

St. Augustine's Church Halifax

Annual Meeting of Parishioners & Annual Parochial Church Meeting



Sunday 28th April 2024

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St. Augustine's Church Halifax Annual Meeting of Parishioners & Annual Parochial Church Meeting

Sunday 28th April 2024

A G E N D A

Annual Meeting of Parishioners

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of previous meeting
 - a. Matters Arising
3. Election of Churchwardens

Annual Parochial Church Meeting

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of previous meeting
 - a. Matters Arising
3. Reports
 - a. Electoral Roll
 - b. PCC Review of the year
 - c. Churchwardens' Fabric Report
 - d. Deanery Synod Proceedings
 - e. Accounts and Financial Statements
4. Appointment of Independent Examiner
5. Elections
 - a. Lay members of PCC
6. Fundraising Report
7. Choir Report
8. School Report
9. Vicar's Remarks
10. Any other business

St. Augustine's Church Halifax

Minutes of Annual Meeting of Parishioners

held on Sunday 7th May 2023

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Ann Mansfield.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 8th May 2022 were included on page 4 of the report booklet which was circulated via email / WhatsApp prior to the meeting.

Proposed: Jenny Lynn

Seconded: Mark Pemberton

That: "The minutes of the Annual Meeting of Parishioners held on 8th May 2022 be accepted as a true record."

Decision: Carried

No matters arising from the minutes were identified.

3. Election of Churchwardens

Shelagh Hirst and Ann Mansfield have been Churchwardens for the 2022 – 2023 cycle.

The following nomination forms for the 2023 – 2024 cycle were received prior to the meeting.

<i>Nominee</i>	<i>Proposer</i>	<i>Seconder</i>
Shelagh Hirst	Ann Mansfield	Jenny Lynn
Ann Mansfield	Shelagh Hirst	Kevin Hoyle

The appointments were unanimously approved by the meeting, therefore Shelagh Hirst and Ann Mansfield were duly appointed as Churchwardens for St. Augustine Halifax for the 2023 – 2024 cycle.

The Archdeacon's Visitation and Admission of Churchwardens for the Halifax and Calder Valley Deanery for 2023 will be held at Halifax Minster on Thursday 15th June at 7:30pm, all are welcome to attend.

St. Augustine's Church Halifax

Minutes of Annual Parochial Church Meeting

held on Sunday 7th May 2023

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Ann Mansfield.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 8th May 2022 were included on pages 5 to 9 of the report booklet which was circulated via email / WhatsApp prior to the meeting.

Proposed: Jenny Lynn

Seconded: Jane Hoyle

That: "The minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting held on 8th May 2022 be accepted as a true record."

Decision: Carried

No matters arising from the minutes were identified.

3. Reports

All the reports were contained in the booklet circulated prior to the meeting via email / WhatsApp. Printed copies were not produced this year to reduce cost and waste.

a) Electoral Roll

The Electoral Roll report was included on page 11 of the report booklet.

Jon Hirst, Electoral Roll Officer, reported that of the 13 people on the 2022 Roll, 2 had been removed, 1 having moved away and 1 having stopped attending and 3 people had been added meaning that a total of 14 will be reported to the Diocese for 2023.

b) PCC Review of the Year

A summary of the business conducted by the PCC in 2022 was included on pages 11 and 12 of the booklet.

Jon Hirst, PCC Secretary, summarised the PCC's year as follows:

- The PCC met 6 times during 2022, with some business also being conducted via email.
- Business discussed was:
 - Covid precautions
 - Interregnum / Licensing
 - Finances
 - Safeguarding
 - St. A's House
 - Fundraising
 - Away Day

c) Churchwardens' Fabric Report

The Churchwardens' Fabric Report was included on pages 12 and 13 of the booklet.

