

Annual Report of the Parochial Church Council for year ended 31st December 2024

Welcome

This has been another eventful year in the life of Christ Church. We have much to thank God for. We continue to be active in many ways, both in our church buildings and in the community. We are fortunate to have lots of faithful volunteers who give their time, expertise, talents and money in the service of Christ. We need to say a big thank you to all of them for all they have done and continue to do.

In the last year some of our well-beloved members have gone to heaven, Rikki Abernethy, Doreen Horrocks, Jenny Rawcliffe, Mary Jones, Jeff Roberts, Eileen Arnold, Elsie Swift, Hazel Collier, Jean Brownlee and Betty Schofield to name just a few.

We have also said goodbye to our curate Jackie Davies, our



administrator Gail Usher and our Vicar Sarah O'Donoghue, as well as losing Fiona and Jaime Craig and Louise Kelly, youth leaders, to other churches. The work, worship and witness of the church continues.

We are hopeful that in the coming year we will be able to appoint a full-time Youth Worker and a new Vicar. We have already appointed a new Administrator for the Ministry Centre.

The reports below give a flavour of some of the activities that everyone has been involved in.

We took a decision not to enter the Diocesan programme Fit for Mission, instead opting to work with other local churches in the Deanery who are of the same mind, using LYCIG as a tool to help us grow.

Our church is doing well.

**Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope:
Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed,
for his compassions never fail.**

They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness

Lamentations 3-22, 3-23

Sunday Services and Prayer

We have continued with our regular pattern of services throughout the year.

9.00am: Holy Communion with a regular and growing congregation.

10.45am: Family service with slightly reduced numbers.

Special services for the great occasions.

All these services are made possible because we have a great number of people involved in cleaning, opening up the building, welcoming, leading, preaching, reading, intercessions, music and technology.

Our fellowship is loving, welcoming, generous and caring.

Leadership teams and Wardens

The church was led by the Vicar Sarah O'Donoghue along with the PCC, the wardens, the ministry team and numerous group leaders for the various activities until her departure in November.

After Sarah's departure a few people have taken on extra responsibility to keep things running smoothly.

Peter Stewart has stepped in as chair of the PCC, Reverends Graham Rutter and Janet Roberts have managed more of the day-to-day ministry.



The wardens this

year Dennis Koogje and Carole Rankin have taken on many of the legal responsibilities.

In general church members have just stepped up in their desire to help and cover all the many things that are needed in a large church like ours.

Administrative Information

Christ Church Office, Long Lane, Aughton, Ormskirk L39 5AS

Official correspondence to The PCC Secretary, Parish Office, at the above address.

Objectives

2 Christ Church Aughton PCC has the responsibility of co-operating with the Vicar in promoting the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical in this parish (PCC {Powers} Measure 1956). It is responsible for the maintenance of the Church, the Ministry Centre and the curate's house in Peet Avenue. Christ Church Aughton is a broad and welcoming church that seeks to provide a spiritual home for all who seek God in Jesus Christ.

We proclaim the Gospel of Christ according to the doctrines and practices of the Church of England, as part of the worldwide Anglican Communion of churches. We worship the one true God, enjoy and share the fellowship of

all our members and friends and aim to share Jesus with everyone beginning in our community.

Appointment to the PCC

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. All church members are encouraged to register on Church Representation Rules.

Structure, Management and Governance

Christ Aughton PCC operates under the Parochial Church Council Powers Measure 1956. The PCC is registered with the Charity Commission - no. 1129036

The PCC (*Parochial Church Council*) has an important role in the governance and management of the church and its elected members are the representatives of the congregation. PCC meetings are normally chaired by the Vicar.

The Wardens, Deputy Wardens and Deanery Synod Representatives are ex-officio members. PCC members are responsible for making decisions on matters of general concern and importance to the church, including deciding on how the funds of the PCC are to be spent.

The maintenance, repair, insurance of the church buildings and contents and the church grounds, are the responsibility of the PCC.

Financial decisions are made jointly by the PCC and the Vicar. The full PCC normally meets every two months, with Standing Committee meetings on alternate months.

The PCC receives regular reports from its Committee, Deanery Synod representatives, Ministry Team, Pastoral Care Team. Safeguarding is a standing item on the PCC agenda.

During 2024 the following served as members of the PCC:

Ex Officio members:

Incumbent: **Rev Sarah**

O'Donoghue (*Chair*)

(*until Nov 3rd*)

Wardens: Mr John Critchley

Mrs Patricia Slater

Deputy Wardens:

Mr Dennis Koogje

Mrs Carole Rankin

Deanery Synod:

Mr David Cobbold (2022-2024)

Mr Jonathan Burke

(*PCC Secretary*) (2022-2023)

Mr Peter Stewart (2022-2025)

Mr Jonathan Lock (*Reader*)

(2022-2025)

Mr John Critchley (2022-2025)

Elected members:

Mr Mark Patterson (*Treasurer*)
(2019-2022)

Miss Jessica Harrison (2022-2025)

Mr Joe Johnson

(*co-opted annually*)

Mrs Jodie Taylor (2022-2025)

Bankers: RBS, Drummond House Branch, 1 Redheughs Avenue, Edinburgh, EH12 9JN
Independent Examiner: Collins

and Co, Chartered Accountant and Registered Auditor, Suite 13, Hattersley House, 1 Hattersley Court, Ormskirk, L39 2AY

