

St Andrew's Epworth

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING 2025



Wednesday 23rd April 2025 at
7:00 pm

St. Andrew's Church

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 23rd April 2025, at 7:00 pm.**

AGENDA

Opening Prayers

Vestry Meeting

1. Apologies for absence
2. (p 3) Minutes of the Annual Vestry Meeting held on 2nd May 2024
3. Election of Churchwardens
4. Election of Deputy Churchwardens

Parish Meeting

1. Apologies for absence
2. (p 5) Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting held on 2nd May 2024
3. Matters arising from the Minutes
4. Election of Parochial Church Councillors to serve 2025-2028
5. Electoral Roll – numbers and changes since the last meeting
6. (p 16) Churchwarden's Report for 2024 – report on the fabric and maintenance.
7. (p 19) Treasurer's Report for 2024 – The financial affairs, presentation of audited accounts, funds and investments.
 - a) Adoption of accounts
8. (p 26) Deanery Synod Report for 2024.

9. (p 29) Safeguarding Report for 2024
10. Appointment of Independent Examiner to the PCC
11. Notice of the first meeting of the PCC – 23rd April
following this meeting
12. Archdeacon's Visitation Service
13. Any other urgent business
14. (p 31) Rector's address

Closing Prayers

EPWORTH PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

St Andrew's Parish Church, Epworth

The Minutes **of the Vestry Meeting** held at St Andrew's Church on Thursday 2nd May 2024 at 7.00 pm

- 1 **The Minutes** of the Vestry Meeting held on Thursday 4th May 2023 were approved.
Proposed by Susan Storey, Seconded by David Higginson
Signed by Rev Paul Wilson

2 **Election of Churchwardens**

Penny Birks.....Proposed Karen Wilson Seconded
Michael Smith

Susan Storey Proposed Peter Broster Seconded
Jim Oliver

There being no other nominations they were elected
unanimously for the next 12 months

They were thanked for their work during the last year and for
being prepared to continue with their commitment.

3 **Election of Deputy Churchwardens**

Jim Oliver Proposed Wendy Kitson Seconded
Peter Knight

David Cooper was unable to be present but is willing to
continue. His appointment will be made at the next PCC
Meeting.

They were thanked for their continued commitment and
support to the churchwardens during the past year with
much of their work being unseen.

Meeting ended at 7.07 pm

Signed Date

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 2nd May 2024
at 7 pm

Present

Chairman - Rev Paul Wilson

Mrs Penny Birks [Churchwarden]

Miss Susan Storey [Churchwarden]

Peter Brown, Rev Jeremy Green, Stephanie Green, David Higginson, Pamela Higginson, Wendy Kitson, Peter Knight, Kathleen Liddell, Cedric May, Jackie May, Jim Oliver, Melvyn Rose, Pauline Rose, Dorothy Smith [Minutes Secretary], Sharon Usztan, Karen Wilson,

Opening Prayers were led by Rev Paul Wilson

1 Apologies for Absence

Received from Anne Broster, Peter Broster , Gail Lockey, Alison Tinsley

2 Minutes

The Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Council Meeting held on Thursday 2nd May 2023, had been distributed a week before the Meeting and were approved as a true record.

Proposed Peter Knight Seconded Melvyn Rose
Signed by Rev Paul

3 Matters Arising from the Minutes - None

4 Election of Parochial Church Councillors to serve 2024 – 2027

There were 4 vacancies

1 Gail Lockey	Proposed Penny Birks
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Seconded David Higginson

2 James Oliver	Proposed Melvyn Rose
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Seconded Linnie Burnham

3 Sharon Usztan	Proposed Peter Broster
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Seconded Anne Broster

These three are duly elected for 3 years 2024 -2027

There is one further vacancy. An appointment can be made at a future PCC Meeting

Kathleen Liddell has retired from the PCC and was thanked for the many years during which she has contributed to the work of the PCC.

