	19,198.43
Unrestricted Funds*	37,889.11	94,445.64	80,081.76	52,252.99
TOTAL ALL FUNDS	63,969.83	209,720.08	202,238.49	71,451.42

*Restated to exclude £10,000 loan from Durham Diocesan Board of Finance incorrectly omitted from 2019 to 2024 accounts. Income includes £5,000 legacy

Movement in Funds during 2024 - Prior Year for Comparison

Fund	01/01/2024	Income	Expenditure	31/12/2024
	£	£	£	£
Flower Fund	471.06	845.00	929.55	386.51
Interfaith forum	1,390.45	0	495.08	895.37
Asylum Seeker Support	406.25	0	154.80	251.45
Legacy	0	24,547.39	0	24,547.39
SMMIB	0	18,417.95	18,417.95	0
Summer Special	0	850.00	850.00	0
Total Restricted and Endowment	2,267.76	44,660.34	20,847.38	26,080.72
Unrestricted Funds	30,888.93	72,482.22	55,482.04	47,889.11
TOTAL ALL FUNDS	33,156.69	117,142.56	76,329.42	73,969.83

Sunderland Minster Parochial Church Council - Registered Charity 1203743

Sunderland Minster

Analysis of Income and Expenditure for the Period 1st January to 31st December 2025

		Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	TOTAL 2025 £	TOTAL 2024 £
INCOME and ENDOWMENTS					
Donations and legacies	**	45,528.21	30.00	45,558.21	57,376
Income from Charitable Activities		47,826.54	6,891.13	54,717.67	39,724
Other trading activities			20.77	20.77	845
Income from Investments		644.84		644.84	504
Other income		446.05	109,295.92	109,295.92	18,693
Total Income and Endowments		94,445.64	116,237.82	210,683.46	117,143
EXPENDITURE					
Costs of generating funds		4,104.02		4,104.02	4,381
Expenditure on charitable activities		75,977.74	58,208.74	134,186.48	192,395
Other expenditure		0	64,911.37	64,911.37	18,417.95
Total Expenditure		80,081.76	123,120.11	203,201.87	326,322
INCOME less EXPENDITURE		14,363.88	-6,882.29	7,481.59	599
BALANCE b/f AT 1st JANUARY 2025*		37,889.11	26,080.72	63,969.83	
BALANCE c/f AT 31st DECEMBER 2025	**	52,252.99	19,198.43	71,451.42	

*1st January 2025 unrestricted funds restated to exclude £10,000 from Durham Diocesan Board of Finance

**Includes £5,000 legacy

The notes on subsequent pages form part of the accounts

Sunderland Minster

Financial Statements for the Year ended 31st December 2025

Analysis of Income and Endowments

	Unrestricted Fund	Restricted Fund	Total 2025	Total 2024
	£	£	£	£
Donations and Legacies				
Planned Giving:	18,605.61		18,605.61	16,008
Non-recurring donations	6,173.74	30.00	6,203.74	3,580
Collections at Services	4,371.46		4,371.46	3,279
Card reader and donations boxes	4,359.48		4,359.48	3,028
Income Tax recovered	7,017.92		7,017.92	6,934
Legacies received	5,000.00		5,000.00	24,547
Total	45,528.21	30.00	45,558.21	57,376
Income from Charitable Activities				
Grants	860.97	6,891.13	7,752.10	950
Fund raising	16,648.88		16,648.88	18,105
Craft Fairs	3,045.69		3,045.69	3,808
Heating charges	2,756.00		2,756.00	2,474
Café lease income	10,400.00		10,400.00	
Room Hire	12,290.00		12,290.00	12,855
Statutory Fees:	1,825.00		1,825.00	1,532
Total	47,826.54	6,891.13	54,717.67	39,724
Income from Investments				
Interest and bank payments	644.84		644.84	504
Total	644.84		644.84	504
Other Income				
Grants received	0	109,295.92	109,295.92	18,418
Flower Fund	0	20.77	20.77	845
Other	446.05		446.05	275
Total	446.05	109,316.69	109,762.74	19,538
TOTAL INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS	94,445.64	116,237.82	210,683.46	117,143