Architect: Schafer Associates, 56 Belvedere Road, Ashton-in-Makerfield, Wigan, WN4 8RU
Day to day management and control of the Church is exercised by the Vicar, the **Rev Sarah O'Donoghue**, (until November 3rd), and Wardens **Mr John Critchley** and **Mrs Patricia Slater**, contactable via the Ministry Centre office on 01695 424530

Committees

The PCC operates through four sub-committees, which meet as required between full meetings of PCC. Each sub-committee includes one or more co-opted member who serves by invitation of the relevant sub-committee chair (*who must be an elected member of the PCC*), in consultation with the vicar. The principle of three-year memberships also applies to co-opted members. PCC members receive

regular instruction and advice on their roles as Trustees, on health and safety issues, risk



assessment and management, and on child and vulnerable adult protection procedures, from the relevant PCC officers.

Standing Committee

Required by law, it transacts the business of the PCC between its meetings, subject to any direction given by the full Council. Membership of the Standing Committee is the Vicar, the Churchwardens, Deputy Church Wardens, the Treasurer, and the Secretary.

Stewardship Committee

4 To assist the treasurer in all areas involving finance, including compliance with procedures, gift-aid, administration, financial planning, budgeting, charitable giving and special appeals. The stewardship committee are also responsible for the personnel of paid employees and volunteers. Membership in 2023 was **Mark Patterson** (Chair) **Jenny Ray** (Secretary), **Dennis Koogje**, **John Appleton** (co-opted), **Jane Archbold** (co-opted) **Stephen Marsh** (co-opted), **Sarah O'Donoghue**.

Ministry Centre

Operations Committee

To assist the Ministry Centre Administrator in the management of all the Ministry Centre activities including Café Vista and its maintenance. Membership for

2023 was **John Shaw** (Chair) **Gail Usher** (until 30-10-24), **Lesley Birchall**, **Kath Elliott**, **Carole Rankin**, **Wendy Arthur**, **Sarah O'Donoghue** (until 3-11-24).

Ministry Team

This committee includes members of the PCC and Ministry team. This committee is responsible for overseeing services, leading, preaching, young people and pastoral care. Membership for 2024 was **Sarah O'Donoghue** (Chair until 3-11-24,) **Angela Mellor**, **Geoff Fallows**, **Graham Rutter**, **Jonathan Lock**, **Jane Lake**, **Jeff Shaw**, **Paul Livesley**, **Janet Roberts**, **Jackie Davies** (until 30-06-24)

Fabric Committee

The Fabric Committee is responsible for the maintenance of the Church building, Ministry Centre and the Curate's house. Membership for 2024 was **Josh Johnson** (Chair), **Liz Mawdsley** (Secretary), **John Critchley**, **Jonathan Burke**, **John Shaw**, **Sarah O'Donoghue**.

Fabric Report

This report covers all the buildings owned or managed by the church. To include the Church, Ministry Centre, and the Curates house at 25 Peet Avenue. The remit of the Fabric



Committee is centred in two areas.

- 1 Maintaining the existing fabric of the Church and all church properties both external and internal including keeping the external grounds in a tidy and safe working order.
- 2 Improving the buildings, and their facilities to the benefit of the church and the wider community.

CHURCH

The Quinquennial Inspection was undertaken in April 2020, the contents of which were reviewed. One hundred percent of jobs, required in the first 12 months period have now been carried out. Regarding the jobs for the period 12 to 24 months, 97 percent of the jobs have now been carried out with the remaining 3 percent of jobs being completed by October 2025 which will cost around £10,000.

The jobs that have been carried out over the last 12-month period on the Church are as follows:

- 1 Existing Gas Boiler broke down after 50 years of service spare parts were not available. Therefore, it was replaced with 2 number Ideal 60Kw Evomax boilers, in order to keep background heating in the Church. We also Install 10 number Infrared Chandeliers with LED lighting, 12 number 0.5kw

under pew heaters and a 3kw Air Curtain above the entrance door, along with 4no 1kw panel heaters.

- 2 As per quinquennial replace stonework and refix and repaint, protect hinges to Church vestry door.
- 3 Tower roof repairs as per quinquennial report repair to lead flashings, repoint inside of tower. Replace existing door and seal. replace the top three steps and handrail.
- 4 Repair church roof in various locations due to storm damage, clean out guttering, repair flashing around toilet soil stack, on the lower roof as per quinquennial report.
- 5 New Gas Safe certificate inspection and commission both boilers.
- 6 New Electric Installation Certificate for Infrared Heating.
- 7 Clear Undergrowth from land to the rear of number 7 Long Lane.
- 8 Electricians repair lights in the toilet, cleaner's cupboard, and electric meter cupboard plus lower existing TV screens

Proposed works to be carried out over the course of the next 12 months providing funds are available.

- 1 Complete the remaining 3 percent of works for items above 24 months that are

required in the quinquennial report.

