

St Francis` Church, High Heaton

**Annual Report
for the Year 2024
and Agenda for
the Annual Parochial
Church Meeting**

6th April 2025

Contents	Page
About St Francis Church	5
Agenda for the Meeting of the Parishioners	5
Agenda for the Annual Parochial Church Meeting	5
Electoral Roll Report	6
The Parochial Church Council	6
The PCC Report	7
Responsible Caring Group	9
Mothers' Union	9
Choir	10
Eco-Church	10
Baby and Toddler group	11
Tea and Toast	12
Place of Welcome	13
Bereavement Journey	13
Uniformed Organizations	14
Treasurer's Report and Accounts	15
Independent examiner's report	22
Planned Giving	23
Deanery Synod	24
Churchwardens' report – Fabric, Goods & Ornaments	25
Vicar's remarks	27

About St Francis Church

St Francis Church is located in the High Heaton district of Newcastle upon Tyne. It is adjacent to the Coxlodge Waggonway (known locally as the tram track) at the junction of Melville Grove and Cleveland Gardens beside the Freeman Hospital. It is in the Deanery of Newcastle East in the Diocese of Newcastle in the Province of York in the Church of England.

Correspondence address: St Francis Vicarage
 66 Cleveland Gardens
 Newcastle upon Tyne
 NE7 7QH

Website www.stfrancisnewcastle.org.uk

Mission Statement

St. Francis Church exists to reveal Christ through worship and loving service. St. Francis seeks to be a church which encourages openness of heart and mind, helps all to grow in their relationship with God, and supports the building of community.

Incumbent: The Reverend Robert Lawrance

Curate: The Reverend Katie Watson (*until 20th September RIP*)

Honorary Associate Priest: Canon Richard Bryant

Reader with Permission to Officiate: Mrs Gloria Bryant

Churchwardens: Mrs Sue Flood & Mrs Elizabeth Brown

Vergers: Mr Don Wilson

Sacristan: Mr Derek Charlton

**Notice is hereby given of the
ANNUAL MEETING OF PARISHIONERS to be held on
Sunday 6th April 2025 at 11.15 am in the Church Hall**

AGENDA

Prayers
Apologies for Absence
Election of Churchwardens

**Notice is hereby given of the ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH
MEETING OF ST FRANCIS CHURCH to be held following the
Meeting of Parishioners on Sunday 6th April 2025 in the Hall**

AGENDA

The Electoral Roll
Proceedings of the Parochial Church Council
Parish Reports
Financial Statements
East Deanery Synod Report
Churchwardens' Report on Fabric, Goods and Ornaments
Elections to Parochial Church Council & Deanery Synod
Appointment
Vicar's remarks
Open Forum

Any person entitled to attend the annual meeting may ask any question about parochial church matters, or bring about a discussion of any matter of parochial church interest, by moving a general resolution or by moving to give any particular recommendation to the council in relation to its duties

.

The total number on the Electoral Roll is 94 comprising 63 women and 31 men, of whom 32 members live outside the parish.

The Parochial Church Council

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) is a charity registered with the Charity Commission No. 1206346

Ex officio members:

Vicar	The Reverend Robert Lawrance (<i>chair</i>)
Churchwardens	Mrs Elizabeth Brown Mrs Sue Flood
Deanery Synod	Mrs Jenny Trotter
Representatives	Dr Jenny Germain (<i>secretary</i>)
Co-opted member	Mrs Gloria Bryant
Elected Members	
2022-2025	Mrs Dorothy Frankland (<i>Safeguarding Officer</i>) Mrs Elaine Anderson Mrs Anna Butcher (<i>elected 2023</i>)
2023-2026	Mr Ken Douthwaite (<i>Lay Chair</i>) Mr David Robson (<i>Treasurer</i>) Dr Stephen Germain
2024-2027	Mrs Catherine Saeed

Structure, governance and management

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church of England Representation Rules. All church attendees are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and stand for election to the PCC.

Standing Committee: The vicar, churchwardens, secretary, treasurer and lay chair

Working groups in 2023 (non-PCC members can be on these)

Responsible Caring Group: The Reverend Robert Lawrance
Mrs Liz Thompson (*Children's Advocate*)
Mrs Dorothy Frankland (*PSO*)
Mrs Elizabeth Brown
Mr Ken Douthwaite
Mrs Helen Swann

DBS administrator: Dr Jenny Germain

Eco-Church Group: The Reverend Robert Lawrance
Miss Kathleen Burn
Miss Joan Park
Dr Jenny Germain
Mr Brian Smith
Dr Steve Germain
Mrs Catherine Saaed
Mrs Jane Freeman
Mrs Mary Douthwaite
Mrs Marion Pennie
Mrs Katherine Vacher-Day

PCC Report

Dr. Jenny Germain (Secretary)

The PCC has met eight times in the upstairs meeting room, since the last APCM. The Vicar usually chairs the meetings but our meeting in May was chaired by vice-chair Mr Ken Douthwaite when the vicar was on sabbatical. The year was dominated by the replacement of the church windows requiring many meetings with the architect, the suppliers of the windows, the installers and the builders. There was a lot of fund-

raising and it was great to see the money coming in from all the various events and the donations from parishioners. Thanks must be extended to all those who got involved. For some considerable time, services were held in the hall, which was more pleasant than people expected, creating quite an intimate atmosphere. It was wonderful, however to get back into the Church just after St Francis-tide. Our Hall remains in great demand with parties booked throughout the year. We were sorry to lose Kumon, one of our regular hirers, but we have gained another couple of regular bookings and are grateful for the continued support of Zumba-Ali, have welcomed Art Ventures, Singin' Toons and Pilates. Our church groups (Tea and Toast, Baby and Toddlers and Place of Welcome) are thriving and we hosted two Bereavement Journey courses in 2024.

