2025 Annual Report

St Peter's Parochial Church Council Croft on Tees

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Introduction

The Parish of St Peter's Croft on Tees is situated in the northern part of the County of North Yorkshire on the border of County Durham. St Peter's is a member of the Benefice of East Dere Street, part of the Deanery of Richmond which is in the Episcopal Area of Ripon and in turn is part of the Diocese of Leeds within the Church of England. The church is a 12th century grade 1 listed building of significant historical interest.

Rector's Report

As Rector for The Benefice of East Dere Street, it is a privilege to be able to serve the 7 churches, 6 parishes, 9 communities and 3 schools across the Benefice. Following my induction on the 17th September 2025, I have enjoyed getting out and about and joining in with events and services, meeting people, enjoying many cups of tea and coffee with people and hearing stories and conversations both in and around Croft but also across the Benefice. At my interview I promised that I would work hard to honour both the individuality of each church and parish whilst also encouraging each parish and church to gently increase links with each other and I will continue to do that.
As this report is for St Peter's Parochial Church Council Croft on Tees, I would like to give my thanks to all those who worked so hard during the vacancy to keep things rolling, and for those who continue

to work hard to 'make church happen' and to share God's love beyond our church doors and out into the community. To the Church Wardens, Alison, Pam and Edward; to Viv our Benefice Licensed Lay Minister and Benefice Safeguarding Officer, and to all those who support behind the scenes, thank you for your hard work, dedication and support. Thank you to Paul and Margaret for their many hours of printing and type setting and patience. Thank you also to Anne Ashworth as Warden (until October 2025) and to John Rushby (as Croft Treasurer until October and Benefice Treasurer until end of December 2025) for their service to the parish and the Benefice. We wish them well in their new parishes.

There are many unseen hours of work done day in day out, and I am very grateful for all that people do so generously including jobs like printing, designing, baking, tea making, fundraising, counting, admin, banking, flower arranging, maintenance of the church grounds and fabric, singing in the choir, playing the organ, praying, reading, welcoming, supporting, cleaning, tidying, graciously challenging, leading services, and so much more. People are most generous with their gifts, talents and time.

I am very grateful for the welcome, support and encouragement shown to me in the first few months of incumbency.

My prayer for the year ahead is that here at St Peter's Parochial Church Council Croft on Tees we will continue to work, pray, worship and share graciously and generously together as we seek to grow God's kingdom of love here in Croft on Tees, The Benefice of East Dere Street and beyond.

1. Aim and Purposes

St Peter's Parochial Church Council (PCC) has the responsibility of cooperating with the Benefice and Diocese in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish, the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical.

2. Objectives and Activities

The PCC is committed to enabling people to feel free to worship at and to become part of the community of St Peter's. The PCC maintains an overview of the parish and works with groups that live within the parish to involve them in the worship life of St Peter's. There is close collaboration with the village school and the village hall. Our service to the community, services and worship put faith into practice through prayer and scripture, music and sacrament.

When planning our activities for the year, we try to enable people to live out their faith as part of the community through:

- Worship and prayer
- Provision of pastoral care for parishioners and those seeking to be married or baptised at St Peter's;
- Provision of pastoral care and community support to all who associate with the church but reside outside the parish.
- Close working with the school and local community groups.

To facilitate this work, it is important that we maintain the fabric and environs of St Peter's which is a grade 1 listed historic building and also Crown Property. During 2024 the quinquennial inspection of the church and grounds was carried out and the architects issued a comprehensive report. An estimate of costs to fulfil the recommendations was in the region of £98,000 spread over a five-year period. We will only know the full cost of repairs and maintenance when the work is completed.

The costs for these repairs plus the need to upgrade the heating system and refurbish the church organ have not been finalised. Changes to the structure of the management team have created delays which we are working to resolve.

These costs will have a serious impact on the churches finances and will probably impact on access to the building and grounds (a lot of work is high level and will probably require scaffolding). Where possible self-help jobs will be encouraged to reduce the impact.

3. Worship and Prayer

Throughout 2025 we continued to work closely with the other parishes in the Benefice and the Diocese to cover services as we were again without an incumbent for 9 months of the year and the responsibility to organise the monthly service pattern fell on the Benefice wardens. This included services of Holy Communion at St Peter's and on the fifth Sunday a joint benefice service often led by a guest minister. Morning Prayer and All Age Family Services continued, led by Lay Minister Viv Waugh and Organist and Occasional Preacher Mike Boulton supported by lesson readers.

The Reverend Gillian Lunn was inducted as rector to the Benefice of East Dere Street in September and quickly picked up the reigns reducing the pressure on the volunteers who had worked hard to ensure continuity.