Shelagh Hirst, Churchwarden, gave a brief verbal summary of the report covering the 4 areas of grounds, St. Augustine's House, Chapel and inventory of goods. Thanks were expressed to all those who assist with setting up for Church and clearing up afterwards.

d) Deanery Synod Proceedings

A report of the proceedings of the Deanery Synod in 2022 was included on pages 13 and 14 of the report booklet.

Shelagh Hirst, Deanery Synod Rep, gave a brief verbal summary of the report covering the 3 meetings held during 2022:

- February – Six Steps to Carbon Net Zero.
- June – Archdeacon Bill Braviner outlined his role.
- November – Barnabas initiative.

e) Accounts and Financial Statements

The accounts and financial statements, including the reports from the External Examiner and the Treasurer, were included on pages 15 to 22 of the report booklet.

A number of slides were presented highlighting that during in 2022 General Fund income (£119 a week) was a little over half of the expenditure (£201 a week) with 75% of the expenditure again being the Parish Share. It was recognised that whilst things had improved slightly as compared to 2021, there is still much to do and no room for complacency.

Mark Pemberton, Treasurer, suggested that when looking at the accounts we should consider the Church (i.e. the General Fund) on its own, which shows a clear need to significantly increase our income by a combination of regular giving and fundraising. At the 2022 meeting Mark challenged those present to increase giving at services and to do some fundraising; at this meeting, he was pleased to report that giving at services had increased significantly and the two fundraising events held during the year had made a welcome contribution to our income. In summary, Mark said that, in his opinion, the way to improve our financial position is to continue to do the work of the Kingdom, by which we would draw more people in and thereby increase income.

Thanks were expressed to Mark Pemberton, Treasurer, for all his hard work and excellent leadership in this area.

4. Appointment of Independent Examiner

Mark Pemberton, Treasurer, confirmed that Debbie Pinder has indicated her willingness to continue as our Independent Examiner. Debbie's re-appointment was unanimously approved.

5. Elections

a) Deanery Synod Representatives

Deanery Synod representatives, of which St. Augustine's is only entitled to one, are elected for a three-year term, with Shelagh Hirst having been elected in 2020.

The following nomination form for the 2023 – 2026 cycle was received prior to the meeting.

<i>Nominee</i>	<i>Proposer</i>	<i>Seconders</i>
Jane Hoyle	Ann Mansfield	Jon Hirst

The appointment was unanimously approved by the meeting; therefore, Jane Hoyle was duly appointed as Deanery Synod Rep for St. Augustine Halifax for the 2023 – 2026 cycle.

b) Lay Members of PCC

Jon Hirst, PCC Secretary, outlined the make up of the PCC:

- *Ex-officio*: on the PCC by right due to an office they hold – namely clergy, Churchwardens and Deanery Synod Rep

- *Elected:* the Church Representation Rules specify the election of 6 lay members for our size of electoral roll
- *Co-opted:* we are allowed to co-opt 2 further members.

For the 2022 – 2023 cycle the PCC carried 3 vacancies for elected members and with 1 term of office having expired, there are 4 vacancies to fill.

The following nomination forms for were received prior to the meeting.

<i>Nominee</i>	<i>Proposer</i>	<i>Seconders</i>
Sahar Bagheri	Ann Mansfield	Shelagh Hirst
Mabel Kehinde Osundiya	Shelagh Hirst	Jenny Lynn
Kevin Hoyle	Shelagh Hirst	Ann Mansfield
Mehdi Sahebi	Shelagh Hirst	Jenny Lynn

The appointments were unanimously approved by the meeting, therefore Sahar Bagheri, Mabel Kehinde Osundiya, Kevin Hoyle and Mehdi Sahebi were duly elected to the Parochial Church Council of St. Augustine Halifax. In order to re-establish the pattern for one third of the elected positions being elected each year, 2 of those elected will serve for 3 years and the other 2 for 2 years, who is in which category will be determined at a future PCC meeting.

Co-option of additional PCC members is the prerogative of the PCC rather than the APCM.