Despite the disappointment of not managing to get back into church for St. Francis Day, we had our usual St Francis-tide ceilidh and supper on the Saturday. Our parish walk took us to the village of Wall for a picnic and then onto Hadrian's Wall for a circular walk incorporating a visit to St Oswald's Church, Heavenfield. A big thank you, once again, to Marion and John Pennie who laid on a lovely spread for us on our way home. All the usual Christmas services were well attended especially the Christmas Eve crib service, in which we witnessed the use of a time machine! Could this be a first at a nativity?

We are delighted to have applied for our Gold Eco Award and await the outcome with hope, but not a little trepidation! We now have regular litter picks and surveys of our wild-life, thanks to Rory and Eric. The development of the Sanctuary Garden and the partial wilding of the north side of the Church are testimony to our willing gardeners, but there are great plans afoot and much more to be done.

The Responsible Caring Group and the Eco-group report to the PCC at every meeting and to keep parishioners abreast of the business of the PCC shortened PCC minutes are published in the newsletter after each meeting.

Responsible Caring Group (RCG)

Mrs. Dorothy Frankland Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO)

The RCG continues to meet three times a year (termly) and our aim is to make our church, the hall and church grounds a safe place for all who use them, whether they be part of our church family or users of our facilities. Each year the APCM approves and adopts the St. Francis' Parish Safeguarding Policy which can be viewed in full on our website – www.stfrancisnewcastle.org.uk. The RCG also meets to review our Safeguarding Dashboard which is a mechanism set up by the Church of England to help parishes address/maintain requirements for safeguarding (as set out in the Church of England Parish Safeguarding Handbook). Our compliance has remained consistently over 90%. We are also involved in the production and advising of Risk Assessments for church activities and our thanks go to Ken Douthwaite for keeping these records up to date. We also extend our thanks to Jenny Germain in her role as our DBS Administrator. If anyone has a concern regarding a child, young person or a vulnerable adult, please speak to Robert or myself.

Mothers' Union

Mrs. Elaine Anderson (Branch Leader)

The Mothers' Union is especially concerned with all that strengthens and preserves marriage and Christian family life. We generally meet in the Church Hall on the third Thursday of each month, and start meetings with a short service which is usually followed by a talk or other activity, we then finish with tea and biscuits and a chance to catch up. In the last year we have welcomed speakers from the wider Mothers Union and from our own church to talk to us, enjoyed a trip to the theatre to see 'The Railway Children' and hosted a successful afternoon tea, coffee morning and our annual dinner. With the help of donations from the parish we were able to put together 36 gift bags for the Women's refuges and socks and chocs for the People's Kitchen. On a sad note we lost one of our long-term members June Falcus this year, but we are planning on honouring her memory with a recipe book of our favourite bakes.

Choir

Mr. Forbes Doig

The remaining members of the choir continue to be steadfast to the cause and although currently the Tuesday choir practices do not occur, this loyal group continues to lead the singing during the services and have received compliments from members of the congregation for the way in which they sing the Taizé chants during communion. Whenever he is able, Derek still joins us, and his presence is always welcome. Currently, we are experiencing a few problems with the organ pedal board leading to some the notes sounding intermittently. The manufacturers no longer maintain the organ, but fortunately, we have the good services of Brian to tackle problems when he has some time to spare. He has managed to keep the instrument going for many years. I am now at the beginning of my 15th year of service at the church.

Eco-Church

Mrs. Mary Douthwaite

Highlights of a busy year include:

*Prayers for the environment at every service, with a specific environmental focus at the spring Green Eucharist and the autumn Harvest Festival service. The sanctuary was appropriately decorated for each and, in autumn, gifts were collected for the West End Foodbank.

*Further planting of the chapel border, the Sanctuary Garden and the north side of the church including the meadow area.

*Bird feeders in the Sanctuary Garden and the RSPB Great Garden Bird Watch.

*Wonderful daffodils from the bulbs planted in 2023 during our 70th birthday celebrations.

*Heaton Festival – we ran our Eco stall, and helped to raise awareness of environmental concerns throughout the Festival.

*Community Litter Picking - started in September and now well established as a monthly event, the group collect litter in the area round the church and along the tram track on the first Saturday morning of each month. The group is growing steadily having attracted members of the community as well as the congregation. It is a way of improving our immediate environment and raising awareness of an important environmental issue.

*Fitting of double-glazing throughout the church, further reducing our carbon footprint.

On-going projects continued through 2024: regular green tips and garden working parties; links with local environment groups; parish walks; the Greenbelt Festival and progress towards the A-Rocha Gold Award.

Sadly, our bees did not survive the long, cold & wet spring. All local beekeepers had these problems, causing depleted colonies and few swarms. Our hives therefore remain empty, future options are being considered.....

Thanks to gardeners, grass-cutters, bird-feeder maintainers, litter-pickers and everyone who has contributed to eco activities of the church and made environmentally friendly changes in their lives this year. New ideas and members are always welcome!