- 2 New Glass doors to Church entrance as part of the 2020 vision
- 3 Construct new disabled toilets as part of the 2020 vision
- 4 Construct new Kitchen Area as part of the 2020 vision.
- 5 Re-construct and repair tarmac footpath around the church to ensure safe and disabled access.
- 6 Carryout condition Survey of Church Tower to existing stonework.
- 7 Re- point and repair Stonework at various locations around the church as per outstanding items from the quinquennial report.
- 8 Construct the Memorial Garden/Garden of Remembrance if possible.
- 9 Carryout roof repairs to ridge tiles and first row of slates on the Chancel roof.
- 10 Commence remaining items required in the quinquennial report before October 2025.

The grass cutting and grounds maintenance of both to the church and ministry centre grounds are under contract to Max Sharp of Maximum Ground Maintenance who mows the grass and general maintenance and David Olive of Olive Branch Landscapes who cuts the hedges and trees.



Both have continued to do a good job again this year.

A special thank you to the Church and Ministry Centre volunteers keeping the graveyard flower beds to both church and ministry centre gardens so neat and tidy.

A special 'thank you' to the female volunteers who carry out the cleaning to the church on a weekly basis organised by Barbara and all the Busy Bees team.

MINISTRY CENTRE

Jobs that have been carried out over the last 12 months are as follows

- 1 Purchase and fit new Solar Panels to Ministry Centre Roof. Connect to existing Electric system.
- 2 Rebuild damage caused by vehicle accident to both the external and internal of the Ministry Centre.
- 3 Electricians add two new sockets to the main hall for the sound system, also bottom of stairs.
- 4 Fix Fire alarm and Burglar alarm.
- 5 Electrician fit replacement LED lights to upstairs café area.
- 6 Plumber carryout Gas Safe inspection and issue Gas Safe certificate.
- 7 Fix and check out Automatic

front doors internal on two occasions.

8 Carryout usual general grounds maintenance.

9 Fix Automatic external entrance doors changed from press pad to automatic sensors. Proposed works to be carried out over the next twelve months providing funds are available.

1 Painting to existing external aluminium windows to match guttering and downspouts.

2 Replace carpet upstairs in the two meeting rooms to laminate flooring.

3 Replace missing slates to roof north elevation.

4 White lines to be repainted on the car park

5 LED lighting to be fitted to as many areas as possible.

A big thank you to Gail and Diane and all the volunteer staff, who keep the Ministry Centre office going. A special thank you to Leslie and all Café Vista gang for doing an excellent job every day and attracting new people to the Ministry Centre.

Also, a big thank you all church members who take part in giving the Church and the Ministry Centre a thorough spring clean every year and our day cleaners who do an outstanding job every week.

Our mission for the coming year will be to further improve

the services and the facilities that the Ministry Centre and Café Vista has to offer to our local community and beyond.

25 PEET AVENUE

Jackie our curate moved out in May 2024 and has sadly left us to be a minister in her own parish. The house was then let to one of our congregation until Christmas 2024.

However to enable the house to be re-let or occupied by another Church worker in the future, the following works need to be carried out.

- 1 Carryout Gas Safe inspection and issue Gas Safe certificate.
- 2 Check Central heating boiler and various plumbing jobs generally.
- 3 Replace and/or refurbish upstairs bathroom and toilet.
- 4 Replace or refurbish downstairs bathroom and shower.
- 5 Check for cavity insulation in the walls if none have the walls cavity injected with insulation to improve heat loss and fit extractor fans to improve ventilation, were needed to stop damp developing.
- 6 Leaking Gutter to be fixed or replaced.
- 7 Replace the two patio doors.
- 8 Replace garage felt roof along with rotting joists underpin southwest corner, re concrete

corner of floor slab, repoint brickwork where necessary, replace garage door or simply demolish and have a Concrete hard standing for parking on.

VICARAGE

Sarah and Cian have vacated the property in November. The diocese has now placed the house on the market, and it is currently up for sale.

In general, the fabric of the church and all associated properties and grounds are in good reasonable order. They continue to be well maintained. The quinquennial report highlights the issues and priorities the order of works to be carried out over the coming year. Which stresses the need for regular maintenance of all the Church buildings.

Joe Johnson

PCC Secretary's Report

With much of the previous year spent on the vexed issue of 'Fit for Mission' it was anticipated the 2024/5 would be a year when we could 'catch up' and return to something like 'business as usual'. However, it was not to be. Early signs of the increasing concern about safeguarding were quickly seen in terms of encouragement for PCC members to complete their on-line training courses, a process that was completed in February.

Our Wardens have to undertake enhanced training and, at the time of writing, are doing so. The on going implications of this will impinge on virtually everybody who works or volunteers within the church or ministry centre and some will feel that this is unnecessary. However, the much publicised difficulties and failures of the institution of the church and individuals within it has made 'safeguarding' an integral part of what we do and how we do it.

One of the main changes to our PCC activities was the introduction of a LYCiG (*Leading Your Church in Growth*) training session at the beginning of each meeting a process which continues into 25/26. The process is vital to growing our congregation and has been proven to be effective wherever it has been implemented. Growth is essential to our survival as a parish, particularly in the area of youth work, bearing in mind the age demographic of the parish. To this end the PCC has spent many hours working on the recruitment of a youth worker, everything from job descriptions to the remuneration package. It is still the intention of the PCC to make an appointment to this critical post and steps are being taken to maintain and expand the youth work within the parish.

