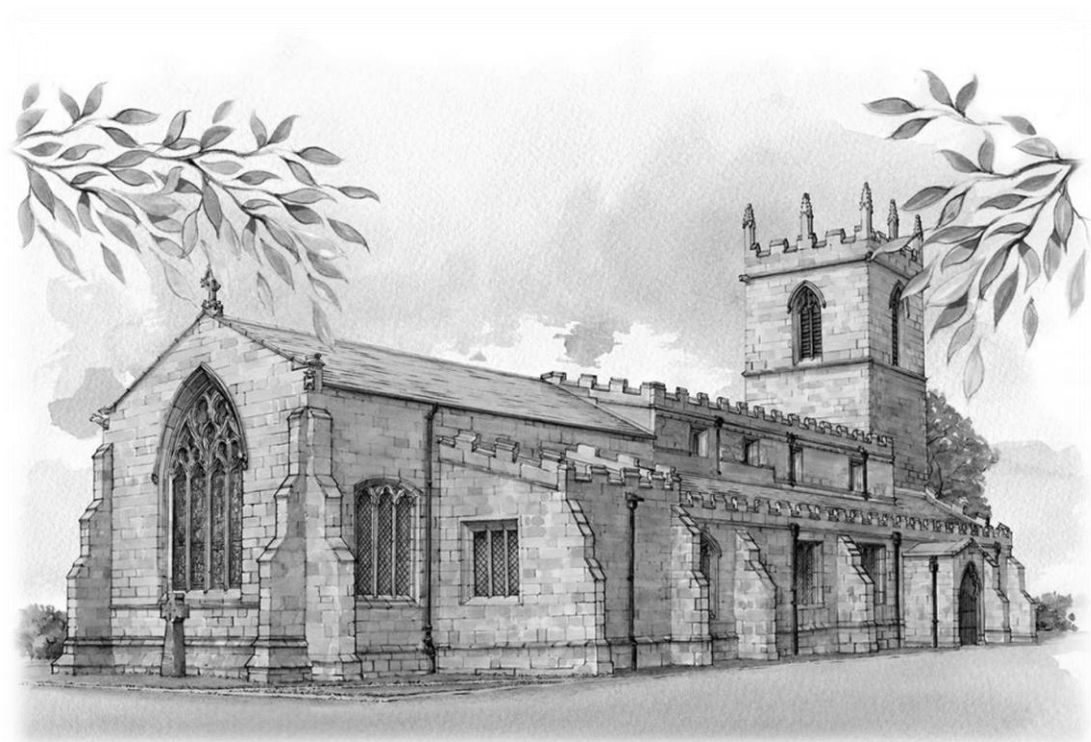


**St. Andrew's Parish Church
Epworth**

**The Annual Parochial Church
Meeting**

Thursday 2nd May 2024, at 7:00 pm.



St. Andrew's Parish Church – Epworth

Rector – Rev. Paul Wilson

Churchwardens – Mrs Penny Birks and Miss Susan Storey

**The Annual Parochial Church Meeting will be held in Church on
Thursday 2nd May 2024, at 7:00 pm.**

AGENDA

Opening Prayers

Vestry Meeting

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of the Annual Vestry Meeting held on 4th May 2023
3. Election of Churchwardens
4. Election of Deputy Churchwardens

Parish Meeting

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting held on 4th May 2023
3. Matters arising from the Minutes
4. Election of Parochial Church Councillors to serve 2024-2027
5. Electoral Roll – numbers and changes since the last meeting
6. Churchwarden's Report for 2023 – report on the fabric and maintenance (p8)
7. Treasurer's Report for 2023 – The financial affairs, presentation of audited accounts, funds and investments (p10)
 - a) Adoption of accounts
8. Deanery Synod Report for 2023 (p16)
9. Safeguarding Report for 2023 (p17)
10. Appointment of Independent Examiner to the PCC
11. Notice of the first meeting of the PCC – 23rd May at 7pm
12. Archdeacon's Visitation Service – Lincoln Cathedral, on Thursday 13th June at 7.30pm.
13. Any other urgent business
14. Rector's address (p18)

Closing Prayers

EPWORTH PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

St Andrew's Parish Church

The Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting

held at St Andrew's Church, Epworth on Thursday 4th May 2023 at 7 pm

Present

Chairman - Rev Paul Wilson

Mrs Penny Birks [Churchwarden] Miss Susan Storey [Churchwarden]

Peter Brown, David Higginson, Pamela Higginson, Wendy Kitson, Cedric May, Jackie May, Jim Oliver, Melvyn Rose, Pauline Rose, Dorothy Smith [Minutes Secretary], Sharon Usztan, Karen Wilson, Anne Broster, Peter Broster, Peter Knight

Opening Prayers were led by Rev Paul Wilson

1 Apologies for Absence

Received from Janet Cozens, David Cooper, Kathleen Liddell, Michael Smith, Carol Mellors, Alison Tinsley

2 Minutes

The Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Council Meeting held on Thursday 28th April 2022, distributed at the Meeting, were approved as a true record.

Proposed Wendy Kitson Seconded David Higginson

Signed by Rev Paul

A request was made that in future the Minutes be available one week before the AGM to give time for them to be read more carefully. This was noted.