6. School Report

A report from Shelagh Hirst, School Governor, was included on page 23 of the booklet.

As Ruth Lee, Headteacher was in the congregation, she gave a verbal report of progress and the current position at the School:

- A complete re-writing of the curriculum will be completed shortly.
- Numbers have been increasing, including 10 new pupils in 1 morning!
- However, numbers for next year's Reception class are very low at 9 making it financially impractical to have a separate Reception Class, therefore there will be a mixed R / Y1 class next year.

- A 'Stay & Play' scheme is to be introduced in an attempt to increase numbers at the younger end of the School.
- The financial position is currently good, with many resources being purchased and a surplus being carried forward. However, pay settlements could have a significant impact.

Shelagh Hirst confirmed, that from a Governor's perspective, good progress is being made under Ruth's excellent leadership.

7. Vicar's Remarks

The Vicar's remarks were included on page 24 of the booklet.

Rev'd Stuart Stobart gave a brief verbal summary of his first few months emphasising the people-focused nature of life at St. Augustine's. Rev'd Stuart gave us the following word for the future – 'flourish'.

8. Any Other Business

Jenny Lynn asked Rev'd Stuart to pass on to Holy Trinity and St. Jude how much St. Augustine's appreciated the welcome we have received at the joint services.

St. Augustine's Church, Hanson Lane, Halifax

Annual Report & Financial Statements of the Parochial Church Council

for the year ended 31st December 2023

INTERIM PRIEST-IN-CHARGE Revd. Stuart Stobart

BANK Santander

INDEPENDENT EXAMINATION Debbie Pinder
15 Moor End
Halifax HX2 0TX

1. Introduction

St. Augustine's Church has the responsibility of promoting in the ecclesiastical parish the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical.

Whilst St. Augustine's Church is still legally part of a united benefice with Christ Church Mount Pellon, Revd. Stuart Stobart (Priest-in-Charge, Holy Trinity & St. Jude) was licensed as Interim Priest-in-Charge of St. Augustine's in October 2022.

2. PCC Membership

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) is a charity excepted from registration with the Charity Commission. Members of the PCC are either *ex officio*, elected by the annual parochial church meeting (APCM) in accordance with the Church Representation Rules, or co-opted by the PCC.

During the year the following served as members of the PCC:

INTERIM PRIEST-IN-CHARGE Revd. Stuart Stobart

CHURCHWARDENS Shelagh Hirst
Ann Mansfield

DEANERY SYNOD REP Shelagh Hirst (*until 07/05*)
Jane Hoyle (*from 07/05*)

ELECTED MEMBERS Jenny Lynn
Jon Hirst
Denise Keenan (*until 07/05*)
Sahar Bagheri (*from 07/05*)
Kevin Hoyle (*from 07/05*)
Mabel Osundiya (*from 07/05*)
Mehdi Sahebi (*from 07/05*)

CO-OPTED MEMBERS Mark Pemberton
Mehdi Sahebi (*until 07/05*)

During 2023 the following members served as officers of the PCC:

VICE-CHAIR Ann Mansfield
TREASURER Mark Pemberton
SECRETARY Jon Hirst

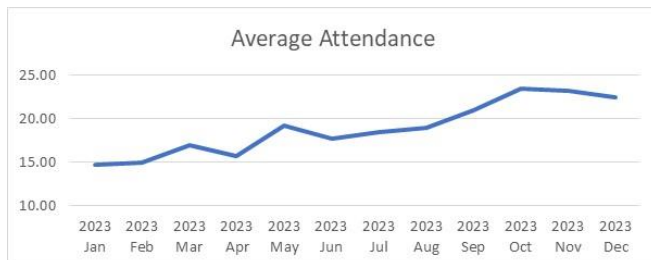
At present the PCC operates one committee, the Standing Committee, which is the only committee required by law. It has the power to transact the business of the PCC between its meetings, subject to any directions given by the Council. The Standing Committee consists of the Treasurer, the Secretary, the Churchwardens, the Vice-chair (currently a Churchwarden) and the Clergy.