5 Electoral Roll

Carol Mellers, Electoral Roll Officer, was unable to be present but had prepared a Report – There are now 79 names on the Electoral Roll..... -2 and +1 from last year. Thank you to Carol for continuing to be responsible for this. There will be a full revision of the Register next year.

6 Churchwarden's Report for 2023 for APCM 2024

During 2022 the **Quinquennial Inspection** was made but it took the Architect a long time to produce the full report which 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 and 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 have 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 being used in the sockets at any one time.** The Avenue ground path lights were failing due to condensation (a regular problem) so they have been isolated. 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 being received about the condition of the Churchyard grass cutting, which had moved onto social media, 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 celebration in May. It 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.

**All agreed to accept the Churchwardens' Report - Proposed
Wendy Kitson Seconded Peter Knight**

6 Churchwardens and Fabric Report 2025

The Churchwardens Report last year mentioned the Quinquennial Report done by the Architect in June 2023. When it was received the PCC requested that it should include a full inspection of the tower roof. This has been done by the Architect and Gary Rawlinson of Heritage Conservation and Restoration the report summary was presented to the PCC.

A brand new water supply pipework was completed early 2024. It was laid from the bottom of the Avenue and into Church on the south side between the porch and the base of the tower. We were advised by several water supply experts that the state of the very old pipework was not good. Whilst work was to be done making a separate supply and stop tap to the old Church School site, it made good sense to replace all the pipework. Therefore, reducing the possibility of having to trace any costly leaks down the avenue. We now also have good working stop taps in both the toilet and kitchen areas.

The heating boiler is now working OK after several visits from Byfield Heating and with Peter Broster's hard work and determination in getting to the root of the cause. Our thanks to him for this and all his trips up into the boiler area to keep the heating working, so we had heat for services and concerts, whilst these problems were put right.

The Church clock continues to be faulty despite regular servicing and interim visits, when required, from the clockmakers. David Cooper is keeping the PCC aware of what repair work is suggested. The current problem is a motor is cutting out, causing the hour strike to be wrong. This has been turned off temporarily, until a repair can be made, allowing the quarter strikes to still be heard. The motor would need to a rewind and reset the amounts quoted by our clockmakers for a rewind is £2,500 + vat or £1850 +vat for full replacement. Currently David is looking into getting other quotes for this work to be done by other Church clockmakers. Thanks again go to him for

keeping the clock going and been the right time for what proves to still be a very important part of our local community. We also have David to thank for the recent repair to the side of the pulpit steps.

The hazard marked areas of flooring in the toilet and kitchen areas are due to rotting floorboards the work to replace these has been requested and is due to be done shortly.

We have had the Altar Flower stand, and the Paschal candle stand repaired by Graham Wager (a member of Althorpe Churches congregation).

The usual annual checks of Lightening conductor check, PAT testing, Fire Alarm and Extinguisher checks have all been done.

Gavin Amys continued to do the Open Churchyard (the two most modern areas) grass cutting during the year, with favourable comments made on the upkeep. Quotes have been requested for the current year. After correspondence with the Town Council regarding the Closed Churchyard (that nearest the Church) the grass cutting improved and work began to tidy the growth around the boundary walls.

This concludes the maintenance part of my report. From this you will all see it has been a very busy year regarding the expense and amount of work been done. Which leads onto the next message I wish to pass on again this and every year. That without both generous financial and voluntary help the Church would suffer greatly. So, a big thank you to all the those concerned who have helped with the day to day running of the Church, with all the concerts, events and coffee mornings, the decoration and flower arranging weekly and seasonal, to those who clean the Church. Another person who requires a special mention is Dave Birks for the support he gives to Penny and for the regular sweeping and blowing of leaves, etc., from the paths before anyone arrives at Church. The

list continues, please forgive me if I have missed anyone. This year we have gratefully received very good financial help from the artwork of Anne Broster's cards, Gail Lockey's cards and carved crosses and Karen Wilson's poetry books.