We were joined at services by couples and their families who have expressed a wish to be joined in marriage at St Peter's. It was possible to host 1 wedding plus 2 dedications of civil marriage. We are extremely grateful to Elizabeth Ford who has been responsible for dealing with much of the wedding administration which is considerable There were 3 baptisms during the year. There were also 7 funerals held in church, 2 held at the crematorium and 1 burial of ashes.

We are extremely grateful for the support of local and retired clergy who offered their assistance and support to maintain our service pattern and provide cover for weddings and baptisms.

We would especially like to commend and thank Viv Waugh Benefice Licensed Lay Minister for the amount of time she has given to the church not only in leading services but for her pastoral work. Her work across all churches in the benefice is greatly appreciated. Again our grateful thanks.

At present there are 42 parishioners on the Church Electoral Roll, not all are resident within the immediate parish. The average weekly attendance in church has dropped to about 12 The Parish Return for the year has been completed and a PDF of this is available to PCC members.

The church has close links with the village Church of England primary school. Most of the events and services held jointly by the school and the church are to mark significant events in the Christian Calendar especially at Christmas. Our Lay Reader Viv Waugh regularly visits the school and since her appointment to the Benefice the Rev Gillian Lunn has begun to develop the working relationship not only taking an active role in promoting the church ethos to the children but making valuable contributions, regularly leading Collective Worships, visiting school and providing background support and encouragement. The primary school attend church on a half termly basis and there are several additional sessions planned in school for 2026 including a Whistlestop Tour of Lent and Prayer Spaces in school.

4. Ecumenical Relationships

Two members of the PCC sit on the deanery synod. Regular meetings of the benefice church wardens continued. Whilst the Benefice Council hasn't been re-formed yet, any Benefice-wide decisions requiring to be made have been done by consulting all the Church Wardens across the Benefice. Reverend Gillian intends to re-form the Benefice Council later in 2026.

The CofE web page A Church Near You with public access to increase accessibility and transparency continued to be developed , this site provides access not only to events and information relating to St Peter's but to the Benefice as well. This provides the PCC and Benefice with important links between the parish and the wider structures of the church. The St Peter's web page count for the past 365 days was at the time of writing this report was 23,223. Entries on this site are regularly updated . The addition of a Share A Prayer page on which parishioners could dedicate a prayer proved to be a popular addition and meant they could also access the CofE Daily Worship App.

Scan to view this website

Members who have internet access are able to receive an electronic copy of the Diocesan e-news as well as St Peter's own newsletter.

5. Safeguarding

The parish of Croft is committed to the safeguarding of children, young people and adults. We follow the House of Bishops guidance and policies and our Benefice Safeguarding Officer is Viv Waugh. The Diocese of Leeds's safeguarding pages contain vital links and information including contacts for the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor (DSA) who advise our PSOs. Safeguarding information is displayed in the church. Safeguarding information including contact information is displayed in church and on the church website .The last quarter of 2025 has seen steps being taken to develop the safeguarding practice, procedures and culture in the parish of Croft and across the Benefice. We have begun using the Data Dashboard as a toolkit to help us record where we are up to in our development of safeguarding in the parish and the Benefice. A small team is being developed to look at Safeguarding across the Benefice, comprising initially of Viv Waugh as Benefice Safeguarding Officer, and Elizabeth Ford (Croft), Liz Croft (Middleton Tyas) and Kate Hindmarsh (Eryholme). DBS checks are now being rolled out for all PCC members at Croft and across the Benefice, as well as for people who hold positions of responsibility. A huge thanks to Alison Kennedy for her ongoing work with this which is time consuming and important. The safeguarding training for all PCC members in the parish and across the Benefice is due to be renewed in 2026, and plans are in place to hold these sessions in person or online (for those who would rather). The QR code for instant access to the safeguarding team was added to the posters and on the Church Near You opening web page and the safeguarding link was added. Croft Parish takes Safeguarding seriously. How we look after and care for each other

is what brings safeguarding alive and makes it everyone's business. Vivienne Waugh Benefice Safeguarding Officer.

6. Achievements and Performance Pastoral Care

The Pastoral Luncheon Club continued meeting throughout the year and has now been running for more than 20 years. Our thanks to all who contributed to this event. The money raised in November and December was donated to Zoe's Place. As with other activities the numbers attending and money raised has gradually reduced. Inflation has had a significant impact and it was decided to set a minimum donation amount of £5 for entrance.

The monthly coffee morning was held the first Friday of the month either in church or the village hall. A charge of £2 per person was made which along with sales of fresh produce and a raffle generated valuable funds. Again, there has been a significant reduction in numbers attending and money raised.

Both these events encourage the wider community to join together and enjoy Christian fellowship throughout the year. Again, many thanks to the volunteers who not only provide food and produce but give freely of their time.