3. Electoral Roll Report

As required by the Church Representation Rules, the Electoral Roll is wholly renewed every six years, the most recent occasion being in 2019.

There are 21 (2023 14) people on the Electoral Roll as at 28th April 2024.

The usual Sunday attendance during 2023 was 19 (2022 13).



4. PCC Review of the year

The PCC met on the following dates, with an average attendance of 86% (2022 71%):

- 08/02/2023
- 29/03/2023
- 07/05/2023
- 26/06/2023
- 14/08/2023
- 16/10/2023
- 13/12/2023

During 2023, the PCC spend a considerable amount of its time discussing issues relating to property and land, and the ownership thereof. Much of this was a pre-requisite for agreeing a formal lease with the St. Augustine's Centre charity for St. Augustine's House. Resolution of the lease is still ongoing and has required liaison with the Archdeacon, the Diocesan Property Team, the Church Commissioners and the Diocesan Registrar.

Other areas discussed by the PCC during 2023 included:

- Repairs to St. Augustine's house, particularly the roof.
- Formally agreeing to change the Sunday service time from 10:45 to 11:15 following a well-received trial.
- Development of the PCC and various aspects of its role.
- Use of a bequest - initially it was intended to use the money to re-model the garden, but following clarification of ownership it was agreed to re-direct this funding towards refurbishing the Chapel. It is hoped this work will be undertaken during 2024.
- Our link with Kiabakari parish in the Mara Diocese of Tanzania, resulting in a donation towards the cost of constructing a new church building.
- Fundraising activities.

The PCC also reviewed the finances and any safeguarding matters at each meeting in order to discharge its legal responsibilities in both those areas.

5. Churchwardens' Fabric Report

a) Grounds

It came to our notice this year that it was the Diocese of Leeds that leased the community garden space from the Church Commissioners who own the land. In the autumn of 2023, the Diocese gave up that lease, so whilst we had previously looked after the garden and the protected trees for many years in that

area, it had not actually been our responsibility. The legal responsibility for the community garden has passed back to the Church Commissioners and we no longer have any obligation to maintain it.

However, it been reestablished with the Diocese that the Church is responsible for the grounds surrounding the Centre building. We note that this year the original boundary fence has been repositioned by the Centre, with our permission, in order to keep the building safer and help with access the Centre Support Building.

The Churchwardens are very grateful to all those who help to maintain the gardens surrounding the Centre, especially the team of volunteers from St. Augustine's Centre do this important work. We also would like to thank all those volunteers who endeavour to keep the grounds tidy and litter free.

At the end of this year, it was brought to our attention that the PCC owns, and has responsibility for, the land adjoining the School playground. Work is being undertaken to establish its value, with the possibility of it being sold. However, in the meantime it is expected that some tidying up and maintenance work will be needed.

b) St. Augustine's House

The St. Augustine's Centre charity continues to use and manage the building on a day-to-day basis. The Churchwardens value and appreciate the work of the Centre's Premises Manager, Paul Clarke and his assistant, Danny, for continuing to oversee the general maintenance of the building and fittings.

Although the building is rented out to St. Augustine's Centre, the PCC currently retains responsibility for maintaining the fabric of the building which this year included funding further repairs to the roof. However, this responsibility is being looked at as part of the review of the Centre lease with the charity

c) Chapel

The Chapel is intended to be a place of calm and stillness within the busy Centre to just 'be' in the presence of God. Due to Covid the use of the Chapel for Monday morning prayers, the Tuesday

lunchtime sung worship , the International Bible study group, and use for private prayer were suspended.