Baby and Toddler Group

Mrs. Elizabeth Brown

The group continues to fulfil a need in the community with activities and provision for play and socialising for children and carers. We have about 40 families registered with us throughout the year, from diverse backgrounds reflecting the local community, and attendances were as high as 21 children towards the end of July 2024, although 10-16 attendees is the average figure. Healthy snacks are provided and well received within the structure of the session. Comments continue to be positive and session leaders are grateful to the core group of regulars who help to integrate and support new members as they attend. There

are some strong relationships formed in the group and we often have men attending, either with a partner, or as lead carers with children/grandchildren. We believe we are providing a real need in the community which can only reflect positively on our parish of St Francis. We continue to be monitored by the National Association of Playgroups and feedback from them remains positive. The support of this group is necessary and welcome. We have updated the risk assessment for the Baby and Toddler group, in line with health and safety guidelines and entrances are kept locked at all times. We still have a strong core of regular volunteers but family and other commitments often impinge upon their time so would welcome anyone willing to step in on a regular, or irregular basis. We are fortunate in the range of skills volunteers are willing to share which enhances the success of the group.

Tea and Toast

Mrs Liz Thompson

The activity continues to run every Monday in term time from 3.00 to 4.30pm. Attendees are mainly from Jesmond Park Academy with a few from St. Mary's School. Year Groups 7 to 13 are welcome, mostly the group are from Years 9 and 10. Attendance can vary from 12 to 40 (52 is the highest number!), depending on variables such as the weather or other after-school activities such as football training or revision classes. The closure of Jesmond Park Academy due to storm damage, interrupted continuity and attendance for a while but young people are filtering back. We offer tea, toast, waffles and hot chocolate with the occasional treats often left over from parish celebrations. Table tennis, badminton and table-top games are provided and well-received. When the weather allows the field is a favourite with the young people. Good relationships are being made between volunteers and young people who seem to thrive on the relaxed atmosphere. Offering this safe space for young people is a positive activity for the parish to engage in and the volunteers receive affirmation serving in this way. The young people we engage with have proved to be appreciative which is a bonus.

Places of Welcome

Mrs Helen Swann

This year was significant as we celebrated five years running our Place of Welcome. The group continues to be a source of significant social support for the regular attendees, with many commenting that they really look forward to coming to the group or that this is one of the only times they leave the house. The group is becoming self-sustaining due to the strong relationships that have been formed as well as the contributions by group members of cakes, music, talks or simply just by being there and talking to each other. Recent changes to the format include a 'warm up' singing spot which has enhanced our guest's experience. Our volunteers are greatly valued by all who attend, making sure everyone has someone to talk to as well as access to refreshments and information if needed. We feel it is a real place of belonging and purpose.

The Bereavement Journey

Mrs Helen Swann

We are one of over 400 churches and Christian organisations involved with running *The Bereavement Journey* across the UK and continue to meet the criteria for the annual registration process. This allows us to run the course and use the materials produced by At a Loss. There were two courses during 2024 in May and September with a total of 15 participants. Evaluations show that the course is extremely valued in terms of helping people understand grief, accept what is normal and provide hope for the future. The opportunity to connect with others and share experiences is also seen as helpful and supportive to those who attend. Enquiries mainly come from outside of the church family such as local bereavement organisations and word of mouth recommendations. Some who attend have a Christian faith the majority do not, but they report that they feel at ease with the course format. Courses in 2025 will be run in May and September.

Uniformed Organisations

81st Rainbows Annual Report

Leader Helen Thompson

The Rainbows have enjoyed a range of activities from crafts to games, to life skills and plenty of fun. We've visited the Panto and had our annual Christmas meal out, not forgetting our visit from Santa.

81st Brownies Annual Report

Leader Lauren Howells

It has been another busy and eventful year for the Brownies! As always, we've been earning lots of badges: as well as our usual Skills Builders, we've also completed an Olympic Challenge and celebrated Black History Month, International Day of the Girl and International Women's Day. A number of girls have completed badges like Aviation, Grow Your Own and Languages independently to achieve their Bronze and Silver awards! However, this year we've also had an incredible amount of fun outside of our usual meetings. We've done local trips to Tynemouth Longsands and Paddy Freeman's Park, and have had joint meetings with the Brownies from St George's, went to see the England Lionesses play France at St James's Park, saw Moana 2 at the cinema, visited the Stephenson Steam Railway, spent a weekend at a PGL activity centre in North Yorkshire and even slept over in Newcastle Cathedral! We've been so lucky to share all these fantastic experiences and opportunities with our lovely girls, and thank everyone at St Francis for their continued support. Our annual Pancake Party in conjunction with the church continues to be hugely successful, this year raising nearly £300 for the People's Kitchen!

81st St Francis Guides Annual Review 2024

Leader Carole Falcus

It has been another busy year for the Guide Unit and we are receiving new Guides from the Brownie Unit throughout the year, which helps to keep the unit growing. Attending Guides gives the girls the chance to meet new friends within the Unit and also to make new friends from around the county when attending a variety of events and camp. The

Leaders have worked hard and we have completed a wide range of activities - Badges, skill builders, cooking, crafting & games. It has been hilarious at times trying out new things. The achievement of the Guides has been outstanding and we have handed out lots of badges as they progress through the programme. In June they joined with other Guide Units to enjoy a camp at Whittonstall, completing a wide range of camping and craft activities. Enjoying hot dogs and marshmallows around the campfire. On the Sunday they played 'Capture the Flag' wide game before packing up to go home. Guides love a party so we've had a pancake one to raise funds for Zoe's international guide trip Interrailing. Summer & Christmas Movie nights with Pizza and Chips!! They attended the Panto at the Tyne Theatre thoroughly enjoying Snow White and the Seven Dwarves. The Guides hosted a SWISH Clothing Swap event raising **£600** for the Window Fund. Bringing the Unit and church people together for this community event, plus it linked to the fundamentals of Eco Church. We think it has been a really great year for the Guides. Thanks to all the people who make these things possible, especially the support of St. Francis Church.

