



St John's Church, Higham

Annual Report and Financial Statements of the Parochial Church Council For the year ended 31st December 2024

Incumbent:

Revd. Lesley Hinchcliffe

Treasurer:

Mr John Shaw & Mrs B Shaw

Independent Examiner:

Mrs Gemma-Louise Wells CIPFA

Address for correspondence:

PCC Secretary
Mr John Loads
29 Acres brook Rd, Higham BB12 9BY

An introductory note

Churchwardens' report - Year end 31st December 2024

Following on from last year's report we were without a Churchwarden until the APCM in May 2024, after which I had the honour of being voted into the role.

At the same meeting we were also pleased to welcome some new members to the PCC team: Sam Tomlinson and Gil Gilbert, along with Pam Fitton returning after a short period off the committee.

Andrea Johnson stepped up to the role of Safeguarding Officer after the resignation of Eileen Coulton, whom we thank for all her hard work during her time in the role.

We also had a change in the role of PCC Secretary. Julie Fox stepped down from the role after many long years of service. We thank her whole heartedly for all the very accurate minute taking and report writing over the years. The PCC would not have functioned so efficiently without her hard work. In her place we welcomed back John Loads who kindly agreed to fulfil the role, many thanks John.

As the year progressed, we looked for ways to celebrate the 150th Anniversary of the consecration of the Higham Church. We decided to mark the occasion with a Harvest Festival Choral Evensong with the Deanery Choir, followed by Harvest Supper in the Village Hall and a community sing along of traditional folk tunes.

We also joined with other churches to take part in the Pendle Deanery Festival of Health and wellbeing; a Deanery event to engage the church and wider local community with different spiritual and physical events and activities. The events held in our church were a musical recital, local walk highlighting the history of Higham, healthier baking competition and a herbs and aromatherapy event.

The PCC has looked to improve our mission outreach by better promotion and advertising of important events and services in the church calendar.

Further works have taken place to the building fabric which are covered in the Fabric Committee Report later in this document.

We engaged the services of Pendle Council to cut the grass around the church and the churchyard, and the grounds are looking well-kept and neat. Memorial inspections are regularly undertaken each October, and the 'Saturday Team' meet often to ensure paths are swept, twigs and branches removed, and guttering cleared.

The Terrier is up to date and reviewed to include photographs and descriptions of valuables.

I would like to thank our 'Welcoming' team, the Verger and all the 'staff' and contributors that make our services run as well as they do – and that includes those on the cleaning rota and those that organise readings and the beautiful flower arrangements, the Readers, those who lead the weekly prayers, and the team providing hot refreshments after the services.

We are lucky, and grateful, to have a talented choir and organist to lead our worship, and we thank them for their dedication and commitment. We thank Revd. Lesley for her guidance, patience, and support of the PCC.

Simon Gilbert

Church warden

22/4/2025

Annual report of the PCC for the year ended 31st December 2024

Aims and Purposes

St John's PCC has the responsibility of co-operating with the Incumbent in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish the whole mission of the church pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. The PCC is also specifically responsible for the maintenance of the Parish Church building.

Vision 2026

'St John's embraces Vision 2026 as it seeks to grow healthy churches that will transform communities. The four guiding principles:

1. Making Disciples of Jesus Christ
2. Being Witnesses to Jesus Christ
3. Growing Leaders for Jesus Christ

4. Inspiring Children and Young People

Structure, Governance and Management

The Parochial Church Council is a corporate body established by the Church of England. The PCC operates under the Parochial Church Powers Measure. The PCC is expected by order from the registering with the Charity Commission. The method of appointment of the PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. All Church attendees are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and to stand for election to the PCC.

The PCC meets at least once every two months, usually in church, but occasionally at the Office in the Refectory. The PCC has complied with the duty under section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 (duty to have regard to House of Bishops' guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults).

PCC Members are:

Ex-officio

Incumbent: PCC Chair	Revd Lesley Hinchcliffe
Churchwarden	Simon Gilbert
Deanery Synod Representatives	Linda Sharpe and Barbara Shaw

Elected Members

Simon Gilbert
Gil Gilbert
John Shaw
Barbara Shaw
Andrea Johnston
Ron Smith
Sam Tomlinson
Linda Sharpe
Pam Fitton
Heather Swindlehurst
Brian Sutcliffe

Treasurer	John Shaw & Barbara Shaw
------------------	--------------------------

Committees

The PCC has a Standing committee. This is the only committee required by law. It has the power to transact business of the PCC between meetings, subject to any direction by the Council. The Standing committee comprised of Reverend Lesley Hinchcliffe, a Treasurer, Simon Gilbert, Ron Smith, John Loads.

Worship

Our services are led by the choir with organist and Choirmaster, Robert Fergusson, and Gil Gilbert providing musical support in his absence. In 2024 we held our usual seasonal services (Ash Wednesday, Lent, Easter, Pentecost, Trinity, All Souls, Remembrance, Advent, and Christmas), with an occasional visit from the Deanery choir. The 'Occasional offices' (Baptisms, Weddings, and Funerals) were administered - in 2024 there were 2 baptisms, 1 funeral and 1 wedding.