In this year the Chapel has been used for Sunday morning worship, when the School Hall has not been available, special services such as Good Friday and for hosting PCC meetings. The PCC have started discussion regarding the refurbishment of the Chapel in the coming year to make it a more flexible space for use.

d) Inventory of Goods

As ever there is ongoing work to bring the Terrier (list of Church-owned property) up to date which will continue into 2024.

6. Deanery Synod Proceedings

There were three Deanery Synod meetings in 2023.

It was reported to the March PCC meeting that the first Deanery Synod meeting of the year was both the first for Rev'd Robb Sutherland as Area Dean and the last of the 3-year cycle. The main business was a discussion around the spiritual needs of children led by the Trinity School Chaplain and Rosemary Wright, CICS Representative.

The new 3-year cycle of the Deanery Synod started on 1st July.

It was reported to the August PCC meeting that neither Rev'd Stuart nor our new Deanery Synod Rep, Jane Hoyle, had been able to attend the recent Deanery Synod meeting.

It was reported to the December PCC meeting that the Deanery Synod met on 20th November at All Saints with Bishop Smitha in attendance. The main business was a discussion around a new Christian youth project at Trinity Academy and the successful obtaining of funding to establish a chaplaincy team at Trinity Academy.

7. Accounts and Financial Statements

External Examiner's Report

- Financial Statement B/F 22 balance agrees.
- Receipts, Payments and Banks for 23 all balance.
- Final totals all agree and reconcile.



27/03/2024

Debbie Pinder
External Examiner
15 Moor End
Halifax
HX2 0TX

Financial Statement for the Year Ending 31 December 2023

	2023	2022
Unrestricted General Fund		
for the Year Ending 31 December 2023		
Receipts		
<i>Voluntary Receipts</i>		
<i>Regular Giving</i>		
Planned giving	3,240.48	3,732.34
Collections at services	3 1,481.93	205.79
Gift Aid recovered	920.05	442.13
<i>Other voluntary receipts</i>		
Donations	300.00	558.75
Sales of coffee after Church	0.00	0.00
<i>Receipts from Church activities</i>		
Baptisms & Confirmations	0.00	0.00
Fundraising Activities	5 300.40	1,026.08
<i>Receipts from investments</i>		
Deposit account interest – see		
Contingencies Fund		
HSBC Interest	22.51	27.49
Baillie Gifford Interest	57.81	193.76
Total Receipts	6,323.18	6,186.34
Payments		
<i>Church activities</i>		
Giving	250.00	218.60
Parish Share	6,744.50	7,809.00
Church running expenses	4 1,566.98	427.73
Cost of services	1,590.80	1,604.13
Clergy expenses	4 532.26	109.84
Cost of Magazines & Publications	0.00	0.00
Coffee after Church	0.00	0.00
Cost of fundraising activities	101.80	278.75
Total Payments	10,786.34	10,448.05
Excess receipts over payments	-4,463.16	-4,261.71
Bank current & deposit accounts at 01/01	0.00	0.00
Balance 31/12/2021	-4,463.16	-4,261.71
Internal transfer from 63 Hanson Lane	4,463.16	4,261.71
Sale Fund		
Bank current & deposit accounts at 31/12	0.00	0.00

		2023	2022
Unrestricted Contingencies Fund for the Year Ending 31 December 2023			
Receipts	Deposit Account interest	701.77	122.19
Payments		0.00	0.00
Excess receipts over payments		701.77	122.19
Bank current & deposit accounts 01/01		3,146.31	3,024.12
Bank current & deposit accounts 31/12		3,848.08	3,146.31
Designated New Mara / Kiabakari Fund for the Year Ending 31 December 2023			
Receipts		321.00	300.00
Payments	6	1,650.00	0.00
Excess receipts over Payments		-1,329.00	300.00
Bank current & deposit accounts 01/01		1,507.98	1,207.98
Bank current & deposit accounts 31/12		178.98	1,507.98
Unrestricted St. Augustine's House Fund for the Year Ending 31 December 2023			
Receipts		8,060.92	5,407.92
Payments			
Repair of St. A's House	7	7,970.00	1,112.00
St. A's House Insurance		1,724.89	1,636.87
Update of Electrical Components for St. A's Hse			1,440.00
Excess receipts over payments		-1,633.97	1,219.05
Bank current & deposit accounts 01/01		1,219.05	0.00
Internal Tfer from 63 Hanson Lane Sale Fund		414.92	0.00
Bank current & deposit accounts 31/12		0.00	1,219.05