Probably one of the most significant problems the PCC has addressed through the year has been the continuing shortfall in income which resulted in a six month period of negotiated reduction in parish share, we continue to repay the debt owed the diocese. As most people will be aware our monthly expenditure usually exceeds income by about £1,500.

In terms of our various building projects it has been a busy year. The PCC decided to replace the boiler that had given so much trouble over the years with an Infra Red heating and lighting system. Eventually permission was forthcoming and the system was installed in February. However, the ailing boiler finally died in October and two gas boilers were installed as an emergency measure but were also required for background heating to protect the fabric of the church.

The Community Garden project was replaced with a new proposal to create a new Garden of Remembrance that is still in progress.

Work is being undertaken to prepare a proposal to replace some of the pathways within the churchyard.

The project that probably 'suffered' most due to the hiatus caused by the heating issues



was the reordering of the back of church as part of the 2020 vision project, this has not been forgotten and hopefully work will restart in the summer but there are limits to how much can be undertaken at any one time.

One project that was completed during the year was the fitting of solar panels to the Ministry Centre roof. This is part of our effort to be more eco-friendly and is a lasting memorial to the late Rikki Abernethy, a true eco-warrior and long serving member of the Christ Church family.

However, probably the most significant issue was the departure of our vicar and the subsequent continuing vacancy. This has resulted with much work being done on a Parish Profile and the various steps that have to be taken as part of the recruitment process. In addition various decisions have had to be taken concerning the disposal of the vicarage. At the time of writing this is a work in progress and there is no certainty about when a new vicar will be in place.

The PCC has certainly had a busy year and this is reflected in the decision to increase the number of meetings back so one a month rather than alternate months, at least during the interregnum. One of the



first decisions the PCC had to take at the outset of the interregnum was whether or not to stop taking significant decisions and wait for the new vicar to take post. It decided that it was possible that the process could take too long for that to be viable. As a result the PCC has continued to try and maintain the existing momentum by, for example, continuing the process of recruiting the youth worker, pursuing Eco-Church status and LYCIG.

Jonathan Burke
(PCC Secretary)

10 Treasurer's report

Firstly, I would like to emphasise that I couldn't fulfil the duties of the treasurer role without the help and support of a number of people including Jane Archbold (*Finance Officer*), Jen Ray (*gift aid and GASDS*), John and Janice Appleton (*grant applications/giving envelopes*), Stephen Marsh (*Missions and Charities Officer*), Edward McCarthy (*Grant Specialist*), Dennis Koogje, Chris Matthews and Paul Collins and Beth Stratford (*Accountants*), for which we are very grateful.

As with 2023, this year has been difficult financially with an average monthly deficit of around £1,500 requiring a few difficult decisions needing to be made. This deficit has been brought about by a continued high

mortgage rate, high utility bills. This is against the backdrop of unexpected bill for the replacement of a new set of boilers in the church.

Although we have funds in our accounts, e.g. for the Youth Worker, these are legally Restricted and can only be spent on the areas for which they were given. This is to protect your giving and ensure that it is spent appropriately.

To mitigate the monthly shortfall in our finances, we were able to secure a Parish Share reduction of £1,500 per month for a six-month period whilst we sought to identify further costs reductions across the board. These included:

- Negotiating a reduction in our interest rate on the loan repayments for the Ministry Centre (We still have an outstanding loan of £172,000 which we are aiming to pay off over the next nine years).
- Reducing our utility bills through an independent broker.
- The installation of solar panels on the Ministry Centre, paid for by donations and a grant.
- The installation of radiant heating chandeliers in the church through a grant from Veolia Environmental Trust.
- Obtaining grants for the repair

of stonework in the vestry and Church Tower.

Having implemented the above, we have started to repay our Parish Share Deficit and will continue to do so in 2025 when the Church's financial position improves. **Mark Patterson**

Finance Officer report

2024 saw the usual mix of lots of different groups using the Ministry Centre, including our usual Bumps and Babes, Knit and Natter, Cave, FACT, GNI, Toddlers and Luncheon Club.

We also have hosted lots of birthday parties and other celebratory gatherings. We have had regular income from renting out the Ministry Centre to the Women's Institute, U3A, Spanish for Kids and Move it or Lose it classes to mention just a few. A value of over £17,822 in invoices raised in 2024, Nearly £500 up on 2023.

I will leave Mark and the Accountants to deliver the key financial points, but I thought it worthy of note the revenues received from the smaller outreach groups that regularly meet at the Ministry Centre.

Bumps and Babes (Monday) Jan to Dec 2024 £340.50

Cave (Friday) Jan to Dec 2024 £1,077.33 (Over £400 up on 2023)



Toddlers (Tuesday) Jan to Dec 2024 £2,716.48 (£500 up on 2023)

Luncheon Club (Wednesday) Jan to Dec 2024 £6,342.75 (£1,450 expenses)

It is worth noting that over the year we have seen an increase in the number of people who are using the card payment machine to not only pay for service in Café Vista but are also paying weekly subscription fees and for generously donating to CCA.

2024 saw a number of changes to the Ministry Lay Staffing, we welcome Diane Prosser as the new Ministry Centre Co-ordinator, Martyn Collins and Gary Smith as our new caretakers. We now have five regular staff and two ad hoc staff on the Ministry Centre Payroll.