One of the big parts of our Church fund raising is from the importance of the Heritage which we have within our Church. For our Church to continue to be open to welcome the visitors we receive every year, we need to grow our group of volunteers. Stewards are required for the afternoon opening sessions or for when the tour groups are booked in to visit and have talks. We were lucky last year to be able to open most afternoons within the April to October period and to accommodate the times for other visitors. I want to thank Melvyn Rose and Jim Oliver for giving the talks and to all the stewards last year. Please help if you can for what is an interesting and rewarding job it is really surprising the reasons and the various places that people come from to visit Epworth.

There are two other people I want to thank for their hard work again this year. The first is Penny Birks for all her hard UNSEEN and time-consuming work for the Church. Finally, but most importantly of course Revd. Paul Wilson for his work which has made the us all want to continue to support and be a part of God's wider Church community.

Finally there are no additions to the Church Terrier this year.

7 Treasurer's Report 2023

The accounts for last year were independently checked on 21st March 2024 by Rod Stormes (Belton) who has very kindly offered to do them again in future, without charge.

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.

It was Proposed by Sharon Usztan, Seconded by Susan Storey, that the Treasurer's Report be accepted – all in favour.

Meeting closed with the saying of The Grace together.

7.19 pm

Signed Date

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

CHURCHWARDENS AND FABRIC REPORT 2025

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Finally there are no additions to the Church Terrier this year.

Treasurer's Report for APCM 2025

The financial accounts for 2024 have been independently checked by Rod Stormes (Belton) dated 12th March 2025.

The accounts were presented to the PCC meeting held on 19th March 2025 and were accepted.

Income

Cash collections have increased: Planned Giving has increased also: Donations of £2500 (Gift Aided) has been received towards the cost of the new water supply.

There have been several events held this year which has seen an increase of £3,000 raised on last year. Mainly due to coffee mornings, Spring Fayre and the Xmas Fayre. The Christmas Fayre was held in Church in 2024 which was remarkably successful in both income and involvement with the community. Fees relate to Weddings and Funerals.

Total Income 2024: £67647: 2023: £61327.

Expenditure

Covenanted Giving £30,000 was paid in full. Utilities: Gas, Electric, Water payments slightly down due to a cheaper tariff being obtained for the Electricity.

Maintenance: This covers the following: Roof Alarm, Organ, Clock, Lighting, Heating repairs and boiler maintenance, Fire Extinguishers, Roof repairs due to a leak spotted when the gutters were cleaned, Grasscutting and Insurance.

Sundries: A new water supply was fitted costing £7434 payable by standing order over 12 months. Altar items include Wine, candles, wafers.

Donations include Air Ambulance, Christian Aid, Children's Society.

At the end of last year an Energy survey was done on behalf of the Diocese and it was found that we had been incorrectly charged for Climate Change Levy which resulted in an overpayment of £3500 to Crown Gas. This has been rectified and the bills amended accordingly.

Total Expenditure 2024: £63344: 2023: £59576.

Independent Examiner's Certificate for the PCC Accounts

Report to the trustees of:	ST ANDREWS, EPWORTH	Parochial Church Council
On accounts for the year	31 DECEMBER 2024	ended: Charity Number N/A
Set out on pages	AS PER ACCOUNT SHEETS, 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.

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records

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: 12 MARCH 2025

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 2024

<u>RECEIPTS</u>	<u>£</u>
Collections	6097
Planned Giving	16884
Events	14956
Donations	5361
Fees	5919
Rents	1496
WB/Wroot re expenses	300
HMRC Tax reclaim	6552
Investment Income	59
Shop/Card Sales	566
Epworth Charities (Insurance re Window)	88
Transfers Money Manager Account	9022
Christian Aid	347
	16634
Total	67647