A number of events were organised that raised much needed funds. The Open Gardens event in June raised in excess of £10,000 The community spirit in running this event was in itself a reward for the hard work that went into organising this event. Unfortunately, after 3 very successful years the key personnel involved in organising this event felt that they couldn't maintain the level of commitment and it was decided to rest the event for 2026.

In partnership with the village hall a number of quiz nights have been held with funds raised being split with the church.

Our thanks also to Cockerton Silver Band who staged a concert in church which not only raised funds but promoted the church as a community asset. There were also a number of joint ventures with the village hall which not only raised funds but promoted greater community spirit.

A Christmas grand hamper draw was well supported and raised valuable funds. There was also an auction of a weekend break in a dales cottage which was a generous donation from a church member.

The 100 club was run by members of the PCC. This was well supported and the annual donation of profits was much appreciated. At the end of the year there were a few numbers not taken due to the sad demise of some contributors and it proved difficult to find new contributors. Our thanks to Barbara Leggott and Anne Ashworth who have organised this for a number of years but now need the time to follow their own family commitments.

During the year we held events to support various charities i.e St Theresa's Hospice, MacMillan Cancer Support, Zoe's Place and the food bank.

A number of events were held at Christmas including the Polam Hall School Choir service, Nativity on the farm, the School Children's nativity service and the choir led carols at Middleton Lodge. The choir also sang at the Carol service. Midnight Mass was held at Barton and on Christmas Day a family service was led by Viv Waugh. All these events were well attended.

Without the hard work of parishioners these events would not be possible.

Routine maintenance was undertaken on the church and environs during year including boiler servicing and grass cutting. But many other items have demanded attention apart from those outlined in the quinquennial report. The organ urgently needs to be serviced and as it is a vital part of services this matter needs to be addressed during this financial year.

Upgrading of the phone line to meet modern standards was completed and thanks again to Elizabeth and Edward for all the work in getting fibre Wi Fi compatible equipment installed. The system also means mobile phones can be used in church. It is now capable of supporting the latest technology essential for security systems and taking card payments.

A payment card machine has been installed and it is hoped that this will increase revenue. It also allows us to take payments for purchases of memorabilia, refreshments and for larger accounts i.e weddings.

As we are custodians of a building which is not only Grade 1 listed but also listed as a building of Historic Interest plus being Crown property there is significant pressure to ensure the maintenance of the structure. This places a great demand on our financial resources.

The Anglo-Saxon Cross Shaft has been on loan to Bowes Museum since 2013 and was exhibited in the Laing Gallery as part of the Lindisfarne Gospel Exhibition The shaft was returned to Bowes after the exhibition and subsequently was relocated to the Yorkshire Museum and a replica provided for St Peter's.

There is permissive access through the churchyard to the river bank which has resulted in people taking short cuts instead of following the path. In an attempt to reduce the damage to the grass and graves visitors were encouraged to use the path. This path is closed one day a year to comply with regulations and the signage has been renewed to clearly indicate that this is a permissive path.

Requests to visit the church have been constant and where possible we have arranged these. To meet with the requirements set out by our insurers and ensure the safety of the visitors we have endeavoured to have a church member present during the visit. There were visits from various groups and individuals i.e. the local history group and the Mothers Union. The purchase of memorabilia by visitors increased as card payment is now available.

An open church day was held in December where anyone could visit the church free of any obligation to contribute financially or take part in any religious activity. There was a good response to this and it is hoped that this can be repeated in 2026.

6a. Mission and Evangelism

A monthly newsletter is produced and distributed in both e'form and hard copy to local residents with additional copies available in the Church. The newsletter keeps people informed of services, local events etc. A dedicated email address has been arranged to facilitate easier communication and provide more cohesion and facilitate the distribution of the newsletter . Links to the Croft Village newsletter are also included. This helps consolidate the ethos of "our church family" which encompasses many who do not attend services but come together to support the community. It has a distribution total of over 200.

Our thanks to Margaret Horseman who produces this, in particular this year as changes in technology (the withdrawal by Microsoft of their publisher app) has meant a lot of effort going into developing a

new format. This also impacted on the production of service sheets, Remembrance Service etc, which Margaret has spent a considerable amount of time developing.

The development of A Church Near You web site allowed for the inclusion of the Benefice entries which included regular updates of services and on-line dedications of daily prayers. Benefice pages are now displayed on all 7 churches web pages. It is hoped that this will encourage all churches in the Benefice to collaborate as all forms of modern communication need to be embraced to promote greater Christian unity. Reverend Gillian has also introduced a Benefice Facebook page and Benefice Instagram page as further methods of communication.

There are plans to develop a Benefice-wide and beyond newsletter in 2026. This will allow an even wider sharing of all that is happening across the Benefice.