Treasurer's Report and Accounts

Dr. David Robson

The most important financial activity of the Parish Council in 2024 was to start the renovation and replacement of the church's windows with windows of a higher specification, in line with our eco-church policies. This led to large cash flows during the year, with total payments out of around £157,000 and total receipts of around £114,000. We paid approximately £53,000 to the contractor for the windows, in professional fees, and for other associated works. The work was funded by around £18,000 of very generous donations from parishioners, for which the PCC is very grateful, about £2,000 from fundraising events and a further £2,500 in reclaimed tax (gift aid). The PCC also drew on around £36,000 of previous legacies from 2022 and 2023. Overall, there is just under £6,000 remaining from the fundraising during 2024. This will go

towards the expected £7,000-£8,000 required to complete the project in 2025. This is close to the expected total cost, and we expect perhaps £1000-2000 of additional funding will be required. Income from giving and grants fell by around £10,000 (16%) in 2024 compared to 2023. Our income from hall lettings and car park fees increased, but it was offset by small falls in events income, and in weddings and funerals fees. The net effect was an overall fall in income of 8% compared to 2023 (excluding legacies and restricted income). Regarding payments, the PCC's largest commitment in 2024 was the Parish Share which rose by 2% to around £56,000 (and which will rise by 8% in 2025). Most of the PCC's other costs were reduced in 2024. However, the reductions in costs were overmatched by the fall in income. This resulted in an operating deficit of around £8,000. This has been financed from cash reserves. The financial reserves of the PCC remain sound, consisting of a cash reserve, property and an investment. It should be noted the cash reserves of unrestricted funds at the end of 2024 represented under two and a half months of the total annual payments made in 2024. The financial policy of the PCC, adopted last year, advises that we should hold three months of cash reserve in unrestricted funds. Unrestricted cash reserves are 35% of the total cash reserve as the other parts are designated funds (55% of the total). These represent legacies given more than 15 years ago. The remaining 10% are cash held for restricted funds. The PCC has just under £15,000 in investment (a designated fund) with CCLA. The approximate valuation of St Francis House is around £300,000. A new valuation will be sought in 2025. The principal challenge for the parish and the PCC is to improve long term income during 2025 through grant, events and giving, whilst controlling costs. If a strong deficit appears likely the PCC has undertaken to review the Parish Share in Quarter 3 of this year.

Accounts up to 31st December 2024

Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31/12/24: Receipts and Payments Accounts.

£		2024				2023
Funds	Notes	Unrestricted	Restricted	Designated	TOTAL	TOTAL
RECEIPTS						
Voluntary Income	Planned giving	36,831			36,831	37,682
	Open plate	965			965	1,789
	Gift aid	9,127			9,127	9,032
	Legacies received			0	0	25,813
	Development			22,887	22,887	0
	Other voluntary income	2,376			2,376	5,285
	Grants	1,550			1,550	6,500
	Restricted funds		4,337		4,337	4,652
Total Voluntary Income		50,849	4,337	22,887	78,073	90,753
Generation of Funds	Hall lettings	14,671			14,671	13,624
	Car park	2,240			2,240	2,045
	Curate's House	828			828	
	Events	5,100			5,100	5,596
Total Generation of Funds		22,839			22,839	21,265
	Fees for weddings and funerals	520			520	1,516
	Interest	753			753	439
	St Francis House	11,400			11,400	10,656
TOTAL RECEIPTS		86,361	4,337	22,887	113,584	124,629
PAYMENTS						
Charitable Activities	Parish share	(56,392)			(56,392)	(55,504)
	Clergy expenses	(77)			(77)	(342)
	Vicarage house	(3,212)			(3,212)	(5,546)
	Church - running costs	(6,794)			(6,794)	(5,589)
	Church - heating and lighting	(5,045)			(5,045)	(4,610)
	Church maintenance	(891)			(891)	(6,417)
	Upkeep of services	(1,020)			(1,020)	(1,144)
	Upkeep of grounds	(1,084)			(1,084)	(1,281)
	Hall - running costs	(4,746)			(4,746)	(5,049)
	Hall - heating and lighting	(5,045)			(5,045)	(4,609)
	Hall maintenance	(1,271)			(1,271)	(1,750)
	Organist and choir	(2,877)			(2,877)	(3,171)
	Stationary, postage and sundries	(187)			(187)	(520)
	Development			(52,951)	(52,951)	
	Legacies received					
	Other					(56)
Total Charitable Activities		(88,641)	0	(52,951)	(141,592)	(95,588)
Other	St Francis House	(5,288)			(5,288)	(489)
	Restricted funds		(7,186)		(7,186)	(2,936)
	Cost of Fundraising Events	(550)			(550)	(1,265)
TOTAL PAYMENTS		(94,479)	(7,186)	(52,951)	(154,616)	(100,278)
DEFICIT/SURPLUS		(8,118)	(2,849)	(30,065)	(41,032)	24,350
(2023 for comparison)		(3,179)	1,716	25,813		

Statement of Assets and Liabilities

£		2024				2023
Funds	Notes	Unrestricted	Restricted	Designated	TOTAL	TOTAL
Cash Funds						
Bank current account		18,365	5,228	28,685	52,278	94,355
The CBF Church of England Deposit Fund				14,877	14,877	14,124
Total cash funds		18,365	5,228	43,562	67,155	108,479
Investment Assets						
St Francis House	2	300,000			300,000	300,000
<u>TOTAL ASSETS</u>		318,365	5,228	43,562	367,155	408,479
Liabilities						
Other liabilities	6		(465)		(465)	(758)
<u>NET ASSETS/(LIABILITIES)</u>		318,365	4,762	43,562	366,690	407,721