ST ANDREW'S PCC - EPWORTH

RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2024

<u>PAYMENTS</u>		<u>£</u>
Covenanted Giving		30000
Clergy expenses		844
Organist		1600
Utilities Gas	6901	
Electric	1096	
Water	161	8158
Maintenance		8871
Fees		665
Insurance		4640
Sundries		
Sunday Sheets	284	
Copyright Licence	247	
Yorkshire Water	5576	
Candles. Wine	355	
Donations	1040	
Change re Events	524	
Church Repair Soc	30	
Bank Charges	212	
Sim Card re Contacless	50	
Wesley Mem re C Card	156	
Sundry Items	92	8566
 TOTAL		 63344
Receipts/Payments	4304	
Balance 1st January 2024	13310	
Balance 31st December 2024	17614	

ST ANDREW'S PCC - EPWORTH
MONEY MANAGER ACCOUNT - 31ST DECEMBER 2024

UNRESTRICTED FUNDS

Receipts	8690
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Interest	17
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Total	8707
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Payments

Transfers to Charitable A/C	9022
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Total	9022
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Receipts/Payments	-315
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Balance 1st January 2024	315
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Balance 31st December 2024	Nil
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Funds held with CCLA Investment Management

1400.26 shares @ £23.1227	32377.79
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94 shares @ £23.1227	2173.53
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Total	34551.32
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ST ANDREW'S RESTORATION APPEAL
YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2024

Accounts held at HSBC

UNRESTRICTED FUNDS

Charitable Account

Balance 1st January 2024	574.30
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Balance 31st December 2024	574.30
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Funds held with Church of England Deposit Fund

Balance as at 31st December 2024	7894.40
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Isle of Axholme Deanery Synod Annual Report 2024

Rural Dean: Revd. Paul Wilson

Deanery Lay Chair: Rod Stormes

Deanery Secretary: Vacant (Interim Minute Secretary: Mrs Sylvia Stormes)

Overview

The Isle of Axholme Deanery Synod met three times in 2024, addressing key issues related to mission, ministry, finance, and structural changes within the deanery and diocese. The meetings facilitated discussions on the future of clergy staffing, safeguarding, church growth, and the proposed deanery restructuring.

Key Highlights

Ministry & Mission Updates

- Children, Youth & Families Enabler: The bid for a part-time (10 hours per week) post was discussed throughout the year. While progress was slow, a potential candidate expressed interest.
- Additional 0.5 Stipendiary Post: Following discussions with the Diocese, it was confirmed that Isle LMP's current covenant giving allows for 2.3 stipendiary posts. The Deanery aims to increase this to 2.5, and to continue the process for realising a 0.5 stipendiary post with oversight of Discipleship, Vocations and Growth across the Isle churches.
- Church Schools: Several Foundation Governor vacancies were filled, particularly within the Belton-Wroot Federation and Trentside Federation, which is merging with Infinity Academy.
- Deanery Training: A successful lay worship training course, led by Revd Hugh Jones, was well received. However, further training for ALM and Reader ministry remains a priority.

Safeguarding & Compliance

- A key presentation from the Diocesan Safeguarding Team outlined crucial safeguarding responsibilities, including:
- Ensuring visible safeguarding posters in churches.
- Proper reporting of concerns.
- Using the safeguarding dashboard for compliance.
- Addressing potential risks of financial abuse, particularly among the elderly.

Finance & Governance

- Deanery Synod funds remained stable at £62.45.
- Discussions continued on the possibility of creating a Deanery Mission Fund from Deanery Service collections.
- A casual vacancy for a Diocesan Synod representative remained unfilled.
- Ongoing need for a permanent Deanery Synod Secretary, with no volunteers stepping forward during 2024.

Structural Changes & Future Planning

- Proposed Deanery Merger: The Diocese is consulting on merging the Isle of Axholme, Manlake, and Yarborough Deaneries into one North Lincolnshire Deanery. Concerns raised include:
- Increased clergy workload.
- Larger meetings potentially reducing engagement.
- Travel challenges for members attending meetings.
- Possible introduction of a 'Partnership Dean & Assistant Archdeacon's' role across the larger single deanery and the workload for that individual alongside parochial responsibilities.
- Consultation ongoing, with the Bishop seeking feedback from parishes.