Jane Archbold (Finance Officer)

Mission and Charities

Christ Church Aughton has a separate Missions and Charities bank account which is funded by a tithe from the general account, and also by contributions from different groups who fundraise in order to support Missions and Charities.

The account is then used to give donations to a variety of causes.

At the local level gifts have included contributions to support Christian activities in



our Church school, supporting Foodbanks in Ormskirk and Skelmersdale, and also supporting individuals in need (*due to illness or sudden changes in circumstance*) as identified by Clergy. We have also supported church members to take part in overseas mission activities.

At a wider level we have supported organisations including 'Leading Your Church Into Growth', Age UK Lancashire, We Are Hope Street, Safe Families, Pearl of Africa Choir, Reach Counselling, Prison Fellowship, Mercy Ships, The Bible Society, 24-7 Prayer, YKids, Carousel Music and Movement, Queenscourt Hospice, and the Owen McVeigh Foundation.

Organisations we support are selected by the Vicar and the Missions and Charities secretary, and also by our LYFE groups. When LYFE groups nominate a charity or organisation to support they are also encouraged to establish contact with the organisation and support them through prayer.

Wardens' Report

2024 will most likely go down as one of the more challenging years for CCA. We have been in situations before where we were looking for a vicar, a curate or an office administrator, but never all three at the same time. We

inherited a relatively steady ship from Tricia Slater and John Critchley when we were elected at the APCM, but that soon changed.

Jackie, followed by Sarah and Gail leaving left us with a huge hole in overall day to day operations, but a very strong PCC performed a huge step up in duties and reasonably quickly we all took on additional roles. When a solution was identified to a problem then something else popped up. Our priorities for 2025 are as follows:

- find a new vicar.
- grow the youth.
- ensure safeguarding becomes a standard item.

The overall running of an operation like Christ Church and the Ministry Centre is huge and we would like to thank Peter Stewart, Janet Roberts, Graham Rutter, Jonathan Burke, Mark Patterson and the other PCC members for their amazing contribution in this time of uncertainty! Without them the church operation would struggle to function. We are also extremely grateful for the help that our volunteers provide!

Your wardens,

**Carole Rankin and
Dennis Koogje**

Ministry Centre

A big thank you to Gail and Diane and all the volunteer staff, who keep the Centre office going.

A special thank you to Leslie and all Café Vista gang for doing an excellent job every day and attracting new people to the Ministry Centre and to our two new caretakers, Martin and Garry who have been invaluable in helping in keep everything running smoothly.

Also, a big thank you all church members who take part in giving the Church and the Ministry Centre a thorough spring clean every year and our day cleaners who do an outstanding job every week.

2020 Vision Working Group

Members

**David Dennison, Joe Johnson,
Jonathan Lock, Liz Mawdsley**

Purpose of Group

Group approved by PCC February 2020, to make improvements in Church, to enrich both the life of the Church family and be welcoming to everyone in our Community.

Work undertaken

In November 2022 an Open Forum with the congregation, when members of the community were invited, to discuss how to take forward the plans to improve accessibility and facilities for the

disabled, including the provision of accessible toilets, re-siting/refitting of kitchen, improving the access to church including new doors for the church porch and the re-ordering of the inside the church – to be known as Phase 1.

From that meeting, it was agreed that we would investigate the infrared heating as a possibility of using it in Christ Church. Several PCC members went to look at the infrared heating (*chandeliers*) at the Albion United Reformed Church in Ashton under Lyne. The halo infrared was deemed to be aesthetically pleasing and cost effective, and was in line with bringing the Church to carbon neutral status, and future proofing for possible solar panel installation.

From that it was agreed by the PCC to submit a faculty application to change the heating to an infrared solution. Following many months of discussion with the diocese, it was eventually agreed by the DAC and confirmed by the Faculty Board in London. The heating was installed in February 2025, with pleasing results, and hopefully with a 40% saving on our Church heating bills.



Another positive, was the installation of solar panels on the Ministry Centre, which,

since November 2024, has saved us an average of £106 per month on our electricity bill. November through to February are the worst solar energy producing months. Due to the installation, we expect our electricity bills in the summer months to be significantly reduced.

Going forward

The remaining outstanding items are as follows:-

1. The disability toilet at the back of Church (*essential item*).
2. The glass entrance doors.
3. Removal of pews, creating new floor and communal area.
4. Creating a new kitchen area.

These items will be reviewed, assessed by cost and by available funds, at the 2020 Vision Group meeting on 17 April 2025, for future assessment by the PCC.

Joe Johnson

Christ Church Aughton Website

The Christ Church Aughton website:

<https://christchurchaughton.org.uk> continues to be an important communication resource, attracting the attention of visitors interested in learning more about what's happening in our church community. Encouragingly, the website has once again seen an increase in traffic year-over-year, outlined in the points below:

- The number of people searching for 'Christ Church Aughton' and subsequently selecting our website link increased from 3,590 in 2023 to 4,390 in 2024; a 22% increase. It is estimated that a further 2,039 people accessed the website directly, up from 2,028 in 2023.

- Site traffic includes international visitors from Canada, USA, Australia, New Zealand and France, with the most viewed pages being the Home Page, Ministry Centre, What's On, Our History, Connect, Contemplations, Contact Us and Worship & Prayer.