3 Matters Arising from the Minutes - None

4 Election of Parochial Church Councillors to serve 2023 – 2026

There were 4 vacancies

1 Pam Higginson Proposed David Higginson Seconded Penny Birks

2 Peter Knight Proposed Penny Birks Seconded Karen Wilson

3 Melvyn Rose Proposed Pauline Rose Seconded Margaret Draper

These three are duly elected for 3 years 2023 -2026

There is one further vacancy. Anyone who would like to take this place, please speak to Rev Paul or the Churchwardens. May be co-opted at a PCC Meeting

5 Election of Deanery Synod Representatives [Max 2]

1 David Higginson. Proposed Pam Higginson Seconded Anne Broster

2 Susan Storey. Proposed Wendy Kitson Seconded Sharon Usztan

Both were willing to continue and were elected for 3 years.

6 Electoral Roll

Carol Mellers, Electoral Roll Officer, was unable to be present but had prepared a Report – There are now 80 names on the Electoral Roll..... +4 and -1 from last year. Thank you to Carol for continuing to be responsible for this.

7 Churchwardens' Report for 2022 [Addendum 1]

Susan Storey [Churchwarden] presented this report.

One item had been added to the Terrier – **Display Cabinet** for artefacts [currently displayed at Scunthorpe Museum] found by archaeologists during excavations on the 'Mowbray site'. [Field to south of the Church] It has been funded by the Isle of Axholme and Hatfield Chase Partnership via a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

The Quinquennial inspection had identified a number of 'small' works requiring attention, totalling approx. £60,00. None more than £10,000.

8 Treasurer's Report

Penny Birks gave the Report and presented the Accounts, which had been audited by VANL, and accepted at the last PCC Meeting on March 23rd 2023.

Susan Storey Proposed that the Accounts be adopted. Seconded Karen Wilson All were in favour

Rev Paul thanked Penny for continued work enabling all accounts to be paid in full and on time

9 Deanery Synod Report 2022 [Addendum 2]

Presented by Susan Storey. She was thanked for presenting the Report.

10 Safeguarding Report

There had been no Safeguarding issues. Penny is the Benefice Safeguarding Officer. DBS checks for all PCC members need to be renewed every 3 years. Compulsory on-line training [via the C of E website] must be completed by all members.

11 Appointment of Independent Examiner to the PCC

All were in favour of the Auditor, Katy Sauvage, being reappointed
Proposed Wendy Kitson Seconded Karen Wilson

12 The date of the first Meeting of the new PCC is Thursday 25th May at 7pm

13 Archdeacon's Visitation Service

This Service, where Churchwardens are legally admitted to office, will this year be held, for the Deanery, at St Andrew's Church on Monday 5th June at 6.00 pm.
Refreshments will be served after the Service

14 AOB None

15 Rector's Address [Addendum 3]

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

CHURCHWARDENS AND FABRIC REPORT 2023

The last year started with an ongoing problem with the Church clock quarter chimes not working. The clock company Time Assured came for several visits. The payment of the £300 service bill was withheld until the matter was resolved fully. In the end it was a simple fault of a peg needing to be adjusted. The chancel steps handrails were inspected and tightened in the best possible manner. A small infestation of woodworm in the choir stalls was successfully treated. The main heating boiler had a big fault but this was sorted after consultation with the heating service engineer and work by Melvyn Rose and Peter Broster. The Town Council repaired a section of the Church Lane wall opposite the North door which borders the closed churchyard.

A roofer was asked to check the tiles on the chancel roof after strong storms. It was then discovered there had been a small theft of lead. This was in the lower gullies at the base of the tiles mainly on the North side and around the porch roofs. DAC permission was gained for the replacement of the lead and the cost covered by our insurance. It was reported to PCC that the Bell Ringers account was to be used to do work to enable the Sally guys to be lowered.

During June the Quinquennial Inspection was done. A full check of the electrical system was requested this was completed and passed onto the Architect. The Lightning conductor was checked and passed. There may be some remedial work required on the conductor terminal next year. The electrical PAT testing was done and passed. Fire extinguishers tested and certified. The Quinquennial report was a long time been produced. Members of the PCC were dismayed by the fact that the Architect did not go up onto the tower roof to complete the inspection. This was due to what she said was a health and safety matter regarding the ladder on the final section of the tower. So it was suggested by Alison Tinsley that her son could take drone film to be passed on to the Architect and included in the report. The completed report was presented to the PCC in March 2023 after many requests for completion by Penny Birks. Melvyn reported that he thought we were lucky that there was nothing major wanted repairing in the near future. Some of the work required in the report had already been done whilst awaiting the reports completion. Like all buildings of this size repairs and maintenance are a constant drain on finances so they have to be strategically worked into the Church's budget. For this we should be very appreciative of how our Treasurer Penny handles this.

The Land Agent notified the PCC of a request by a tenant to purchase some of our land. This was put to the PCC vote and decided against. Also on land matters the piece of land at the end of Church Lane after the burial ground was due to have the rental increase so this will go ahead with the customary notice period been given to the tenant.

