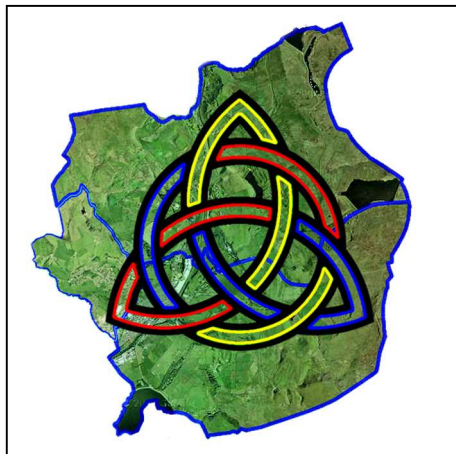


The Diocese of Manchester

PARISH INFORMATION AND PROFILE

THE BENEFICE OF: LITTLEBOROUGH



1. THE NEXT PARISH PRIEST

As our next parish priest, we are looking for someone who:

- Gives wholehearted assent to the creeds, including the bodily resurrection of Jesus.
- Has a strong faith developed through persistent and sustained prayer.
- Is open to the gifts and promptings of the Holy Spirit and encourages others in their own spiritual growth.
- Can hold together diverse congregations with different traditions.
- Can preach and teach the Gospel message enabling both new and mature Christians to develop their faith.
- Has ambition to continue to reach and draw in the local community.
- Has a commitment to collaborative ministry encouraging all to develop and use their gifts.
- Can inspire and lead the congregation in mission activities.
- Will continue to develop links with other churches in Littleborough and our Mission Community.
- Will maintain and develop further the close relationship with our schools.
- Will support the churches in growing stewardship
- Will support the improvement of the condition of the buildings leading to changes and upgrades to the facilities.

To create, in collaboration with the congregations, a vibrant Christian presence in the centre of and at the service of this community, testifying to the risen Christ.

2. INTRODUCTION

We are three churches in the village of Littleborough, situated on the outskirts of Rochdale in the Deanery of Rochdale, joined together as one Benefice. We seek to share Christ with Littleborough by serving our community.

3. BASIC INFORMATION AND STATISTICS

3.1. Full name of benefice: Benefice of Littleborough

Consisting of three parishes:

- Holy Trinity, Littleborough
- St. Barnabas, Shore
- St. James, Calderbrook

3.2. Title of the post that is vacant:

Vicar of Littleborough

3.3. Name and address of patron:

Holy Trinity

- Bishop
- Incumbent of St Chad's, the Parish Church of Rochdale
- Dean and Canons of Manchester Cathedral

St Barnabas

- Bishop

St James

- Bishop

3.4. Archdeaconry, Deanery and Mission Community; and name of Area Dean and Mission Community Leader:

Archdeaconry: Rochdale

Archdeacon: The Ven. Canon Karen Smeeton

karen.smeeton@manchester.anglican.org

Mobile: 07504 960446

Deanery: Rochdale

Acting Area Dean: The Revd. Anne Gilbert

revannegilbert@gmail.com

Telephone: 01706 346774

Mobile: 0786 529 3827

Mission Community: Mission Community 4

Mission Community Leader: Revd. Janet Pitman

hildaofwhitby67@gmail.com

Telephone: 01706 594284

3.5. Official clergy housing: address and brief description:

4 Stansfield Hall,
Calderbrook,
Littleborough,
OL15 9RH

A modern detached house close to St. James church built in the 1960's. It has a large drive and two parking bays for six cars, with gardens to all four sides. The interior comprises of a large lounge with separate dining room, fitted kitchen with utility room leading into the large garage. Downstairs there is a combined cloakroom and toilet. The study/office can be accessed separately from the house. Upstairs are four good sized bedrooms, toilet and separate bathroom, including a shower and bath.



- 3.6. Official population:
The official population of the benefice, taken from the 2021 census is 8,779. Breakdown by parish: -
- Holy Trinity 3,421
 - St. Barnabas 3,188
 - St James 2,170
- 3.7. Number on electoral roll:
- Holy Trinity 41
 - St Barnabas 34
 - St James 19
- 3.8. Average weekly attendance year on year, over the last 3 years:
- Holy Trinity 25
 - St Barnabas 20
 - St James 12
- 3.9. Average Weekly Attendance of children and young people under 16:
- Holy Trinity 7
 - St Barnabas 4
 - St James 1
- 3.10. In the last twelve months, numbers (if applicable) of: -
- a. those baptized:
 - St Barnabas 1
 - Holy Trinity 3
 - St James 2
 - b. those admitted to holy communion before confirmation: None
 - c. those confirmed: None
 - d. marriages:
 - St Barnabas 1
 - Holy Trinity 1
 - St James 0
 - e. funerals:
 - St Barnabas 11
 - Holy Trinity 2
 - St James 3
 - f. Christmas communicants (all services):
 - 120 attended joint Benefice services
 - g. Easter communicants (all services):
 - 98 attended joint Benefice services
 - h. last October survey:

The last October survey coincided with several joint benefice services and a baptism which made recording accurate numbers difficult.