Sunderland Minster Parochial Church Council - Registered Charity 1203743

Sunderland Minster

Financial Statements for the Year ended 31st December 2025

Analysis of Expenditure

	Unrestricted Fund £	Restricted Fund £	Total 2025 £	Total 2024 £
Costs of Generating Funds				
Fund raising	4104.02		4,104.02	4,381
	<u>4,104.02</u>		<u>4,104.02</u>	<u>4,381</u>
Expenditure on Charitable Activities				
Parish Share	11,166.70		11,166.70	5,500
Clergy and Staffing Costs	3,768.14		3,768.14	4,502
Employee Pay	3835.23	36491.12	40,326.35	0
Pension costs	-59.30	834.98	775.68	0
Parish Mission and service costs	3,722.69	3,023.00	6,745.69	3,061
Hospitality	873.02		873.02	128
Utility Costs	19,823.10		19,823.10	16,754
Church Insurance	13,415.42		13,415.42	12,432
Maintenance / repairs	8,514.06	6,170.92	14,684.98	4,833
Organ	1,366.16		1,366.16	312
Printing and office costs	2,674.13	18.49	2,692.62	1,437
Telephone /computing	1,612.07		1,612.07	1,173
Governance	0		0	0
Banking costs	66.59		66.59	86
Flower Fund	0		0	930
SMMIB relaunch costs	0	6,774.57	6,774.57	0
Other costs	5,199.73	4,895.66	10,095.39	2,383
	<u>75,977.74</u>	<u>58,208.74</u>	<u>134,186.48</u>	<u>53,531</u>
Other Expenditure				
SMMIB -1.15 Building	0	64911.37	64911.37	18,418
	<u>0</u>	<u>64,911.37</u>	<u>64,911.37</u>	<u>18,418</u>
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	80,081.76	123,120.11	203,201.87	76,329

Sunderland Minster - Notes on the Financial Statements 2025

See note 3 (SMMIB) regarding future financial liabilities not included in financial statement

1. Basis of Financial Statements. These have been prepared under The Charities Act 2011 and in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations 2006 governing the individual accounts of PCCs, together with applicable accounting standards and the Statement of Recommended Practice for charities (SORP) FRS102.

The Financial Statements have been prepared using the accruals and prepayment method.

The accounts were subject to an independent examination. The Independent Examiner's Report is attached to the Financial Statements.

2. Restatement of 2024 accounts. In early 2016, the then Minster Council drew down a short-term loan of £10,000 from the Durham Diocesan Board of Finance (DDBF), to be repaid within 18 months. During 2025 it emerged that the loan had not been repaid and had not been included as a debt in any PCC accounts since 2018. It is not obvious how the loan disappeared from the financial records during 2019 but the PCC has agreed that the loan should be repaid in instalments. The opening balances of these financial statements have been adjusted to move £10,000 from unrestricted funds to being a debt to the DDBF.

3. SMMIB (Archbishop's Council's Strategic Mission and Ministry Investment Board). In late 2024 the PCC commenced a SMMIB funded project (all costs reimbursed) to fund specific capital works and to meet the costs of employing 4 staff on fixed term contracts. Works to repair the heating system and upgrade the lighting were completed as planned but no further works are now approved.

Three staff were recruited during 2025, with SMMIB continuing to commit to fund the pay and pension costs (but not other costs) for 2 of the employees. The Durham Diocesan Board of Finance has underwritten the cost of the third employee until September 2026. The PCC has no guarantee of funding its contractual liability beyond then. The PCC has reported the financial issues to the Charity Commission as a Serious Incident.