The same piece of land was brought to our attention by a member of the congregation as a place to plant a tree on the grass verge to commemorate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee and that the hedgerow needed replanting in parts. The tree and hedgerow saplings were kindly

donated by the member of the congregation. The tree is already planted and the hedgerow was to be done at the correct time of year with thanks to David Cooper for that.

I will conclude my report for this year by giving my thanks. Firstly to Paul for his organisation of all Church matters and how smoothly he has made very complex changes and taken on board the problems of this benefice. Due to his organisation we Churchwardens always know which job we should be doing next. Next my thanks go to Penny because she has the biggest share of the jobs that are done in the Church and not just small ones Treasurer and Safeguarding Officer. Finally thank you to you the congregation because without your support this Church could not continue, but extra volunteers are always appreciated to make life so much easier for those that are already helping.

ANNUAL DEANERY SYNOD REPORT 2022/23

Bishop Stephen was appointed as the acting Bishop of Lincoln at the beginning of the year and he would be looking to fill the vacancy for the Archdeacon of Stow.

The report back from the working party on Resourcing Suitable Church (which is now called Time to Change together), told us that all Partnership Deans would be appointed by last Easter. Our Partnership Deanery is North Lincolnshire which includes Manlake and Yarborough. David Swannack is the Chair of our Deanery Mission Partnership Team. Martin Patterson is our local representative on this team. Good progress was made during the year and the team worked well together. There were 13.5 stipends at the beginning of the year in our Partnership Team.

Rev. Cliff Kay took a three month sabbatical and Manlake clergy said they would help out to cover this.

In June last year concern was that within the Deanery, churches would be unable to reach their Parish share (now called Covenant giving) and keep their clergy. There was also concern regarding the ages of the clergy and where help would come from. Rev Paul and Rev Mark are to work towards developing people to be lay leaders. In Spring 2023 there will be special launch by the Diocese for the training and development of lay people.

Rev Cliff stood down as Rural Dean and the Bishop appointed Rev Paul on 8th September 2022 as the new Rural Dean. A present was presented to Rev. Cliff at the November meeting of Deanery Synod to mark the ending of his time as Rural Dean.

The new Partnership Dean for the North Lincolnshire Partnership is Cameron Martin and Rev Paul and Diane Ekins attended the steering group meeting. The Bishop was asked to attend the next meeting of that group to cover some of the questions raised at that meeting. All Deanery Partnerships were to be sorted out and in place in the Diocese by February 2023.

At our Deanery Synod meeting it was suggested to help raise money in our Churches that contactless terminals be put into use at baptisms and weddings for collection purposes due to a more cashless society after Covid. This is something which our Church has taken on board.

A new item is to be added to every Deanery meeting agenda "Good News items happening in our Churches on the Isle.

There is still the usual £62.45 in the Treasurers funds.

APCM Rector's Address 2023 – St. Andrew's

I want to begin again with thanking those who have helped and supported the ministry of this church over the last year, those unseen hours of work carried out quietly behind the scenes in order that this church is able to function and offer ministry and worship to this parish and community, those who do the readings, arrange the rotas, serve refreshments, welcome visitors - whether on Sundays for worship or through links with the Wesleys, those who serve on open church, those who help to reorder church for each event or concert and those who help to maintain this building and keep it clean and tidy and in good order.

Thank you to members of the PCC who work with me to ensure that good church governance is embedded, and essential decisions and activities are carried out properly and according to Charity Commission and Church law.

So, thank you to all those to whom this applies. You know who you are.

And secondly, I'd like to thank all those who have served as Church Officers or PCC members in these voluntary roles, which bring with them additional areas of responsibility and without whom this church just wouldn't be able to continue. Thank you also to all those who have agreed today to serve as elected representatives of this church. I look forward to working with you over this next year.

Our fundraising activities to support the essential costs of maintaining our church building during the last year have been extremely fruitful. Thank you to all of those who have been involved in preparing for these and thank you also to members of our community who have continued to support us – a wonderfully effective way of connecting with the good people of our parish.

Our Diocese is currently well under way with the process for appointing the next Bishop of Lincoln and we hope to hear who that will be soon, with the consecration taking place later this year and our new Bishop being in place at some point in early Autumn.

As you are aware, recent events relating to the Diocesan 'Time To Change Together' process and the announcement of Cliff Kay's move from the Benefice of Belton to another Diocese, have meant yet another change of priorities and a further stretching of already limited resources. Following consultation with Churchwardens, PCCs and Deanery Synod a new workable Deanery worship plan is now agreed, and which has taken effect from 23rd April and will hopefully continue to provide support for worship, pastoral care and church governance as we move forward into the rest of this year and beyond.

If this proves to be unhelpful, both for congregations and the two remaining stipendiary clergy with support from our generous retired clergy and capable Lay people, then we will need to reconsider that plan.

As part of that new plan, I will remain as Rector of this Benefice but also become Priest-in-charge of the Belton Benefice, then having responsibility for 6 churches and parishes for worship, pastoral care and governance along with responding to requests for baptisms, weddings and funerals, and being involved with our schools, whilst also remaining as Rural Dean of the Isle of Axholme Deanery with all of the additional meetings and responsibilities involved in that role. Of course, it's not what I originally came here to do, is a lot to ask, and does require a great deal of time commitment and trying to juggle many balls at once. However, I have no reason to complain. I have been called and equipped by God for the purpose of serving his people and will continue to do that for as long as he continues to call me.