- Closely mirroring last year's data, 67% of visitors accessed the site by mobile phone, 28% by computer and 5% by tablet.

Our website is an important gateway to our micro site on the Church of England's 'A Church Near You' (ACNY).

<https://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/15222/>

where we post all of our services and events (and more!). The ACNY site also saw a significant increase in the number of visits, with a growing average of more than 38,000 page views in 2024, compared to 32,000 in 2023 and 25,000 in 2022. That's a 52% increase in three years!

We attribute this to the sites having reliable and comprehensive resources where new and returning site visitors can conveniently access fresh and topical content. We are pleased that our growing website presence continues to help visitors experience all that the church has to offer, at home, in church and in the community.

Nigel Sharpe
(Buckinghamshire, UK) and
Adele Eccleston
(Ontario, Canada)

Deanery Synod Report

As part of Ormskirk Deanery each church sends lay representatives to Deanery Synod (*the information sharing, consultative and decision making body above our various PCCs.*) Deanery Synod receives reports from Diocesan and General Synod.

In addition to our clergy and any ex-officio appointments we are entitled to send five representatives to Deanery Synod. For 2024/25 these have been Jonathan Lock, David Cobbold and John Critchley, plus Peter Stewart as Deanery representative on Diocesan Synod. In January 2025, I also was co-opted as a representative to fill one of the vacancies. Synod met three times in 2024.

February

- Acknowledge and affirm different



Mission directions arising from the Fit for Mission Debate.

- 'Together Liverpool' and a project to map the social action work of our churches across the whole of Liverpool Diocese

July

- 'Surf stage' Summer Christian festival – Parbold
- 'School pastors' – street safety for children at our high schools
- Pentecost open air by our Aughton Cluster of churches

December

- Approve Bishop's request to reduce the number of Arch-deaconries
- LYCIG sharing and update
- 'Faiths4Change' – progressing to a Net Zero church – we are registered.

Whilst previously representing Christ Church, I was elected Deanery Secretary. I continue in that role as well as, now again, being one of our representatives.

Bill Casey

School links and partnerships

A recent SIAMS report quote:

Leaders ensure that links between school and church are exceptionally strong.

The children visit church as part of the major festivals, an Easter experience, a harvest service, Christmas



Carol concert and as part of the RE curriculum. They also hold their Y6 leavers service in church. The vicar leads one assembly a week.

Rev Sarah O'Donoghue continued as School Governor until her departure (*we expect the new Vicar to take her place*) along with Mrs Tess Jutla (*Foundation Governor*) and Mr Neil Heyes (*Chair of Governors*).

Bumps and Babes

Over the past year Bumps and Babes has had 26 members who have attended weekly for the most part. We continue to meet every Monday apart from bank holidays and some of the summer weeks when older children may be off school. As parents have returned to work or their babies have attained the ripe old age of 1 year some have left the group and others 'graduated' to Toddlers (8 over the year). We continue to stay in touch through our WhatsApp group in order to maintain the link with church and with each other.

Bumps and Babes continues to have the aim of sharing Jesus through love and support for the youngest members of our community, and their carers. The WhatsApp group still has 28 members who talk with each other and are offered advice from each other. As group facilitator I

let members know of church events and continue to pray for each child and parent, particularly when they have been facing difficulties and illness. We invite parents to bring their children for baptism or thanksgiving and the Hope Explored course. Some came to the Light Night in October and others to the Christmas Eve live nativity.

We welcome all, following Jesus' directive ~ Mark 9:37 Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me: and whoever welcomes me does not welcome me but the one who sent me.

Tricia Slater

Toddlers

Volunteers meet on a Monday afternoon to set up the Children's Play areas, with toys, dressing up clothes, craft items etc. We then meet each Tuesday morning during term time. A group of 12 volunteers run the group and approximately 40 children attend each week with their parents, grandparents or carers. During the morning play we provide refreshments for everyone. After the main activity we have a short time of singing nursery/children's rhymes and Christian choruses and then notices of forthcoming Church events.

Sue Leigh

Diddy Disciples

Diddy Disciples meets each Sunday during the 10.45am service in the choir vestry.

In the group we have children aged roughly 0-4 years and children move on to Xplore when they feel ready. We have had quite low numbers over the last year. If there is just one child attending, we tend to join with the Xplore children in the Ministry Centre and this seems to work well.

We either use the 'Diddy Disciples' program written by Sharon Moughtin Mumby which involves simple easy to catch songs with Bible storytelling or 'Roots on the Web' which follows the church lectionary. This seems to work better when there are fewer children or families who attend less regularly.

The sessions have been led for the first Sunday which is now an all age creative worship service). We are a small group (*usually up to 10 at the most*) but we always have lots of fun together. We use the Roots on the Web resources and start with a game and a news section so we can hear all about the children's adventures through the week. We use our children's bibles to focus on the Bible passage and then do some activities to help us to remember how we can demonstrate those



teachings in our lives. We do lots of drama which the children really enjoy, crafts and Kahoot quizzes and recently started using an AI tool to create a new song about the bible story we have been reading – Deep Deep Roots (*Psalm 1*) and Love your enemy (*Luke 6 27-38*) are two in the style of pop country and rock and roll (*find me and I will play you our creations*).