	2023	2022
Unrestricted 63 Hanson Lane Sale Fund for the Year Ending 31 December 2023		
Receipts	0.00	0.00
Payments	0.00	0.00
Excess receipts over payments	0.00	0.00
Bank current & deposit accounts 01/01	11,810.41	15,072.12
Year-end balance	11,810.41	15,072.12
Int'l Tfr from Loan to Christ Church Fund		1,000.00
Int'l Tfr to General Fund	-4,463.16	-4,261.71
Int'l Tfr to St. A's House Fund	-414.92	0.00
Bank current & deposit accounts 31/12	6,932.33	11,810.41

Unrestricted Investment Fund for the Year Ending 31 December 2023		
Receipts		
Fund	0.00	0.00
Increase in value of closing stock - HSBC	47.19	64.72
Increase in value of closing stock – Baillie Gifford	54.07	87.40
Payments	0.00	0.00
Excess receipts over Payments	101.26	152.12
Bank current & deposit accounts 01/01	10,330.34	10,178.22
Bank current & deposit accounts 31/12	10,431.60	10,330.34

	2023	2022
Designated Fundraising Fund for the Year Ending 31 December 2023		
Receipts		
Donations for Walk	611.00	469.13
Revenue from Fundraising		0.00
Payments		
Christianity Explored	88.02	100.27
Church Retreat		165.00
Childrens Activities		15.99
Excess receipts over payments	522.98	187.87
Bank current & deposit accounts 01/01	2,396.84	2,208.97
Internal Transfer to General Fund	0.00	0.00
Bank current & deposit accounts 31/12	2,919.82	2,396.84

Designated Robert Berridge Fund for the Year Ending 31 December 2023		
Receipts	0.00	4,000.00
Payments	0.00	0.00
Excess receipts over payments	0.00	4,000.00
Bank current & deposit accounts 01/01	4,000.00	0.00
Bank current & deposit accounts 31/12	4,000.00	4,000.00

Summary of Accounts for Year Ending 31 December 2023

	Receipts £.pp	Payments £.pp	Excess Receipts over Payments £.pp	Amount in Bank 31/12/2023 £.pp	Transferred from 63 Hanson Lane Sale Fund £.pp	Amount in Bank 01/01/2024 after Internal Tfrs £.pp
Unrestricted General Fund	6,323.18	10,786.34	-4,463.16	0.00	4,463.16	0.00
Unrestricted Contingencies Fund	701.77	0.00	701.77	3,146.31		3,848.08
Designated New Mara / Kiabakari Fund	321.00	1,650.00	-1,329.00	1,507.98		178.98
Unrestricted St. Augustine's House Fund	8,060.92	9,694.89	-1,633.97	-414.92	414.92	0.00
Unrestricted 63 Hanson Lane Sale Fund	0.00	0.00	0.00	11,810.41	-4,878.08	6,932.33
Unrestricted Investment Fund	101.26	0.00	101.26	10,330.34		10,431.60
Designated Fundraising Fund	611.00	88.02	522.98	2,396.84		2,919.82
Designated Robert Berridge Fund	0.00	0.00	0.00	4,000.00		4,000.00
TOTAL ALL FUNDS	16,119.13	22,219.25	-6,100.12	28,310.81	0.00	28,310.81
Bank Accounts:						
Santander Current Account				1,031.35		1,031.35
Church of England Deposit Account				16,847.86		16,847.86
HL Investments				10,431.60		10,431.60
				28,310.81		28,310.81