My only request is that I continue to have your understanding, support and prayers moving forward, - and that whoever it is that keeps on moving the goalposts, would they please stop for a while so we can all manage to catch our breath!

It is clear that the world and the Church has changed and that is disorientating and causing anxiety for many. We will have decisions to make, as individuals and as a Church. However, let us never forget that with God leading us we will have no need to fear. I do hope that you will choose to join with me in this challenging yet exciting adventure together.

Thank you.

Closing Prayers were led by the Rector

Meeting closed at 7.48pm

Signed Date

APCM Reports for 2024

Churchwarden's Report for 2023 for APCM 2024

During 2022 the Quinquennial Inspection was done but it took the Architect a long time to produce the full report and this was finally presented to the PCC in March 2023. As reported previously we were very lucky that nothing major was required and a further smaller meeting was held to discuss anything that was to be done immediately. Some work had already been done or was due to progress when weather and finances allowed. The small amounts of lead that had been stolen were replaced any loose or damaged tiles were replaced making the roof watertight. The burglar alarm sensors were rechecked, which they are on an annual basis. All the gutters and gullies were given a full clean after the final fall of leaves from the trees. Unfortunately, even though we have had quite a few callouts to the engineers the Church clock continues to keep having problems. David Cooper is keeping this under scrutiny. The gates on the North porch needed re-aligning and re-fixing into the walls this has been done. The iron handrails that were broken (vandalised) on the outside steps at the front of Church were repaired.

Unfortunately during the year the fabric of the Church was a major financial worry. It seems that there are a lot of things which have needed replacing or need work to keep them running due to their age. The lighting system in the Chancel and Nave is a big drain on resources because whenever a bulb needs replacing we have to call in electricians and a use of a scaffold tower. The electricians have drilled holes in the tops of the large black shades to keep the bulbs cool and prolong their use. Please note we do wait if at all possible before requesting the work so to put blocks of work together and save costs. There was a problem with electrics in the kitchen and to save major rewiring the system is completely safe if we restrict the use to two items been used in the sockets in total. The Avenue ground path lights were failing due to condensation (a regular problem) so they have been isolated and the pole lights were repaired and are adequate. The annual electrical Pat-testing and fire alarm checks were done. The heating boiler is causing concern. A new pump was fitted at the end of the year. Currently though the system is losing pressure and if this continues the boiler may have to be replaced! Thank you to Peter Broster for monitoring this and working with engineers to have the best possible outcomes.

Another major worry was the continued historical sharing of the water meter between the Church and the owners of the old Church School. The water company decided that we owed lots of money for usage that we could not possibly have had, when previous bills were checked and no increase in our occupation of the Church during the day. This will be seen in the Treasurer's report. We did report back to the water company that there had been large water bursts on the school site (not our responsibility). The PCC decided that the best way forward was to get our own water meter as soon as possible. This was not an easy task. Finally, after numerous calls by Penny to different people, departments and companies we got as far as visits to see how the work could progress. However, during these meetings it was stated that the meter could be replaced, but given the age of the pipework and the

avenue trees around the best thing was to have the pipework brought up to current standards. PCC approved the work and a date of 11th December 2023 was set but the full work did not start then. All work was completed during 2024 and a meter is now installed at the front west corner of the Church.

After repeated complaints been received about the condition of the Churchyard grass cutting, which had moved onto social media too. The PCC had put out various forms of request for help without results. Given the number and the effect it was having on our "Community standing" the decision was made to request quotes for the grass cutting work for the open Churchyard. In July a contractor Gavin Amys was appointed and he is also continuing this year thanks to the hard work he is doing. This decision did not reflect on the dutiful and hard work done by Jim Oliver and David Birks in the Churchyard over a long number of years. Our grateful thanks go to them for their unstinting support.

PCC received a request, through our land agent, for Mr. Hewson who currently farms and rents some of the Church lands. This was to swap two pieces of the Church rented land with a piece directly behind the Church (which he owns) to make this into a car park for Church use. He was willing to pay to surface the car park. Discussion included no lighting, further responsibility and the loss to the Church of land that may in the future be sold for development. The resulting reply was sent that the church would decline this offer.

The additions to the Terrier for 2023 are the Cabinet storing the archaeological artefacts which is on loan to the Church from North Lincs Council and the Laying Up of the old British Legion Standard which is now permanently placed in Church. That concludes the Fabric report.

As Churchwardens we are extremely thankful to the volunteers that help us to continue the work of the Church as a building and within the community. Unfortunately, there is a feeling that the group of volunteers is growing smaller leaving those to do the jobs required on a more regular basis. Please if there is something you feel you can help with or can see a simpler quicker way your input would be much appreciated.