4. Bankers. The PCC has a current account and an instant access deposit account with The Co-operative Bank.
5. Petty Cash. The Flower Fund is held as petty cash. Petty cash is also held to be used as a float at events and is kept in a secure safe. £28.10 of 2025 petty cash expenditure is undocumented.
6. Policy for Reserves. To hold sufficient reserves of approximately 3 months expenditure for unavoidable costs including redundancy costs for employees, together with additional reserves of at least £20,000 to finance the expected regular monthly cashflow requirements for SMMIB project.
7. Employees, Pay and Pensions. The PCC employs a caretaker (4 hours per week) and a cleaner (6 hours per week). These employees are paid at the Living Wage Foundation's living wage rate. Neither employee qualified for Automatic Enrolment pension contributions. The PCC also employs three staff under the SMMIB funded project. These employees are on fixed term contracts with gross pay and related employer costs reimbursed (but see note 3). Gross pay for the 5 employees in 2025 was £40,326.35

The PCC has a defined contribution pension scheme with The People's Pension. Employer contributions are at the rate of 3% of qualifying earnings. Pension costs were £834.96 (but offset by an overpayment of £59.30 from 2020).

8. PCC remuneration. PCC members receive no remuneration.
9. Payments to Connected Persons. None.

10. Contracts with Central and Local Government. The PCC has no contracts with Central or Local Government other than for routine services (waste collection, pest control)
11. Grants from Central and Local Government. £11,476.25 (2024: £3,069.66)) was claimed from the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme, which makes grants equal to the amount of VAT paid on eligible works.

Grants totalling £5,427.75 were made by Sunderland City Council to cover most of the costs incurred by the PCC in respect of the Unity in the Community event. The Sunderland City Council grant of £4,000 in March 2024 to the Inter-Faith Forum was passed to that organisation in early 2025.
12. Other Grants received. Communities Together Durham made a grant of £500.00 towards the cost of funding summer activities for children. A grant of £1,570.00 was received from The St Hild and St Bede Trust and held in the suspense account on behalf of Sunderland University Chaplaincy. The grant was used to meet some of the costs of a retreat for students. Durham Diocesan Board of Finance reimbursed a total of £99,644.02 in respect of the SMMIB project.
13. Legacies. The PCC received one legacy of £5,000.00. No restrictions were placed on the usage of the legacy. (2024: one legacy of £24,547.39).
14. Parish Share. The Parish Share paid to the Diocese in 2025 was £11,166.70 (2024: £5,500.00).
15. Utility Costs: Expenditure was £19,823.10 (2024: £16,754.02), offset by user heating charges of £2,756.00 (2024: £2,474.00). Gas and Electricity are purchased through the Church of England's Parish Energy Scheme.
16. Photocopier. The PCC leases a printer /photocopier from Siemens.
17. Governance Fees. No costs have been incurred in the Independent Examination of the Accounts. £172.45 (2024: £28.74) was incurred obtaining DBS safeguarding checks.
18. Agency Monies. The PCC acts as collecting agents for certain connected parties and also where monies are raised for a specific charity. These transactions are not included in the financial statements.

Agency	Amount received £	Amount paid out £
Diocesan Fees for weddings and funerals	2,824.00	2,824.00
Organist fees for playing at funerals	540.00	540.00
Sunderland Mayor's Charity	287.41	287.41
Verger fees weddings and funerals	320.00	320.00
Inter-Faith Forum (monies received 2024)	4000.00	4000.00
Sunderland University Chaplaincy	1,570.00	1,570.00
Sunderland Inter-Faith Forum (note 11)	-	4000.00
Durham DBF Ordinand's Fund	£368.82	£368.82
The Children's Society (Christingle)	135.10	135.10
Bunker Music	329.05	329.05

19. Accounting records. Accounting records are maintained on Data Developments' MyFundAccounting software.
20. Review of Financial Controls. The PCC updated its financial controls during 2025.

Sunderland Minster Parochial Church Council (the "Minster")
Registered Charity 1203743

Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 December 2025

Independent Examiner's Report

I report to the members on my examination of the accounts of the Minster for the year ended 31 December 2025.

Responsibilities and basis of report

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

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

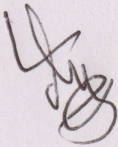
Independent examiner's statement

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. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the 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 any 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.

Signed:



Lewis Ayers
2 The Green
Long Newton
Stockton-on-Tees
TS21 1DL

Date: 11 February 2026