With the decreasing number of people attending regular worship all forms of communicating Christian values are a vital element and continue to evolve.

It cannot be stressed enough that the amount of work undertaken by volunteers facilitates the very active role the church plays in the community and promoting Christian values.

7. Financial Review

Financially this year has not been without significant ups and downs. The ups have been the Open Gardens, fund raising events and in particular the many activities held at Christmas which attracted more than 400 people. The downs have been the suspension of the Open Gardens for 2026 plus the need to reorganise the management structure. John Rushby made significant contributions to the organisation of the finances but felt that he could not continue in his role of treasurer. Barbara Leggott felt she could no longer dedicate the amount of time she contributed to organising fund raising events due to family commitments. This meant that the PCC did not have a treasurer and a chairperson to lead fund raising activities. Restructuring of the management/fund raising system is underway and thanks to all who have contributed to this.

The difficulties of balancing the financial demands and maintaining the church family ethos have been a significant factor in the evolution of our church and community during this year.

At the end of the previous year, we received the quinquennial report which will have a great impact on the church's finances over the next five years.

The auditing of the church accounts will be done in time for the APCM but as yet is not finalised.

8. Risk Management

The age and historical nature of the building means that repairs require specialist involvement that is expensive and labour intensive. Any work undertaken has to have a risk assessment completed before work commences.

The Church is surrounded by a large number of trees, the majority of which are listed. From time to time these require additional maintenance as they impinge on both neighbouring properties and roads. The reserves policy takes account of the cost that will be incurred by the PCC post any insurance claim should thefts or significant damage occur. The repairs/maintenance outlined in the quinquennial report will also impact on this.

A number of trip accidents in church highlighted the need for continuous risk assessment and a number of suggestions to improve safety were considered by the PCC

The CofE governing body have been active in promoting safe working guidelines as well as safeguarding updates and these need to be available to all involved in the church.

9. Structure, Governance and Management

PCC is a corporate body established by the Church of England. The PCC operates under the Parochial Church Council Powers Measure. The PCC is not a Registered Charity. The gross income of the PCC is under £100,000 and is exempted by order from registering with the Charity Commission.

Most churches are "Excepted Charities" and are therefore not registered with the Charity Commission. A PDF that includes the church's name, address and church code is available. This PDF, which is an extract from the Church of England's database of churches can serve as a certificate for proof of their charity status when registering for online and card-based giving.

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. At St Peter's the membership of the PCC consists of the incumbent (the vicar), four churchwardens, a reader (ex officio) and members elected by members of the congregation who are on the electoral roll of the church. Everyone who attends services are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and become eligible to stand for election to the PCC. The PCC members are responsible for making decisions on all matters of general concern and importance to the parish including deciding on how the funds of the PCC are spent. The regular pattern of PCC meetings has been re-established.

There is currently a vacancy for a warden and it is hoped that this post can be filled and St Peters retains the right to have 4 church wardens. This vacancy has been advertised and so far there has not been any expression of interest.

Barbara Leggott was chosen to be the Benefice Council representative for St Peter's reporting back to the PCC. As Barbara has stood down from the PCC a new representative will be agreed when the Benefice Council is re-formed. We must thank her for everything she has contributed to the church and Benefice.

Church wardens from each parish church held regular meetings to discuss any matters arising across the benefice and to discuss and agree rotas across the Benefice.

Since her appointment in September 2025 the Reverend Gillian Lunn has begun the process of adapting and enhancing the working practices of the benefice and building on all that has gone before. She has been supported in this by the PCC and church members not only of St Peter's but from all 7 churches in the Benefice.

10. Administrative Information

PCC members who have served at any time from 16th April until the date this report was approved

Ex Officio members:

Incumbent:	Rev Gillian Lunn (September 2025)
Lay Minister:	Mrs Viv Waugh
Wardens:	Mr Edward Cooper (verger)
	Mrs Alison Kennedy
	Mrs Pam Dunn
	Mrs Anne Ashworth (Resigned September 2025) post vacant
Vice Chairperson	Mr Mike Campling
Treasurer	Mr John Rushby (Resigned September 2025) post vacant
Secretary	Post Vacant
Minutes Secretary	Miss Margaret Horseman

Elected members

Mrs Pauline Bailey, representative on Deanery Synod

Mrs Sue Dent, representative on Deanery Synod

Mrs Barbara Leggott (Benefice Rep) (Organist)(retired as PCC member and Benefice Rep Oct)

Mrs Anne Ramsden (Payments & Banking)

Mrs Elizabeth Ford

Mrs Sandra Veerman

Mrs Carole Holford

11. Volunteers

We would like to thank all the volunteers who work so hard to support our church. In particular we want to thank all those people who donate freely of their time to assist with keeping the church clean, arranging flowers, manning events and assisting with services.