During the last year we have had a wonderful array of enjoyable services and events. Historically the most important of these was the Coronation celebrations in May. They started off with the special coffee morning. Children from the Primary school displayed their cards which were all to be parcelled up and sent to the Palace. This resulted in lots of new people visiting the Church to see the display and the fabulously decorated Church. On the special weekend we held a Proms and picnic party in Church with singing to suit all age groups. The Royal photo booth was well visited. Everyone really enjoyed themselves. Thanks to Alison Tinsley for coordinating the event. The regular coffee mornings continue to be a great success. We now have a thriving Craft Club which provides a wonderful contact with the community and gives an array of enjoyment and learning thanks go to Gail Lockey for this. As always, we have visitors from all over the World and we thank Jim Oliver and Melvyn Rose for the talks that they give to them producing a generous revue. There is also

a team of volunteer stewards which keeps the Church open in an afternoon during the summer months for the casual visitor. Our thanks go to them too. I know I have not mentioned all the hard workers, those who are part of the Church family and those who help us out on occasions like our Christmas Fayre, but our thanks go to everyone on behalf of the Church.

My thanks go to Penny for the many jobs she does. Some you will never notice but are integral to the day to day running of the Church. Also, the times when she nearly has to live here, because someone else needs letting in to do a job.

We appreciate that the change to the service time was something we all had to get used to, but thank you, to you all for making it work. Nobody can say it has not proved a headache for our Rector Paul who has such a large workload now. I wish to pass on all our THANKS to him for the way he has worked through the past year giving everything to the Benefice and in helping us to work more closely together as a team. I hope that the Rector realises, that we all hope, that if there is a problem with the workload, he must let us know. We now have meetings every other month with him and the other Churchwardens and this gives us time to consolidate our work practices and learn with and from each other. Fundraising and grant applications are just some of the items discussed.

Thank you to everybody for the past year and please pass on the good word about our Church to all your friends so we may continue to grow in fellowship.

Treasurer's Report for 2023 for APCM 2024

The accounts for last year have been independently checked on 21st March 2024 by Rod Stormes (Belton) who has very kindly offered to do them free.

Receipts

Cash collections are about the same as 2022. Planned Giving has increased slightly.

Thank you to you all for your contributions.

Donations have increased by about £500.

Events: proceeds from coffee mornings have increased significantly. Christmas Fayre was down on previous years by approx. £1000.

Land rents have increased.

Feed in tariff (solar panels) down mainly due to severe weather but the previous year included a late payment.

Fees are for Funerals, Weddings,

Total income for 2023 was £61327 compared to £64231 in 2022, but a one-off Energy payment from the Diocese of £2579 was included.

Payments

The PCC made a commitment to pay £30,000 Covenanted Giving in 2023 as opposed to £35000 in 2022. The £30,000 was paid in full.

Clergy expenses relate to Rev Paul's claims for St Andrew's, St Mary's, and St Pancras only.

Utilities: Our gas usage was down last year, Electric about the same, Water: we received a demand for payment of £1200 but after disputing this as not our water leak, we agreed a figure of £483 which is in line with previous payments before the Old Church School was sold.

Maintenance: This includes, roof alarm maintenance and monitoring, Clock, Organ, Electrical (lighting) grasscutting, heating repairs and service.

Fees: Wedding fees (Diocese) Organist, vergers, Architect (Quinquennial report)

Donations to Children's Society, Turkey, Israel/Gaza, Ukraine appeals, Christian Aid and British Legion.

Bank Charges: Monthly fee £5, cheques issues, no of credits, cash paid in.

The closing balance at the end of the year was £13311.

Other funds with the CCLA Management Fund – 1494.26 shares - £33778.20 as at 31st December.

Independent Examiner's Certificate for the PCC Accounts

Report to the trustees of:	ST ANDREW'S EPWORTH		Parochial Church Council	
On accounts for the year	31 DECEMBER 2023	ended:	Charity Number	N/A
Set out on pages	AS PER ACCOUNT SHEETS AND BANK STATEMENTS PLUS SUPPORTING PAPERWORK			

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

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

It is my responsibility to:

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

Basis of independent examiner's statement

My examination was carried out in accordance with general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the 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 from the 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 which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in, any material respect.

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

** Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.*

Signed:



Date:

21 MARCH 2024

Name:

Rodney STORMES

Relevant professional qualification(s) or body (if any):

ACIB, Cert ICM

Address:

1 Meadowbank

Belton,

Doncaster DN9 1NW

ST. ANDREW'S PCC - EPWORTH

RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS - YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2023

<u>RECEIPTS</u>	<u>£</u>
Collections	5835
Planned Giving	13982
Events	11928
Donations	4890
Rents	1694
WB/Wroot re expenses	600
HMRC Tax reclaim	7653
Investment Income	58
Feed in tariff	951
Epworth Charities (Insurance re Wi	87
Transfers Money Manager Account	8859 17608
Fees	4790
Total	61327

Examined  21/3/24

ST ANDREW'S PCC - EPWORTH - RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS
YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2023

<u>PAYMENTS</u>		<u>£</u>
Covenanted Giving		30000
Clergy expenses		1511
Organist		1600
Utilities Gas	7217	
Electric	1514	
Water	483	9214
Maintenance		5945
Fees		3469
Insurance		4704
Donations		1892
Sunday Sheets	216	
Copyright Licence	236	
N Lincs Licence	21	
Candles. Wine	100	
VANL	360	
Printing costs	41	
Church Supplies	71	
Bank Charges	196	1241
		59576
Receipts/Payments		1751
Balance 1st January 2023		11560
Balance 31st December 2023		13311