Good News Stories

- Despite challenges, God's work is evident across the Deanery:
- Food Share Project expanded to include baby equipment and furniture storage.
- Haxey Choir has grown in numbers.
- Time to Pray Meetings at Belton have been well received.
- Sunday at All Saints Early Service has seen increased attendance.
- Churches such as Crowle and Althorpe secured funding for maintenance and upgrades.

Looking Ahead

- Recruitment: A continued focus on filling key vacancies, including the 0.5 stipendiary post and Deanery Secretary role.
- Deanery Restructure: Engaging with the Diocese to ensure local concerns are considered in the proposed deanery amalgamation.
- Mission & Growth: Strengthening lay training, developing youth ministry, and ensuring financial sustainability for clergy posts.

Conclusion

The Isle of Axholme Deanery continues to navigate significant change while maintaining its mission and ministry. With ongoing discussions on staffing, governance, and restructuring, the coming year will be pivotal in shaping the future of the Deanery's ministry and outreach.

We give thanks for God's guidance and pray for wisdom in the year ahead.

Safeguarding Report for 2024 for APCM 2025

Safeguarding Review

We encourage vigilance and transparency to help create a culture that encourages

Safeguarding concerns or incidents to be raised and reported to the Parish Safeguarding Officer. we aim to provide support to safeguard victims.

We have adopted the Safer Church Policy which is displayed on the noticeboard in the South Porch.

We can report that there have been no incidents during 2024 and since the last PCC meeting in March 2025.

DBS

We continue to monitor DBS certificates that are due for renewal every 3 years to ensure applicable volunteers have a valid DBS clearance.

Training

All current PCC members have undertaken the appropriate training required. Any recently elected members to the PCC will be required to do the training also,

Volunteers

All new and existing volunteers engaged in church activities involving children, young people and the elderly will be required to do appropriate safeguarding training. Also

new and existing volunteers need to undertake the Basic Awareness training module. This will be arranged by the PSO.

Every PCC meeting has a standing agenda item on Safeguarding which enables regular discussion when needed on any relevant issues.

Penny Birks Parish Safeguarding Officer April 2025

The Epworth & Belton Group of Churches

Annual Parochial Church Meeting

Rector's Address 2025

Introduction:

As we gather for our Annual Parochial Church Meetings in 2025, we do so with gratitude for the year that has passed and hope for the year ahead. Our churches in the Epworth and Belton Group have continued to be places of prayer, witness, and service, standing as beacons of faith in our communities. Today, we reflect on where we have been, where we are, and where God is leading us.

On my way to one of our churches just a short while ago I met someone who comes occasionally on a Sunday, and they apologised for not coming more frequently due to such a hectic work and family life. I assured them that they were always welcome, whenever they were able to join us. They replied by saying, *'That's what I love so much about this church, knowing that I'm always welcome'*.

Invitation and welcome, two crucially important aspects of God's nature and also two crucially important aspects of what the Church should be like – full of invitation and welcome.

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, the Lay Ministry Team at Belton, Churchwardens, our three newly appointed Focal Ministers and others who lead some non-eucharistic services, those who do the readings, lead the prayers, sing in the choir, play the organ, operate screens or sound systems, arrange the rotas, serve refreshments, arrange flowers, welcome visitors, provide support for baptisms,

weddings and funerals, 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, 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 decided not to seek re-election and who have served their church for many years and those who have agreed today to serve as elected representatives of this church for the coming year. I look forward to working with you over this next year.

The past year has brought its share of challenges, both within the wider Church of England and within our own deanery of the Isle of Axholme. Nationally, we continue to navigate the implications of change, whether through leadership transitions or discussions about the future shape of the Church. At a local level, we have faced the realities of maintaining our buildings, balancing our finances, and ensuring that we remain present and engaged with our communities. And yet, through it all, God has been faithful.