The following reports have been individually submitted by PCC members: -

Safeguarding Report Year Ending 2024

At St John's our culture has always been that the safety and well-being of all people, especially children and vulnerable adults, is taken seriously. This year we have continued to hold ourselves to that standard and to prioritise safeguarding.

Safeguarding Training

We have had no changes to the Parish Safeguarding Officer role and our policy and procedures all remain the same. We are grateful for people at St John's who volunteer on our various teams, groups, and PCC and who work here. They all have a firm commitment to a safe culture and one way they show this is in their willingness to undertake the appropriate training in which they have been helpful, quick and responsive.

Training is all up to date and the following has taken place:

- DBS updates x5
- Foundation Pathways updates

- Domestic Abuse updates
- PSO Induction completed.

These dates continue to be put into the Parish Dashboard. As we move into 2025/26, please note, all dates must be visible on certificates for the PSO before the date of completion can be uploaded onto the Parish Dashboard.

Safer Recruitment

We have a notice board in church, with photographs and names of all our team, to help the congregation identify the team if they need to talk to us about any issues. We continue to follow correct procedure and policy so that all people are recruited to teams and roles using the official 'Safer Recruitment' procedures. This year we have not had any new recruits.

Incident Reporting

There were no formal safeguarding incidents in 2024/25 and we continue to use the Parish Dashboard to track progress, get reports and identify areas to work on.

Policy Implementation

St John's continues to follow their safeguarding policies - for both children and adults – which should cover the following:

1. Governance
2. Culture
3. Safeguarding Policy

Risk Assessment

Risk assessments have continued to be carried out – a further 2 new ones written due to new church events. These were the Easter Egg Hunt and Harvest Celebrations.

Andrea Johnston - Parish Safeguarding Officer 03/05/25



Financial Review: Treasurer's report for the year ended 31 December 2024

Treasurer's Notes to the Financial Statements

Accounting Policies

Notes to the Financial Statements: -

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations 2006, using the Receipts and Payments basis.

General funds represent the funds of the PCC that are not subject to any special restrictions regarding their use and are available for application to the general purposes of the PCC. The accounts include monetary transactions, assets and liabilities for which the PCC can be held responsible. The PCC have agreed to hold a restricted fund for the Pendle Deanery, but there are no other accounts of other church groups that owe an affiliation to another body, nor those that are informal gatherings of church members. Receipts and payments include income as received and expenditure when irrevocably paid.

It is PCC policy to try to maintain a balance on unrestricted funds that equates to at least three months of unrestricted payments, this is to smooth out fluctuations in cash flow and to meet emergencies. Based on 2024 normal payments this equates to £8,648. The cash balance at the end of the year was £1,174.26, which together with our deposits with the Diocese of £1,956.24 and £125.14, totals £3255.64.

Receipts

There were 32 members using the Standing Order system throughout the year.

There were also 8 members of the preferred Planned Giving Scheme throughout the year.

Only two of these members increased their giving for inflation. The fund raising via the 125 Club and the usual annual community events increased by 8% this year. Total receipts were down by 6%.

Payments

No exceptional items have been paid this year. The complete payment of the Parish Share was achieved by withdrawing £2,500 from invested funds.

Barbara Shaw and John Shaw, Joint Treasurers - April 2025

Electoral Roll

The Electoral Roll has been reviewed and revised in line with the Church Representation Rules and Regulations 2025. There are currently 40 individuals on roll.

Rebecca Harrison

Electoral Roll Officer

Fabric Committee

Fabric Committee Report 2024

The Committee met five times during the year.

Our agenda items over the year are a mixture of, statutory requirements, good housekeeping, general improvements and maintenance, as well as planning major improvements and reordering.

Agenda items during the year included:

Church Building:

Annual Fire Extinguisher Check

P. A. T. of appliances

Upkeep of the church Log Book & files.

Cleaning of the building, thanks expressed to our cleaning staff.

Heating duties, switching on the heating for all services and frost protection during periods sub-zero temps.

Raising monies for the building fund, (book sales)

Repair work to south transept roof.

Investigation of the wooden floor South transept.

The provision of kitchen and toilet facilities.

Remedial work to the south transept floor.

Church Bell Restoration

A meeting will be arranged to plan Kitchen and toilet facilities.

Repair work to stop the ingress the of water to the west gable.

Churchyard & Grounds:

Arranging the Grounds maintenance Contract

Regular cleaning of Troughing s and Gulleys

Sweeping of all Paths, steps

Emptying of waste Bins, (thanks to Garth Craven for returning the bins each week)

Leaf Clearance, of pathways & grass areas,

Memorial Inspections & recording & remedial work to sunken graves, top up and seed.

Remedial work to laid down memorials

Pruning of Shrubs

Removal of epicormic growth.

Removal of Brambles

Erection of Christmas decorations crib & Advent Star

Easter Cross

Observance of Flag Days

Thanks are due to many people who keep our building safe and secure, members of the Saturday team who meet once a month to undertake some of the many tasks associated with the church.