Examined *[Signature]* 21/3/24

ST ANDREW'S PCC - EPWORTH

MONEY MANAGER ACCOUNT - 31ST DECEMBER 2023

UNRESTRICTED FUNDS

Receipts	8940
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Interest	14
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Total	8954
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Payments	
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Transfer to Charitable Acc	8859
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Total	8859
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Receipts/Payments	95
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Balance 1st January 2023	220
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Balance 31st December 2023	315
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Funds held with CCLA Investment Management

1400.26 shares @ £22.6053	31653.30
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94 shares @ £22.6053	2124.90
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Total	33778.20
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Examined *[Signature]* 21/3/24

Deanery Synod Report for 2023 for APCM 2024

During 2022 Churches were deciding which Category they came into for the next five years. The 615 Churches in the Diocese have identified where they fit in and were ready to move forward at the beginning of 2023. All the Deanery Partnerships have been locally agreed. Our Partnership is to be called the North Lincolnshire Deanery Partnership, including Deaneries of The Isle of Axholme, Manlake and Yarborough. Our Isle Deanery Synod agreed to form one Local Mission Partnership across the Isle.

In February a Deanery meeting of all the Churchwardens was held to agree a plan for the Services from April onwards. The information was then passed down to the PCC's for them to agree. The Isle would now be split between the two remaining Rectors because with the amounts of our Covenanted giving (Parish Share) we only qualify on the Isle for 2.3 stipendiary posts.

Revd Paul would be responsible for Epworth, Wroot, West Butterwick, Belton, Althorpe and Amcotts.

Revd Mark would be responsible for Haxey, Owston Ferry, Crowle, Luddington and Garthorpe.

Concern was expressed for the hard work that would be involved. The Wardens stressed that both Rectors must make known any problems at any time regarding the new working arrangement.

Diane Ekins had formally retired from her post of Deanery Synod Lay Chair and her place on the Diocesan Synod and at the March meeting she was presented with a bouquet of flowers and thanks were expressed for everybody by Revd Paul. The new elected Deanery Lay Chair is Rod Stormes from Belton.

Revd Cliff Kay left the Isle in April and his last service was the Deanery service in April he was presented with an Amazon voucher.

Revd Paul was appointed the new Rural Dean. Revd Paul explained that the remaining clergy would have to become responsible for funerals all over the Isle. Pastoral care, mission and ministry would become more Deanery teams. Both of the Vicarages in Belton and Crowle were to be put up for sale. Revd Paul and Revd Mark were licensed enabling them to give any type of service across the Isle i.e. Weddings and Funerals, which would help provide cover.

The Archdeacons Visitation service for the Churchwardens on the Isle was held on 6th June 2023.

An application for funds has been approved for a Deanery Partnership Children's Youth and Families Enabler. We still qualify for another 0.3 Stipendiary Post in the Deanery and Revd Paul keeps pushing this point at Diocese level at every opportunity.

The new Bishop of Lincoln, Bishop Stephen Conway's installation service was held at the Cathedral on 11th November 2023.

Any questions on this report may be addressed to the Annual Parochial Church meeting or to me personally. Susan Storey, Churchwarden.

Safeguarding Report for 2023 for APCM 2024

Policies and Practice

The clergy and PCC continue to meet the requirement to have due regard to guidance issued by the House of Bishops on matters relating to the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults. Safeguarding continues to be a standard item on every agenda of the PCC meetings.

All safeguarding policies were updated and approved in May 2023 at the PCC meeting. They are all in line with the House of Bishop's Safeguarding Policy and Practice Guidance and meet statutory requirements. The next reviews will be in May 2024.

The Diocesan Safeguarding Team introduced a new Parish Safeguarding Dashboard. This is an online tool which allows PSOs to complete an audit of safeguarding policy and practice in the parish. Following the audit, an action plan is automatically generated to assist them in maintaining and improving their safeguarding practices.

Safer recruitment

The online system for DBS clearance is now well established. Application for recently elected PCC members will be undertaken, in addition to renewals where applicable.

Currently, there are no other volunteers who require DBS clearance, but this is always under review.

Thank you to everyone for their willingness to go through this process, your co-operation has been much appreciated.

Training

A new Safeguarding Learning and Development Framework has been developed by the Church of England. This means that additional training modules may need to be completed. Safeguarding training is always kept under review.

Safeguarding concerns and incidents

No safeguarding concerns have been raised during this year. However, we need to maintain our vigilance to ensure the protection and well-being of everyone in our communities.

Penny Birks
Parish Safeguarding Officer
April 2024

Annual Parochial Church Meeting Rector's Address 2024

Introduction:

I want to begin with thanking those who have helped and supported the ministry of our churches over the last year, those unseen hours of work carried out quietly behind the scenes in order that our churches are able to function and offer ministry and worship to our parishes and communities; to Revd Derek Brown for presiding each month at West Butterwick, Revd Jeremy Green who provides much-needed cover when I'm on leave, Revd Graham Lines who has covered a Christmas and Easter service at Althorpe, the Lay Ministry Team at Belton, Churchwardens and others who lead some non-eucharistic services, those who do the readings, lead the prayers, operate screens or sound systems, arrange the rotas, serve refreshments, arrange flowers, welcome visitors, those who help to reorder church for each event or service and those who help to maintain our buildings and keep them safe, clean and tidy and in good order.