Notes

- 1 The financial statements of St Francis Parochial Church Council ('the PCC') have been prepared in accordance with Church Accounting Regulations 2006 using the Receipts and Payments basis.
- 2 Investment assets include St Francis House, 18 Cotswold Gardens, Newcastle Upon Tyne, NE7 7AE which is accounted for at market value.
- 3 The designated fund primarily relates to legacy donations received over 15 years ago. The income is designated for ongoing upkeep of the property of the Church.
- 4 In accordance with The PCC Accountability Guidance, paragraphs 2.9 and 4.3, donations that have been specifically requested to be donated to other charities is not included in the PCC's annual Receipts and Payments Account. The cash collected has been reflected as a restricted asset, with a corresponding liability in the Statement of Assets and Liabilities.
- 5 (See below)
- 6 Collections for organisations and other restricted funds have been reflected in the Receipts and Payments Accounts on the basis that these funds are under the control of the PCC. Either the PCC has earmarked these funds for specific charities (referred to as '*collections for organisations*'), or the donor(s) has/have requested the funds are to be used for particular activities (referred to as '*other restricted activities*').
- 7 '*Special collections*' are funds in which there is no discretion for the PCC to do anything other than send the money directly to the specified charity. A corresponding liability has been reflected in the Statement of Assets and Liabilities. The income and expenditure has not been reflected in the Receipts and Payments Account in accordance with 'The PCC Accountability Guidance', para 2.9 & 4.3.
- 8 The fund '*Soup Lunches*' relates to monies raised by luncheon activities which are fully donated to charities.
Only those restricted funds which contained monies at the start, or end of the year, or had activity during the year are shown
- 9
- 10 (See below)

Summary of Restricted Funds:

£		1 January 2024	Receipts	(Payments)	31 December 2024
<u>Collections for organisations</u>	6				
Soup lunches	8	1,929	1,684	(2,944)	669
Bishop Helen's Christmas Appeal 2023		214	317	(531)	-
Bishop Helen's Christmas Appeal 2024		-	542	-	542
Children's Society		169	333	(502)	(0)
<u>Sub-total</u>		2,312	2,875	(3,977)	1,210
<u>Other restricted funds</u>	6				
Youth work		975	550	(39)	1,486
Toddler Group		1,213	610	(1,500)	323
Community		2,342	-	(1,670)	672
Garden fund		285	302	-	586
Choir Account		454	-	-	454
Altar Cloth Donation		31	-	-	31
<u>Sub-total</u>		5,300	1,462	(3,209)	3,552
<u>Special collections</u>	4 & 7				
West End Food Bank		50	550	(550)	50
DEC Turkey/Syria Earthquake Appeal		374	-	(374)	0
Newcastle Diocesan Board of Finance - share of fees		247	-	-	247
Christian Aid		38	123	-	160
In Memorium' Collections:					
West End Food Bank & Crib Star			147	(140)	-
Nectar Charity		49	-	(49)	-
<u>Sub-total</u>		758	820	(1,113)	465
<u>TOTAL</u>		8,370	5,157	(8,299)	5,228

10 Development: In 2024 the PCC allocated within its Designated fund certain sums for development of the church and the hall including receipts from fundraising, generous donations, and previous legacies. These monies were used to replace the worn church windows with an improved specification. The sums raised were known colloquially as 'The Windows Fund'. Funding of the replacement of the windows and associated works is detailed below because it constitutes a very large proportion of PCC spending in 2024.

<u>Development Work in 2024 (£)</u>		<u>Totals</u>	
<u>Monies Received</u>			
	Donations	18,396	
	Events	1,910	
	Gift Aid	2,581	
<u>Previous Legacies</u>		22,887	
	2022	10,000	<i>see Accounts Year 2022</i>
	2023	25,813	<i>see Accounts Year 2023</i>
		35,813	
<u>Total Monies Received</u>		58,700	
<u>Payments</u>			
	Building Works	(49,976)	
	Fees	(2,601)	
	Blinds	(374)	
<u>Total of Payments</u>		(52,951)	
Balance at 31/12/2024			5,749

	B/F 1		C/F	
	January		28/2/25	
	2025	Receipts	Payment	
<u>Collections for organisations</u>				
Franciscan Aid	-	-	-	-
People's kitchen	-	-	-	-
Bishop Christine's Christmas Appeal	-	-	-	-
Bishop Helen's Christmas Appeal 2023	-	-	-	-
Bishop Helen's Christmas Appeal 2024	542	50	(592)	0
Soup lunches	669	244	-	913
Children's Society	(0)	-	-	(0)
Pakistan	-	-	-	-
Sub-total	1,210	295	(592)	913
<u>Other restricted funds</u>				
Youth work	1,486	-	(40)	1,446
Toddler Group	323	116	-	438
Jubilee celebrations	-	-	-	-
Community	672	-	-	672
Choir Account	454	-	(59)	395
Garden fund	586	-	-	586
70th church anniversary - cake	-	-	-	-
Altar Cloth Donation	31	-	-	31
Clergy Gifts	-	-	-	-
Sub-total	3,552	116	(99)	3,569
<u>Special collections</u>				
West End Food Bank	50	50	-	100
DEC Turkey/Syria Earthquake Appeal	0	-	-	0
Newcastle Diocesan Board of Finance - share of fees	247	-	-	247
Church Urban Fund	(0)	-	-	(0)
Christian Aid	160	-	-	160
In Memory of Margaret Crentsil	0	-	-	0
In Memory of Lilian Hood	-	-	-	-
In Memory of Jacqueline Cryer	-	-	-	-
In Memory of June Falcus	7	-	-	7
Sub-total	465	50	-	515
TOTAL	5,228	460	(691)	4,997

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of St Francis Parochial Church Council 2024

I report on the accounts of the church for the year ended 31 December 2024.