One of the greatest blessings of this past year has been the deepening of our collaboration across our group of churches. In 1 Corinthians 12:12, Paul reminds us, *“For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ.”* Each of our churches is unique, with its own history and character, but together we form one body, united in mission and love. When we work together—sharing resources, supporting each other’s ministries, praying for one another—we move forward in the mission God has given us.

We have seen this spirit of cooperation in so many ways this past year. From joint services and shared ministry initiatives to our pastoral care and outreach, we are learning what it means to truly be one body in Christ. And we have much to be thankful for: new opportunities to serve, the faithfulness of our congregations, and the ways in which God is still calling people to follow Him.

As we look to the year ahead, we do so with confidence in God’s plans for us. Yes, there will be difficulties to navigate, but we are not alone. The Holy Spirit guides us, and we have one another to lean on.

In March 2025 we welcomed our new half-time (2 weekdays plus Sunday) Priest and colleague, Revd Julie Miles, who will encourage and develop discipleship, vocations and growth across the Isle churches. I encourage you to continue thinking and praying about what God might be calling you to and then to share those thoughts with Revd Julie.

I encourage you to commit yourselves afresh to being a people of faith, hope, and love—working together as Christ’s body and trusting in God’s purposes for our churches and our communities.

May the Lord bless us and keep us as we continue this journey together.

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

As you know, St. Mark's Amcotts has been going through a lengthy process for some years, begun long before my time as Priest-in Charge, 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. We are told that this should be finalised very soon. All these years on and we are still waiting for the Church Commissioners to provide their final judgement and for the closure order to be made effective.

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

St. Oswald's PCC have been busy working with our architect to provide important surveys on the fabric of the church in order to know where we need to focus our funds and priorities. These have been

useful and we are able to move forward achieving what we can with the limited resources available to us.

The consecrated ground adjacent to St. Oswald's Church and the road has been closed for burials for many years (since 1915) 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, as this should not be a financial responsibility for the church.

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, some of which have been granted and without which the work won't be realised. Work will commence soon to the ceiling and roof of the church and ongoing conversations and meetings are in place to install a more efficient and eco-friendly heating system, which is desperately needed, especially in the bitterly cold winter. We also hope to combine an upgraded lighting system within this project too.

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 and rotten timbers has thankfully been completed. Again, finances are hugely

limited, and local fundraising continues to help cover some of these outstanding costs, with residents of Wroot being extremely helpful and generous.

St. Andrew's Epworth

Since being re-ordered and refurbished some years ago, many of the facilities in St. Andrew's 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, however we remain hopeful as ever that these ongoing projects will be realised.

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 2024

Baptisms: = 20

Epworth = 4. Belton = 6. Althorpe = 8. Wroot = 1. West Butterwick = 1. Amcotts = 0.

Weddings: = 4

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

Funerals: 34

Epworth = 13. Belton = 10. Althorpe = 1. Wroot = 3. West Butterwick = 4. Amcotts = 1.

Crowle = 2.

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. Colleagues from the Epworth Methodist Church now offer support to Wroot-Travis School with 'Open the Book'. I also have had opportunities for working with Keadby Primary School and we have also held school services for them in Althorpe Church.

Nursing Homes

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

Diocese

Our Diocese will be saying farewell to Bishop David Court (Bishop of Grimsby) in July this year. Bishop David will remain in the Diocese of Lincoln and will move to another home in Grimsby, where he will continue to offer his ministry in retirement across the Diocese.

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 Synod Annual Summary Report is included elsewhere.

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, especially including the Friends of St. Mary's in West Butterwick – a wonderfully effective way of connecting with the good people of our parishes.

Personal

Ministry is always evolving, and in recent years, the pace of change has been particularly intense. Yet, amid the shifting landscape of the Church of England and the growing demands of leadership, I remain deeply grateful for the honour of serving as your Priest.