Thank you to Churchwardens, the Treasurers, PCC Secretaries, Safeguarding Officers and members of the PCCs, to all those who have served as Church Officers or PCC members in these voluntary roles, which bring with them additional areas of responsibility and without whom our churches just wouldn't be able to continue and who work with me to ensure that good church governance is embedded, and essential decisions and activities are carried out properly and according to Charity Commission and Church law.

In each of our churches I am so fortunate to have wonderfully generous, kind, thoughtful and capable people to work alongside, without whom I would simply not be able to do the job I'm called to do as your Priest.

So, thank you to all those to whom this applies. I hope you know who you are.

Thank you also to all those who have agreed today to serve as elected representatives of this church. I look forward to working with you over this next year.

Services and Worship:

As you are aware, following the reduction in full time stipendiary clergy numbers on the Isle of Axholme from four to two, this has meant yet another change of priorities and a further stretching of already limited resources. Following consultation with Churchwardens, PCCs and Deanery Synod early last year, a new Deanery worship plan (copied below) was agreed from 23rd April last year, with some changes to worship times for some churches but which appears, on the whole, to have worked fairly well and which will hopefully continue to provide support for worship, pastoral care and church governance as we move forward into the rest of this year and beyond.

Now a year on, there will need to be a time of reflection to consider what can be done more effectively and where adjustments and changes need to be made to ease the clergy services workload. Again, I am immensely grateful for those authorised Lay leaders and retired clergy who share in leading worship each week.

Sunday	West Butterwick Type 3 Community Church	Epworth Type 2 Local Mission Church	Althorpe Type 3 Community Church	Belton Type 2 Local Mission Church	Wroot Type 3 Community Church	Amcotts Type 5 Closure	Crowle Type 3 Community Church	Owston Ferry Type 3 Community Church	Haxey Type 2 Local Mission Church	Luddington Type 4 Festival Church	Garthorpe Type 4 Festival Church
1 st	9:00 am HC Revd Paul	9:30 am Word Lay-led	10:30 am HC Revd Paul	11:00 am Word Lay-led	3:00 pm HC Revd Paul	(No Sunday services. Revd Paul)	9:15 am HC Revd Mark		11:00 am HC Revd Mark		
2 nd	9:00 am Word Lay-led	9:30 am HC Revd Paul		11:00 am HC Revd Paul		(No Sunday services. Revd Paul)	9:15 am Word Lay-led	9:15 am HC Revd Mark	11:00 am HC Revd Mark	2:00 pm HC Revd Mark	
3 rd	9:00 am HC Revd Derek Brown	9:30 am HC Revd Paul	10:00 am Prayer Fellowship Lay-led	11:00 am HC Revd Paul	3:00 pm HC Revd Paul	(No Sunday services. Revd Paul)	9:15 am HC Revd Mark	3:00 pm Informal worship Lay-led	11:00 am HC Revd Mark		
4 th		9:30 am HC Revd Paul		11:00 am HC Revd Paul		(No Sunday services. Revd Paul)	9:15 am Word Lay-led	9:15 am HC Revd Mark	11:00 am HC Revd Mark		Possible afternoon service? Revd Mark
5 th Deanery 10:30 am											

Church Buildings

Church building reports will have been covered elsewhere by Churchwardens, however I wanted to highlight a few things in my report.

St. Mark's Amcotts

St. Mark's Amcotts has been going through a lengthy process for some time seeking closure of the church building for regular worship and where the Parish Council will eventually take on the responsibility for the church building and maintain it as a community space for the village, as there is no village hall. This should be finalised very soon. We are waiting for the Church Commissioners to provide their final judgement. My thanks go to Tricia Murphy, who is Community Warden for St. Mark's, and who has worked tirelessly to repair and refurbish St. Mark's, applying for grants and Faculties and overseeing the work. The churchyard at St. Mark's remains open for further burials until the churchyard becomes full and will then need to be closed, and I will continue to have responsibility for this.

St. Oswald's Althorpe Consecrated Ground

The consecrated ground adjacent to St. Oswald's Church and the road has been closed for burials for many years and is an attractive open space which is currently underused. I am working with the Parish Council to enhance this as a Quiet Space for use by anyone needing to sit, reflect or pray. We are planning to sensitively develop this area with some suitable benches, low-maintenance planting and shrubs, a circular wheelchair and buggy-friendly footpath, a circular central grassed area, entrance gates to keep out animals and a noticeboard explaining the purpose of the Quiet Space (i.e. not a playground). Community grants should be available to fund this.

St. Mary's West Butterwick

The plans for maintenance and repair of St. Mary's Church continue, particularly the urgent repairs to weather-worn external stonework and extensive quinquennial inspection work. A small working group of the PCC are working hard to apply for eligible grants for this work, without which the work won't be realised.