Responsibilities and basis of report

The church's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The church's trustees consider that an audit is not required under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- Examine the accounts (under section 145 of the 2011 Act);
- To follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners (under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act); and
- To state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of Independent Examiner's statement

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

Independent Examiner's statement

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

1.Which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:

- To keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act; and
- To prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act have not been met; or

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

Name: Rachel Lawson

Signature: 

Date: 9 February 2025

Relevant professional qualification or body: ICAEW Chartered Accountant, ACA

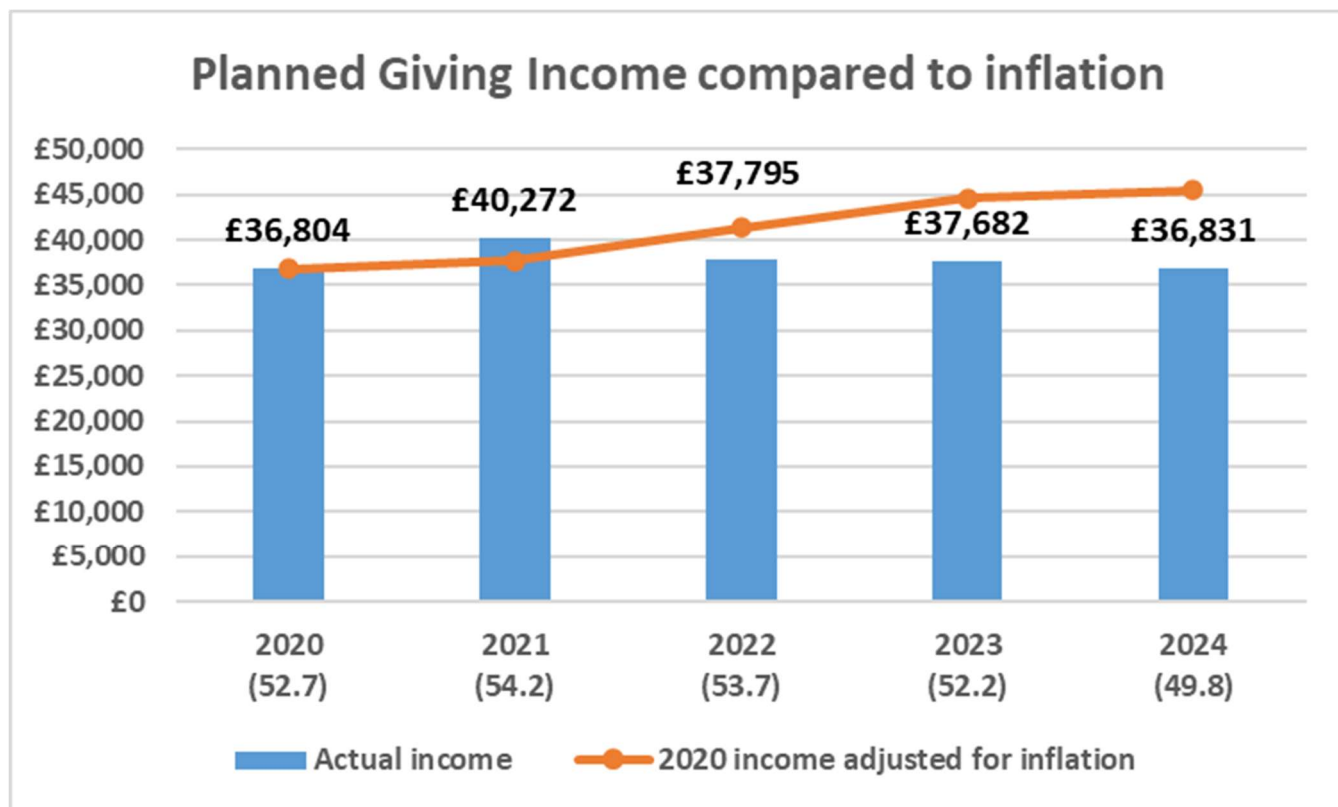
Address: 7 Jenifer Grove, Newcastle Upon Tyne, NE7 7QS

Planned Giving income in 2024 was £36,831 which is £851 less than in 2023, a fall of 2.3%, or around 4.8% in real terms. We lost three members during the year and gained one new member, so we now have a total of 50 planned givers. Most of our members increased their contributions during the year (either through the automatic PGS inflation increase or by just individually deciding to increase their giving) and so the average monthly contribution increased from £60.16 to £61.63 which matches the inflation rate. It follows from this that the reason for decrease in the year's total is the nett loss of two members. This continues the pattern of recent years which has seen the loss, through death, of many longstanding generous contributors. They have, however, been replaced in the congregation by new worshippers, most of whom are probably making ad hoc contributions. I would ask these members of St Francis' to consider regularising their giving by becoming Planned Givers. The advantage to the church of doing so is that we will have a steady predictable income. The advantage to you, the giver, is that, once set up, there is nothing more that needs to be done. Also, your contributions will be confirmed and acknowledged through an annual 'thank-you' letter. The preferred method of payment is by Direct Debit, but other methods of contributing are possible. There is no formal commitment involved (you would not be asked to sign any form of promise), and you can easily change the size of your contributions if your circumstances change.

Please get in touch with me (either directly or through Robert or the churchwardens) and I will be happy give you further details.
john.a.telfer@btinternet.com 0191 281 0938 07455 orb 07455 889287

The chart below shows that *in real terms* our planned giving income in 2024 was about £9,000 less than in 2020.