It is hoped that progress will be made in the coming months on the completion of the Church bell & Notice board, and plans set up to decorate the Chancel area.

Special thanks to the Simon Gilbert, Chair of the Fabric committee for the use of his house for meetings and for Charing the meetings.

Faith, Mission & Action

AUTHORISED LAY MINISTRY (ALM) PASTORAL TEAM REPORT 2024

Linda, Caroline (ALM St. Anne's), and John, continue to meet with Revd. Lesley, to pray and plan their pastoral care for the two parishes.

Revd. Lesley is still the main provider of pastoral care, but John and Linda hope to be able to increase their contribution to this service in the future. They already visit and speak with people in the village, and more regularly with members of the congregation, and send cards to those away from church due to illness or infirmity. They are also a source of support and caring words.

Linda and John

Pizza & Praise

Another consistent and successful year for Pizza and Praise in 2024. We are continuing to reach out to a small group of children in the community to allow them to engage in an act of worship with their family.

Attendance

We continue to serve the same families and children as in previous years – two of which are being confirmed this year.

We have an average of 7 children at each session and have had another child start to attend so hopefully they could become a more permanent attendee. This has been through word of mouth and because of being a friend of another child who regularly attends. Some children have taken part in church readings during the Christmas service.

Structure

The format remains the same with the quiet, busy, colour and word stations lasting an hour. As we are more established and confident and move into the warmer weather we would like to use the outdoor space around church more.

Safeguarding Reporting/Risk Assessments

There have been no safeguarding issues to report on from the Pizza and Praise sessions. Risk assessments will be completed if we move some activities outside in 2025.

Andrea Johnston - Pizza and Praise Lead 03/05/25



Pendle Deanery Synod

In the past year we have had great fellowship with some very interesting and stimulating talks.

Among the subjects covered were: -

Safe Families; Christians against Poverty; Parish Nursing Ministries U.K.

In September there was the Festival of Health and Wellbeing which was a great success. We also had a joint meeting with Burnley Deanery where we were addressed by Bishop Philip about our mission and the challenges it presents.

It has been wonderful to meet with fellow Christians and to find out what is happening in our Deanery and the wider church. Synod now has a more updated format, and I would urge people to come along to the open meetings and join us.

Linda Sharpe

Deanery Synod Representative

Incumbent's Report for Year ended December 2024

APCM 11th May 2025

St John's, Higham

Reflecting on 2024, it was a year that heralded change! This came about at the Annual Meeting in May 2024 when our PCC was refreshed. We gained new members, previous members returned, and Simon Gilbert was appointed Church Warden. Relationships were nurtured and strengthened and there was the desire for growth and renewal. This was a very positive and encouraging sign following the previous year of challenges.

It was great to welcome our organist and choirmaster, Robert Fergusson back, as it was to have Heather Swindlehurst return. Both were fully recovered and in good health.

At the Annual Meeting in 2024, PCC Secretary Julie Fox stepped down as Secretary but also as a PCC member. We give grateful thanks for her long and dedicated service. John Loads was appointed PCC Secretary, and co-opted ex-officio, on to the PCC. We are immensely grateful to John for stepping in to do this essential and valuable role.

Throughout 2024, our relationship with school was maintained, with twice monthly visits from classes to church. Here the children were able to explore a Bible story, to express understanding of the story through crafting and to worship and pray. Choir Church was still very much on the heart of myself and the PCC. We worked tirelessly with Blackburn Cathedral, resulting in Gil Gilbert completing the training necessary to be appointed Choral

Director. However, the school did not attract sufficient interest and in December 2024, we withdrew from the project. This was a difficult time for Gil and I. We wondered if we had misheard God. We drew together in prayer and quickly realised that perhaps God had other plans for us at St John's.

The Pizza and Praise group continued to meet monthly on Fridays in the Village Hall and join with the Friday Faith and Fun group at St Anne's for parties at the end of summer term and Christmas. I extend thanks to Andrea Johnston as leader.

The village Community events attract people to our church, which is used to host aspects of these events. Some PCC members also sit on the Village Events Committee. This is a good witness which we need to develop as we move forward into 2025. My prayer is that at these events, we can have some focus on Jesus, prayer etc. where visitors can access Jesus and His love without formally attending our church services. It would be a start.

As with all Christian disciples, we are called to mission and outreach. 2024 saw us mark 150 years of St John's, as a Christian presence in the Village. The newly appointed Bishop of Burnley, The Rt Revd Dr Joe Kennedy came to our Harvest celebrations as we began a year to recognise this wonderful milestone. If we each take time to reflect, 2024 gave us much to celebrate and promise and hope for the future.

Carpe diem – let us seize the day, moving forward into 2025, together as disciples in prayer and in loving fellowship with each other. Let us know that the Spirit hovers over us now and, in His power, that we will grow deeper in our own faith, and we will make new disciples and grow His church.

I pledge my continued commitment to the Lord and to this church.



Reverend Lesley Hinchcliffe
8^h April 2025

Approved by PCC

Reverend Lesley Hinchcliffe
11th May 2025