St. Pancras Wroot

The urgent work at St. Pancras to repair the church tower, inside and out, and replace the old cracked and leaking lead roof continue and should be completed fairly soon. Again, finances are limited, and fundraising continues to help cover some of these costs.

St. Andrew's Epworth

Since being re-ordered and refurbished some years ago, many of the facilities are now beginning to cause issues due to age, predominantly electrical and lighting, rising damp and flaking plaster, etc. These will require attention and of course expense. Through no fault of our own, we had to make a decision to install a new water supply at a cost of £7,500, as the water supply was being shared with the old school site at the bottom of the footpath leading up to church and which had been sold by the Diocese to a private developer. This was an unexpected and unfortunate additional cost for the church.

All Saints Belton

Although the church is in good order, we will need to replace the church roof. This work should begin soon.

Baptism, Weddings & Funerals 2023

Baptisms: = 22

Epworth = 7. Belton = 11. Althorpe = 2. Wroot = 1. West Butterwick = 1. Amcotts = 0.

Weddings: = 8

Epworth = 3. Belton = 1. Althorpe = 0. Wroot = 1. West Butterwick = 3. Amcotts = 0.

Funerals: = 26

Epworth = 4. Belton = 10. Althorpe = 2. Wroot = 1. West Butterwick = 2. Amcotts = 2.

Crowle = 2. Crematorium = 3

Church Schools

There continues to be good working relationships with our three Church Primary Schools (West Butterwick, Wroot-Travis and Belton) with school services in church, Collective Worship in school led by myself with a group from All Saints Belton providing regular 'Open the Book' worship in Belton School. It is hoped that colleagues from the Epworth Methodist Church will be able to support Wroot-Travis School with 'Open the Book' from this year. I also have had opportunities for working with Keadby Primary School and we have also held school services in Althorpe Church.

Nursing Homes

The one residential nursing home within our group of churches is in Althorpe and a group from the church visit monthly for an hour consisting of worship, refreshments and conversations and ending with an uplifting sing-a-long.

Diocese

Our Diocese now has a new Bishop of Lincoln, The Right Revd Stephen Conway, and I feel that the Diocese is in good, Godly, experienced and capable hands with Bishop Stephen for the next few years.

As part of Time To Change Together, each parish and PCC in the Diocese will be encouraged to reflect and reconsider their church categorisation, (i.e. 1. Key Mission Church, 2. Local Mission Church, 3. Community Church, 4. Festival Church, 5 Church seeking closure) in case there may need to be some adjustments made for the next period of time moving forward.

Deanery

The Isle of Axholme Deanery has a new Deanery Lay Chair, Rod Stormes, (who is also Churchwarden and Treasurer at All Saints Belton), and who is working closely with the 2 stipendiary clergy, Deanery Churchwardens, Deanery and Diocesan Synod and will be a huge asset and benefit to the Deanery in this role.

Fundraising

Our fundraising activities to support the essential costs of maintaining our church buildings during the last year have been extremely helpful. Thank you to all of those who have been involved in preparing for these and thank you also to members of our community who have continued to support us – a wonderfully effective way of connecting with the good people of our parishes.

Personal

The last couple of years have been something of a challenge for all of us with so many recent and predicted changes in the pattern of parish ministry. As a priest, I have to be ever mindful of maintaining and continually renewing that initial sense of calling to ordained ministry, which was to serve and lead God's people, whilst also being mindful of my own well-being in order to continue that ministry for the long-term.

“Priests are called to be servants and shepherds among the people to whom they are sent” “Remember always with thanksgiving that the treasure now to be entrusted to you is Christ’s own flock bought by the shedding of his blood on the cross. It is to him that you will render account for your stewardship of his people.”

It is crucial for me that this form of ministry isn't replaced by a pragmatic 'managerial-style' of leadership due to constraints on time and resources, and therefore, I will be spending some time reflecting prayerfully and considering thoughtfully those priestly roles and responsibilities which only I am able to carry out and which things need to either be passed to other capable people or perhaps even stopped altogether.

Meeting schedules and frequency will need to be reconsidered where I am expected to attend, to avoid constantly preparing for and going to too many meetings each week, consider where capable people can effectively chair and administer some meetings and where other meetings could be amalgamated to avoid duplication.

Our fundraising and social events are an important and enjoyable part of our church lives together, however, there are often so many of these in our 6 churches that I find it difficult to attend all of them and feel sad because I have to make those kinds of decisions due to other commitments. I do try, and will continue to try, to support as many as possible when I can and when time allows.

However, bearing all of these things and more in mind, I have no reason to complain. I have been called and equipped by God for the purpose of serving and caring for his people as Priest and will continue to do that for as long as he continues to call me.

My only request is that I continue to have your understanding, support and prayers moving forward.

It is clear that the world and the Church has changed and that is disorientating and causing anxiety for many. We will have decisions to make, as individuals and as a Church and inevitably there will need to be further changes. However, let us never forget that with God leading us we will have no need to fear.

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (Matthew 28:19-20)

I do hope that you will choose to join with me in this challenging yet exciting adventure together.

Thank you.

Revd Paul.