Figures in brackets are the average number of contributors each year.



The above totals do not include the gift-aid recovered. We received £7,875 from HMRC relating to the Planned Giving income, bringing the total amount contributed by our planned givers to £44,706.

Newcastle East Deanery Synod

The Reverend Robert Lawrance

The Deanery Synod met four times in 2024 with representatives from all twelve parishes in Newcastle East, offering mutual support and encouragement; we regularly share good news stories and the ongoing agenda items are deanery development and the parish share. We also receive updates from Diocesan Synod and General Synod. In March the new Diocesan Director of Ordinations and Vocations Stephen Tranter talked about vocations to licensed ministries and to roles in the church, and the importance of being willing to test out our calling. In May there was sharing about work with children and young people. In July we looked at the Diocesan Year of Seeking (the first in a three-year cycle of *Seeking, Sharing and Sending*) and did a community examen which

might be useful for a PCC to do! In November it was agreed to have a Deanery Mission in 2025, from Ascension Day to Pentecost. This will begin with a united service at St Francis on Ascension Day Thursday 29th May and a Deanery Pilgrimage on Saturday 31st May and other events during the week. We welcomed Tim Ferguson in May as the new vicar of St Martin's and St Oswald's, part of MINE. St Anthony's remains closed to worship. St Michael's is undergoing a major refurbishment Named 'The Lighthouse Project', supported by a £4.2m grant from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport's Youth Investment Fund, and through the generosity of Lord Crewe Trust and The Squires Foundation. It is due to open later this year led by a Mission Enabler funded by Oxford Diocese. Funding has also been secured for a fixed contract mission enabler post at St Mary Magdalene Longbenton, under the supervision of Benjamin Jarvis, the vicar of St Bartholomew's Benton

Church Wardens' Report - Fabric, Goods & Ornaments

Mrs Elizabeth Brown and Mrs Sue Flood

The most significant development in 2024 has of course been the replacement of all the windows in the church. The completion of the entire project was due not least to the generosity of those who had bequeathed sums to the church (Dorothy Graham and Eric Wright in particular) but to the whole congregation who gave so generously to see us reach the necessary target to achieve this aim. We are most grateful so our architect, Sarah Harrison, who oversaw the contract and ensured all matters were attended to eventually. All will no doubt agree that there is improved warmth in the building since the completion of this project. Throughout 2024 there has been the usual regular and ongoing attention given to the fabric of the church buildings. The principal works carried out during the year have been:

- All portable electrical equipment PAT tested
- Large coffee-maker repaired
- Water urn fitted with plug

- Fire extinguishers inspected
- Toilet soap dispenser reattached to wall
- Piano retuned
- Inspection and updating of church electrics
- Environ call used for unblocking of toilet
- Central strip lights in hall repaired
- Repair of loose tiles in hall
- Repair of snapped off oven control
- Repair of hall pews
- Repair of toilet door lock in church
- Repair of church chair
- Refitting of 7 lights in church with LED's
- Replacement of church office heaters due to malfunction

The garden work continues to be an ongoing development and a large part of our eco gold aims and huge thanks go to all of the hard-working volunteers. Also, to the Cullinan family for the addition of the bird feeders in the garden area.

Thanks also go to the grass cutting team as well as all of the volunteers who assist in the day to day life of the Church, cleaning and maintaining, garments, linen and other objects necessary to our worship. A big thank you to Joan Grebby who has kept our church looking splendid with her beautiful flower displays, and to all those who have spent time making up seasonal altar displays.

Special thanks go to Brian Smith, Steve Germain and Ken Douthwaite for their invaluable technical and practical help. As always it is much appreciated.

Finally, many thanks to Carole Falcus for her continued and vital assistance in the management, running and letting of the church hall.

The previous reports indicate that we continue to enjoy a busy programme of Worship, Community and Service at St Francis church. The daily and weekly round of prayer is the foundation of our life together and I am grateful to everyone who helps in any way. During my sabbatical we were fortunate to enjoy the ministry of various clergy who were able to lead services and preach for us, and a reminder of how important it is to ensure that there are multiple voices in the leadership of our worship. Thank you to everyone who helps by reading the lesson, leading prayers, serving and especially to Derek our sacristan. We are blessed too with the team that leads our Taizé worship, and if you haven't encountered that simple but powerful way of worshipping, I do recommend it to you. I also want to say a particular thank you to Richard Bryant and Gloria Bryant for their ministerial support. As you know Richard had to step back from public duties for the first half of last year as he underwent treatment. It is such a blessing that he has made a good recovery and is presiding and preaching again, and I am grateful to Gloria not only for her preaching but also for leading the modest amount of non-Eucharistic worship we offer, not least quiet evenings in Advent and Lent, and also Stations of the Cross. The hardest thing to bear was the death of Katie Watson in September. Katie was licensed to our parish when Bishop Christine decided to ordain her at the start of the Covid crisis in 2020, to expand her ministry as Lead Chaplain for the Newcastle Hospitals NHS Trust. Her day job meant that she was in hospital on Sundays, but many of us got to know her in various ways, and I benefited from our regular supervision meetings, which were often mutual support sessions. During her illness she would slip into church to worship with us and we share a profound sadness that it ended in her death. Our love continues to extend to Emily, and to Elsa and Nate, and to all who love and support them. One of Katie's abiding concerns was