We have two leaders and five helpers and we all thank God that we have this opportunity to share God's life changing love with them – a love that He offers to us all.

Jane Lake

Youth 4 You

This group ceased at the end of the school year because Louise Kelly's job changed and she moved to another church.

It was enjoyed by all the children who came. A useful contact with children from school and good for relationships with our school.

A small thought for the day hopefully sowed a few seeds of faith for the children who came.

Perhaps in the future we may be able to do something like this again.



Luncheon Club

Luncheon club provides a three course meal for approximately 55 people.

We gather every two weeks and on the 4th week we celebrate Holy Communion in the Ministry Centre. All members are cared for pastorally and thoroughly enjoy their time together.

Pauline Welsh

Bell Ringers

We have managed to ring the bells most Sunday mornings, normally having 6 of the 8 bells pealing. The ringing is normally assisted by external ringers, without them we couldn't ring. I have talked to both early and 10.45 congregations appealing for new ringers (*as well as many other outlets etc*) though not had much luck yet. The bells frame and fitting are still in need of major overhaul (as detailed in several reports previously submitted to church). Continuation of ringing at Christ Church is on a knife edge.

Paul Coggon

Knit and Natter

Just over 10 years ago we started this group, meeting just once a month in Café Vista. The ladies so enjoy meeting together that 18 months ago it was decided that we would meet twice in the month: the 2nd and 4th Mondays. Over the years we have raised

several thousand pounds for various charities, focussing mostly on local hospitals, Food banks, hospices, Age UK and children's charities. We also have links with an orphanage abroad and send clothes and bedding to them from time to time. We enjoy making a variety of items including hats for premature babies, hats for seamen, quilts and blankets, prayer squares and prayer shawls/blankets. These are regularly distributed by our clergy and ministry team.

Each year we hold coffee mornings, afternoon teas and occasionally lunches, raising money for charity. At Easter and Christmas, we make novelty items to sell.

The group has become a safe and happy haven for those who are lonely and sometimes it offers a safe place to discuss problems. Great friendships have been established over the years. We're open to all even if knitting is not your skill. Sharing and nattering are always available.

Irene Critchley

Café Vista

Our mission is to serve quality tea, coffee and food, encouraging meaningful connections in a faithfilled environment.

Cafe Vista is more than just a coffee shop, it's a community hub where people can connect, reflect

and recharge.

Cafe Vista is run by a team of volunteers. We hope to provide a warm place for all whether you're seeking a quiet time, deep conversation or a friendly face.

Lesley Birchall

Café Vista

Saturday Breakfast

Over the past year there has been a steady increase in the number of people coming to Saturday Breakfast. It is often full with people waiting for tables. Half of the people are not (*yet*) members of Christ Church and the same goes for the many helpers.

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It's great to be able to meet people that just want to eat and talk and who feel comfortable being inside a church building. For many it is the first step towards a close relationship with God.

Nell and Eddie Marshman are usually there setting up and cleaning down every Saturday. Nell arranges the rotas of the servers and waiters who give up their time to serve one Saturday a month. Tony and Graham do most of the cooking helped by Bill, David and John.

We are truly blessed to have so many people helping with this ministry. We thank God for giving us a building which includes the wonderful Café Vista.

John Shaw

GNI (Girlie Night In)

GNI meets every 3rd Friday of each month in the Ministry Centre and has been going strong for a good number of years. No one is required to book so we do not know how many we will get but broadly we have approximately 60 ladies each month and lots of new faces which is wonderful. We do not charge for the evenings but we do have a donation opportunity each week to support a charity that is connected with the speaker or an organisation that could do with support.

Changes at church have meant that our GNI Team has changed recently with some very long standing members leaving us and new ones joining. We were sorry to see them go but we are very grateful for the time and energy they have given to GNI over the years and it is always good to have new people with fresh ideas.

We aim to provide an interesting and informative evening with knowledgeable speakers from all walks of life or an opportunity to get dancing (*a GNI favourite*). This year we have heard from a beekeeper, a professional artist and danced to a local band plus considered our finances and whether mindfulness will make a positive difference to our lives.



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We had lots of contributions from the church community to our very popular Christmas craft evening and Christmas itself was celebrated with the amazing Rock Choir – the latter two being repeated later this year by popular demand. Our ladies bring their friend's and their snacks and we bring some soft drinks and some excellent additions for the tables thought up by our team.

We are indebted to the wonderful Bill Evans for producing our flyers each month and we are trying to get our email list back on line so we can send out email invitations directly - watch this space. We are always looking for interesting options for our GNI evenings so if you think of anything we might want to pursue please email the Christ church email address or speak to one of the team.

Jane Lake

Cave

Cave is a men's group that has been running for almost three years and has a regular attendance of between 20 and 30. We meet weekly in the Ministry Centre on a Friday morning from 10 until noon and enjoy games, conversation and refreshments.

Peter Stewart

West Lancs Ecological Trust

We have links with Gorse Hill Nature Reserve which is a 90+ acre area that is dedicated to preserving nature and supporting wildlife. We have Church members who are committed volunteers, and we have held occasional services and joint events at the centre in the recent past.

Peter Stewart

FACT

(Feeling Alone Come Together)

FACT, 'Friendship and a cup of tea' started in July 2018 for people on their own, or feeling lonely and not getting out etc.