Statement of Assets and Liabilities 31 December 2023

	2023	2022
Cash Funds		
Santander Current Account	1,031.35	5,232.73
Church of England Deposit Account	16,847.86	18,847.86
	17,879.21	24,080.59
Investment Assets		
HL Investments	10,431.60	10,330.34
Assets retained for Church's use (unrestricted funds)	28,310.81	34,410.93
Liabilities		0.00

Notes:

1. The financial statements of the PCC have been prepared in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations 2006 using the R&P basis.
2. Moveable church furnishing and equipment held by the Churchwardens on special trust for the PCC, and which require a facility for disposal, are recognised but not valued in the Statement of Assets and Liabilities.
3. Although the church has seen a significant increase from the plate, we have lost 2 regular givers.
4. The church has also seen a significant increase in general running expenses and clergy expenses.
5. The church only ran 1 major fundraiser, rather than the 2 that were run in 2022.
6. The church made a significant gift to Mara / Kiabakari diocese.
7. The Church incurred costs of nearly £8,000.00 on St Augustine's House rent.

Treasurer's Report for Year Ending 31 December 2023

The General Fund of St. Augustine's Church covers the general running of the Church. The fund incurred a deficit of expenditure over receipts of £4,463.16 during the year.

The deficit is an increase on the deficit from the previous financial year of £171.45.

St. Augustine's House also incurred a deficit of £1,633.97, due to a significant amount of work on the house's roof.

The PCC also made the decision to send a lot of the money they had raised to Mara / Kiabakari diocese. So the Mara / Kiabakari fund ran at a deficit on £1,329.00.

Although the Church increased income from the plate by over 700%, fundraising activities raised over £700.00 less.

In the future St. Augustine's Church will need to increase its income significantly, regardless of the contributions the Church can expect to see through an increase of rent at St. Augustine's House.



04/04/2024

Mark Pemberton
PCC Treasurer

The independently examined accounts for the year ending 31/12/2023 were unanimously accepted by the PCC on 14/04/2024.

Fundraising Report

The Fundraising Committee organised a harvest supper and beetle drive in October 2023, which was held in St. Jude's Church Hall. The well-attended event was enjoyed by all.

The Committee also worked on plans for a ceilidh to be held in March 2024.

Jane Hoyle

Choir Report

St. Augustine's choir was formed in December 2023. It is comprised of a number of nationalities, African, Persian, English. Despite any language difficulties it is building up a mixed repertoire of songs and has performed at a number of services including St. Augustine's and St. Jude's. The choir averages an attendance of between 16 to 18 members. We plan to build on a reserve of songs and to be able to continue to perform both within church and in the community. An effort will also be made to attract further musicians to accompany the choir.

Kevin Hoyle

School Report

Where to start? It doesn't seem five minutes since I was reflecting on the journey that school is on for the last meeting.

This year, we have continued to consolidate everything that we've put into place since I started at St Augustine's – 3 years ago! When you are in the middle of anything, it is easy to get caught up in all the things that we still need to do, to get further down the 'to do list' rather than stop and reflect and see just how far you've come! Someone much wiser than me suggested I do this so here are some of the things that have changed children's outcomes and experiences in school since our last Ofsted and SIAMS inspections . . .