for justice, transparency and accountability, and especially her heart for the victims of the abuse of power. Her experiences in the army, in the church and in the NHS allowed her to see at close quarters how large institutions can mangle people's lives, and the current wrangling in the Church of England concerning Safeguarding, redress for the victims of abuse and the treatment of LGBTQIA+ people, are matters of ongoing concern. As we await the appointment of a new Archbishop of Canterbury the house of bishops is in some disarray and our own bishop Helen-Ann has been a prominent (and lone) voice in drawing attention to these issues. For some people, including clergy, failure to address them leads to suspicion and distrust of the institution, and I wonder to what extent this is matched in wider society? Of course, there are other factors in play – the social, intellectual and cultural barriers to Christian faith and worship in a post-modern era, as well as the historic relationship of churches with their local communities. The privatization of belief is another manifestation of the hegemony of the individual, and the rise of authoritarian leaders in liberal economies suggest that the post-war consensus in Europe of social democracy is under severe strain. I am convinced that in the face of these pressures, the life of the local church is more important than ever as a place where we nurture our faith in God who holds us and all living creatures in the grip of sacrificial love as Creator, and who in Jesus Christ has demonstrated a power that is beyond our imagination as Redeemer, and by the Holy Spirit continues to encourage and sustain us. On my sabbatical last year, I had the opportunity to explore some of the theological and spiritual themes around the environment and climate change, and in particular the concepts of climate grief and active hope. Grief and hope are part of the language of the Christian faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and as we enter the season of Passiontide we are invited to consider again the deep magic revealed in the Christian faith and which

the world needs to know and longs to hear, even when it has become deaf to the ways in which we have traditionally expressed it. I'm not inclined to dispense with our tradition, but I think we have to think forward in the life of our local church in terms of how we function in our community so that we remain a place where people can find meaning and purpose in giving thanks to God, in praying for the world and for those in need, in creating bonds of fellowship and in becoming agents of God's transforming love in our daily lives and workplaces, and in our activities and actions locally and more widely in the charities and causes we support. With the incoming PCC I hope we can engage in a process of Vision Planning that will involve everyone in our church, to determine how we can sustain and deepen our life together in a way that will ensure growth into the future. Our programme of community engagement, environmental stewardship and service to the wider world will all help us achieve this. One of the unsung heroes in this regard has been Sue Flood who has managed our Christian Aid work for many years. This has involved the annual door to door collection, the Big Brekkie, and other appeals and events. Having so generously shouldered the burden of being church warden, she has decided that the time is right to hand over that responsibility and I am grateful to Elizabeth Brown who has agreed to take it on. In so doing I would like to say a hearty thank you to Sue on behalf of all of us, and for the many thousands of pounds raised over the years she has overseen Christian Aid in our parish, for the benefit of some of the world's poorest people and as a sign of our discipleship. Indeed, discipleship is one of the areas that I think we need to explore more in the coming months and years, enabling us to become better disciples, creating more opportunities to learn about the Christian faith and to deepen our relationship with God. Faith is like a seed which needs feeding and nurturing, it requires attention if it is not to become straggly and unfruitful, and I hope that as part of our vision going

forward we can create a culture of learning about the Christian faith. To that end I am delighted that Katherine Vacher-Day has been selected for training for ordination and is already over half-way through her first year of study with Lindisfarne College of Theology. It has been great having her on placement with us during this academic year. Next year she will be placed elsewhere but we assure her of our continued prayers and support. Meanwhile Helen Swann and Nigel Coates have recently embarked upon the diocesan training course for Authorized Lay Ministry, and at a recent PCC meeting we gave our whole-hearted support to their undertaking further training, Helen in Pastoral Ministry and Nigel in Worship & Teaching. I feel sure that this will help build us up as a community of Christian Word and Action and encourage anyone else who might be feeling the whisper of God's Holy Spirit in their heart and who might take up the challenge of responding by offering themselves for ministry in the church, or simply seek to respond to the call to improve the practice of their faith. As you know I favour the term practising Christian, for I know I need to practise: there are no experts here, we are all companions – literally people who share bread – followers of The Way of Jesus Christ, and it is in that spirit that I assure you of my continuing commitment to the life and work of this parish church and my deep gratitude for everything that everyone who is associated with St Francis brings to our common life. I should add that beyond the parish my ministry in the wider church has expanded this year with my election as Chair of the Diocesan House of Clergy. This means that I am now also a member of the Bishop's Council and Trustee of the Diocesan Board of Finance, and have also become chair of the diocesan Net Zero Carbon Working group, as well as other *ad hoc* working groups. I am also continuing my ministry as a Bishop's Advisor, helping to select candidates for public ministry in the national church, and in that role have recently become a member of the Candidates

Panel, which interviews and assesses candidates in special circumstances, for example clergy of other denominations seeking to become Anglican clergy, or people who have trained for a particular focus in ministry being allowed to change their ministerial focus, or enabling Anglican clergy from other provinces to serve in England. I remain a Proctor in Convocation (a clergy member of the General Synod) until July 2026. I have also developed my ministry of Spiritual Accompaniment through St Antony's Priory in Durham, and the diocesan Spiritual Direction network, and you need to know that these activities do not distract me from my prime focus as vicar, for they help me retain a sense of the bigger picture and inform my understanding and practice of my ministry. I do firmly believe that the purpose of Christian faith is to enable us to live well in a fragmented and discordant universe, anchored by our faith in Jesus Christ as the incarnation of God in human history and who continues to live in us by the Holy Spirit. Jesus taught us in St John's Gospel that we should have life in all its fullness (*Jn 10:10*), which is life lived in love, life without fear or limitation of death, which means life that seeks justice, peace and the integrity of creation. Thank you to everyone for your support and encouragement in the past year, and please join with me in our shared endeavour in the year to come.