We meet each Friday 11am to 12 noon and now quite a few people stay for lunch in Café Vista extending the meeting to 1.00pm.

The group has grown from eight regular members to 18 members at the moment.

FACT is open to everyone in the community. Our reputation has spread, and we have several newly bereaved members have arrived 'cold' not knowing anyone and become good friends. Also, the NHS referral team are sending people in need.

A morning of good conversation and much laughter with the volunteers in Café Vista looking after us throughout the morning.

Bridget Wainwright



Pastoral Support

Pastoral Support, at the heart of our service to all at Christ Church, has continued to flourish and develop during the past year. There are now 37 team members supporting many people, both within the church community and further afield in Aughton. Individual support is provided with regular phone calls and visits, according to need.

We also support several local nursing homes through regular services of Holy Communion and visits to individuals. Within the team, there are five smaller groups, each with a coordinator, and they report to me and my deputy Joan Massie regularly and through that to the PCC meetings, as needed.

This year we have further developed the pastoral support in church services and through the many groups that meet each day in the Ministry Centre. Through this we aim to support more people and to encourage them in turn, to seek support through the friends they meet and interact within these groups. In church we have a team of welcomers as well as the sides persons. Prayer support after both services is being developed and we have accessed training from the diocese for this.

During the week there



is support for all age groups through the following activities: Bumps and Babes, Toddlers, Luncheon Club, FACT, Cave and Lyfe groups. All these groups are well attended with dedicated leaders with whom I have informal and regular liaisons to identify any additional needs.

Mental health and wellbeing are so important in life now and we have been most fortunate that Graeme and Victoria, both trained counsellors and church members, have been able to lead another 'Sanctuary' course, aimed at equipping people in our church community to support others with their own mental health.

A team of Café Companions have been working in Café Vista since July 2023 and have worked very successfully alongside the café volunteers, supporting any who come to the café and who would welcome a conversation and a listening ear.

At the beginning of December 2024, we held our annual Service of Hope. Around 75 people attended and nearly everyone stayed for refreshments afterwards, reflecting on an emotional and supportive service for anyone remembering the life of a loved one.



As I said at the beginning of this report, pastoral care is at the heart of our

ministry here at Christ Church. So, I want to say a huge thank you to all the team and to those as well, who work tirelessly in a less formal way to support some of the more vulnerable in our church family and in the local community.

Angela Mellor, April 2024

Discipleship

(Leading your church in growth)

Four lay members have attended a LYCIG conference Leading Your Evangelism into Growth, and a number of lay members have attended a LYCIG conference entitled Leading Your Church Into Growth. Most recently a group of some 20 people, clergy and lay, from the Aughton cluster of churches have attended the LYCIG conference, and as a result they meet once a month to discuss progress in applying LYCIG methods in their own churches and also plan to explain these methods by interactive sessions with their PCCs.

Hope Explored

The LYCIG methods have been applied most often by inviting people to a three-week course called Hope Explored. This course describes Christian hope as a joyful expectation for the future, based on true events in the past which changes everything for the present. This course



invites people to come to talk about any issues that concern them relating to the Christian faith. Having attended this course a number of people have come to faith in Jesus Christ and started to attend church regularly.

LYFE

(Living your faith everyday) groups

There are a number of LYFE groups, (*Living Your Faith Every day*), which meet weekly for fellowship and to deepen their faith by studying the Scriptures together.

Alpha

The number of Alpha courses have been conducted on Zoom, most recently in conjunction with St James Westhead. These are in general been well attended with some 20 people attending over three courses.

Sanctuary Course

Three groups of about eight people in each group, have completed the Sanctuary Course, which looks, over an eight week period, at various types of mental health issues from a Christian perspective; how they may be recognised and how people may be counselled. **Geoff Fallows**



Churches Together Ormskirk

Churches Together Ormskirk, CTO, is a group of church leaders and church representatives from each church in Ormskirk. This is a wonderful ecumenical group to be part of, full of people who truly want to share the good news of Christ in an inspiring and relevant way to all the people of Aughton and Ormskirk. At these meetings we discuss all that is going on in our churches and around Ormskirk. It is wonderful to hear how God is working through the people and the places in this community.

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In 2024 CTO organised the Annual Good Friday Service at the Clock Tower and a short service at the switching on of the Christmas lights in the town centre. As for 2025/26, so far, the Good Friday service has been planned to take place again at the Clock Tower. Other events are being planned, though at the present time it seems that the Park Praise event may not happen this year due to lack of volunteers.

David Cobbold



Ormskirk, Skelmersdale and District Foodbanks

We are involved in Ormskirk Food Bank and Skelmersdale and district Food Bank, both working under the auspices of The Trussell Trust. We supply a number of Trustees and volunteers to both Food Banks and act as a collection centre for donations from several Schools, and from our church. We hold several events during the year to highlight the work of these foodbanks and to raise money and further donations.

Pete Chalk and Peter Stewart

Cluster

Following the Fit for Mission Vote in November the Standing Committees from St Michael's Aughton, Holy Trinity Bickerstaffe, St James Westhead and St Mark's Scarisbrick met and agreed to work more closely together as a cluster. The clergy from all the churches meet regularly for prayer and support as well as working on joint ventures.



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