At the heart of my vocation is the privilege of walking alongside people in their joys and struggles—proclaiming the Gospel, offering the sacraments, and sharing the love of Christ. There are, of course, challenges. The increasing administrative and structural pressures and responsibilities of parish life can sometimes feel overwhelming, and like many clergy, I have wrestled with the tension between pastoral ministry and the managerial expectations of church leadership. However, I am reminded time and again that ministry is not something I do alone; it is something we share as the Body of Christ.

Looking ahead, I am continuing to prayerfully discern how to focus my time and energy on what truly matters—being present with those in need, leading worship, deepening our community's faith, and entrusting certain responsibilities to others who are gifted to serve in different ways. This may mean rethinking structures, learning to sometimes saying no when asked to take on additional major responsibilities, and allowing space for renewal. My hope is not just to sustain ministry but to do so with joy and faithfulness.

Despite any challenges, I remain filled with hope and gratitude. Your kindness, encouragement, and prayers continually renew my sense of calling, and it is an incredible privilege to journey with you in faith.

I take great comfort in the words of Isaiah:

"But those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint." (Isaiah 40:31)

My prayer is that, together, we will continue to seek God's will, trusting that He will provide the strength, wisdom, and joy we need for the journey ahead.

Thank you for your support, your prayers, and for allowing me the privilege of being your Priest.

Revd Paul.

Independent Examiner's Certificate for the PCC Accounts

Report to the trustees of:

ST ANDREWS, EPWORTH

Parochial Church Council

On accounts for the year

31 DECEMBER 2024

ended:

Charity Number

N/A

Set out on pages

AS PER ACCOUNT SHEETS, 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.

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records

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:

12 MARCH 2025

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 2024**

<u>RECEIPTS</u>	<u>£</u>
Collections	6097
Planned Giving	16884
Events	14956
Donations	5361
Fees	5919
Rents	1496
WB/Wroot re expenses	300
HMRC Tax reclaim	6552
Investment Income	59
Shop/Card Sales	566
Epworth Charities (Insurance re Window)	88
Transfers Money Manager Account	9022
Christian Aid	347
	16634
Total	67647

ST ANDREW'S PCC - EPWORTH**RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2024****PAYMENTS****£**

Covenanted Giving		30000
Clergy expenses		844
Organist		1600
Utilities Gas	6901	
Electric	1096	
Water	161	8158
Maintenance		8871
Fees		665
Insurance		4640
Sundries		
Sunday Sheets	284	
Copyright Licence	247	
Yorkshire Water	5576	
Candles. Wine	355	
Donations	1040	
Change re Events	524	
Church Repair Soc	30	
Bank Charges	212	
Sim Card re Contacless	50	
Wesley Mem re C Card	156	
Sundry Items	92	8566
 TOTAL		 63344

Receipts/Payments	4304
Balance 1st January 2024	13310
Balance 31st December 2024	17614

ST ANDREW'S PCC - EPWORTH

MONEY MANAGER ACCOUNT - 31ST DECEMBER 2024

UNRESTRICTED FUNDS

Receipts	8690
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Interest	17
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Total	8707
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Payments

Transfers to Charitable A/C	9022
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Total	9022
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Receipts/Payments	-315
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Balance 1st January 2024	315
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Balance 31st December 2024	Nil
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Funds held with CCLA Investment Management

1400.26 shares @ £23.1227	32377.79
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94 shares @ £23.1227	2173.53
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Total	34551.32
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ST ANDREW'S RESTORATION APPEAL
YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2024

Accounts held at HSBC

UNRESTRICTED FUNDS

Charitable Account

Balance 1st January 2024	574.30
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Balance 31st December 2024	574.30
----------------------------	--------

Funds held with Church of England Deposit Fund

Balance as at 31st December 2024	7894.40
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ST ANDREWS, EPWORTH

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On accounts for the year

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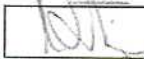
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ST ANDREW'S PCC - EPWORTH

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