- A whole new curriculum – rewritten and scoped to meet the needs of our ever-changing school population

- A fully embedded phonics programme that meets the needs of any pupil who joins us who needs to learn to read – no matter what their age
- Lots of work on the school environment – painting, new hall floor, carpeting throughout that all matches, our new doors that all match, our welcome mat
- A set of school values and a vision that truly is at the centre of all that we do
- A KS2 reading scheme to support readers when they finish the phonics program
- A fiction library which enables every pupil to borrow a book at least every week to encourage them to 'read for pleasure'
- A stable staff with little movement – a staff who are invested in working at St Augustine's and invested in our children
- A record number of pupils from recent years which means we are in a relatively strong financial position compared to many schools – it was a deficit budget position three years ago.
- Policies and procedures are all in place which support the smoother running of school
- We have specialist provision for PE and for Music to develop pupils' wider interests and skills – closely linked to our vision.
- We have a school prayer and worship liturgy all linked to our vision – written by the children
- A range of activities through the year which enhance children's experiences and build their confidence – the mobile farm visit, a wide range of after school clubs, all free and run by staff who give up their time to run them, opportunities to take part in events like the Calderdale Poetry Slam with a workshop day to work with a poet and then the winning group perform live on stage at The Victoria Theatre with lights, microphones and an audience! We are the only school who also widen up this opportunity to take other Y6 pupils to experience the theatre and support their peers with subsidised tickets.
- We have four Teams which children are part of – Shaw, Mahmood, Lister and Cockcroft. Pupils are given a PE T-Shirt in their team colour when they join us and then work hard to collect Team Points. This year, we have introduced Team Rewards and the winning Team each term go on a free trip – so far to see a production at Square Chapel at Christmas and a visit to Galactic Golf for the spring term. Both visits were thoroughly enjoyed by staff and pupils alike and pupils also took part in experiences that none of them had ever done before.

As you can see, it's been a busy few years and this is just a snapshot of some of the things we've done (alongside teaching our children!) – and there is still more to do. As I write, this afternoon will see the start of our ESOL style classes for parents so that they can support their child's learning at home and understand more about why the things we do in school are so important. Please pray that this initiative supports both our parents but also our children as their parents become more confident. There are many challenges working in a school like St Augustine's but there are also the times, when you reflect, that we know that we truly are making a difference to our school community. Watch this space for everything that might come next!

Ruth E Lee

Headteacher, St Augustine's CE School

Vicar's Remarks

There's a wonderful old 17th century hymn that begins:

“Through all the changing scenes of life
In trouble and in joy”

It comes to mind as I reflect over the last twelve months, my first full year, which has seen much hard work and frustration behind the scenes as we seek to resolve “stuff” that is not particularly missional nor to do with people, but still necessary. There have been negotiations to put our relationship with the centre on a firm legal footing, discussions with the diocese to put to bed the ownership of the various plots of land and buildings that lie within our ‘boundaries’, and talk about how we refurbish the chapel.

Parish life is never plain sailing and sometimes you need to regroup, attend to the things on the periphery in order that you can move forward again on firmer footings. This has been the underlying story of 2023. Not much visible progress perhaps if looking in from the outside, but vital and significant for those who have been involved, knowing that the fruits of our labour will become apparent as we move forward in the new year. Mission, we know, will find fruitful ground, having now done the work of preparing the soil.

Which leads me on to the second half of the verse from this hymn:

“The praises of my God shall still
my heart and tongue employ”.

It's easy to become downhearted when progress seems slow, but we are called to remain faithful, trusting in God that all will be well. And this has been true in our worship life and with the love and care shown for each other, our faith has not waivered over this last year as we have continued to both welcome new people and say goodbye to dear friends. We have seen people discover Jesus for themselves, be baptised and confirmed. We have heard the word of God in multiple languages and brought together a choir who have sung in praise of God. We have re-established our monthly service at Clement Court with a growing congregation, sharing hymns, prayers, bible stories and laughter.

All this is made possible through the hard work of our team. Thank you to Shelagh and Ann our stalwart churchwardens, Jon our PCC secretary, Mark our treasurer, those who have served as PCC members. But also a big thank you to the chair putter-outers, those who tidy away, the tea and coffee makers, the bible readers, the musicians, and those who continue to invite their friends and neighbours along, those who befriend the newly arrived asylum seekers, and those who just lighten up the room with their presence.

God Bless

Rev'd Stuart