 - Average attendance at the three churches - 73

3.11. Anglican churches and licensed places of worship in the benefice profiled here: -

3.11.1 Holy Trinity, Littleborough



- a. Name of principal church: Holy Trinity
- b. Approximate key dates for the building:
The nave of the current building dates from 1817, replacing an earlier church building. In 1889 a new chancel was added. The intention was to rebuild the whole church, but the plan was abandoned with the onset of the First World War.
- c. Approximate seating capacity: 350
- d. When was the last Quinquennial inspection done? 2019
 - i. What are the top 3 priorities as highlighted by the architect?
 - Cleaning and repair of gutters
 - Testing and update of service records
 - Condition of nave windows
 - ii. How much did the architect estimate they might cost?
 - Nave windows - £90,000 in 2019, we are currently waiting for a faculty to start grant applications.
 - iii. What progress has been made thus far by the parish?
 - Cleaning and repair of gutters completed 2023
 - Testing and update of service records completed 2024
 - DAC have agreed to replacement of nave windows under Phase 1 of Project 2020, currently awaiting faculty.
- e. How accessible are the parish buildings?
There is no level access, or accessible WC, this would be part of Phase 2 of Project 2020.
- f. Name of any attached or nearby hall or other similar facility:
There is no church hall, however we have use of the nearby church school premises with permission of the headteacher.

3.11.2 St Barnabas, Shore



- a. Name of principal church: St Barnabas
- b. Approximate key dates for the building:
The church was built in 1901.
- c. Approximate seating capacity: 200
- d. When was the last Quinquennial inspection done? June 2019
 - i. What are the top 3 priorities as highlighted by the architect?
 - Roof repairs to a number of locations
 - Damp ingress relating to roof and pointing defects
 - ii. How much did the architect estimate they might cost?
£10,000 to £15,000
 - iii. What progress has been made thus far by the parish?
Grant funding successfully obtained in 2024 to undertake roof and pointing repairs. Areas of replastering will be undertaken when the masonry has dried out following repointing.
Currently seeking grants for replacement lighting. This will allow all fluorescent, SON and metal halide fittings to be replaced with energy efficient LED fittings which will significantly reduce electricity consumption and the churches carbon footprint.
- e. How accessible are the parish buildings?
The church has a level carpark and access road from public highways. There is an accessible ramp to the main entrance. An accessible toilet is provided on the ground floor and all doors within the Narthex are wide enough to accommodate wheelchairs. The Narthex with parish hall at first floor was completed in 1992. It was designed to allow the installation of a chair lift on one of the staircases and has the potential for a lift to be installed should funds be available in the future making the first floor fully accessible.
- f. Name of any attached or nearby hall or other similar facility:
The church has a Narthex with a hall on the upper level.

3.11.3 St James, Calderbrook



- a. Name of principal church: St James
- b. Approximate key dates for the building:
The church was built in 1860 as a Chapel of Ease of Holy Trinity.
- c. Approximate seating capacity:
- d. When was the last Quinquennial inspection done? 20th September 2024
 - i. What are the top 3 priorities as highlighted by the architect
- Pending report
 - ii. How much did the architect estimate they might cost?
 - iii. What progress has been made thus far by the parish?
- e. How accessible are the parish buildings?
- There is ramp access to the church and an accessible toilet.
- f. Name of any attached or nearby hall or other similar facility:
None.

- 3.12 Details of Anglican churches or licensed places of worship in the benefice or parish(es) profiled here with whom you will share an incumbent undergoing pastoral reorganisation, or likely to, in the near future:

None.

- 3.13 Details of any publicity/literature that the parish produces e.g. newsletter, magazine:

A Benefice newsletter is produced every Sunday, the Benefice magazine stopped during Covid and has not yet been restarted.

3.14 Address of website and/or other social media or remote service offering:

- Website: <https://cofe-littleborough.co.uk>
- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/cofelittleborough>
- X: @cofelittleborough
- Instagram: CofELittleborough

3.15 Names of churchwardens:

Holy Trinity:

- Frank Kershaw
- Graham Windslow

St Barnabas:

- Sheila Wildman
- Cynthia Moulton

St James

- Thomas Gordon
- Linda Gibson

3.16 Names of any representatives:

Holy Trinity:

- Frank Kershaw
- Graham Windslow

St Barnabas:

- Sheila Wildman
- Cynthia Moulton

St James

- Thomas Gordon
- Linda Gibson

4. PRIESTS (ORDINATION OF WOMEN) MEASURE 1993 HOUSE OF BISHOPS DECLARATION ON THE MINISTRY OF BISHOPS AND PRIESTS 2014

Since 17 November 2014 it has no longer been possible for a PCC to pass resolutions under the Priests (Ordination of Women) Measure 1993 or to petition under the 1993 Act of Synod for Extended Episcopal Oversight. It is no longer a requirement that parishes should consider passing or rescinding resolutions under the Measure at a Section 11 Meeting in a vacancy. Any new resolutions must now be passed under the House of Bishops Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests. A PCC, on grounds of theological conviction, may resolve to request that arrangements are made for it under the House of Bishops Declaration.

Under transitional arrangements, though, any resolutions passed under the Measure will be treated as if they are resolutions under the House of Bishops Declaration *until 17 November 2016*.

Please record details below if either,

- a. any resolutions under the Priests (Ordination of Women) Measure or the 1993 Act of Synod were passed by the PCC prior to 17 November 2014 and have not subsequently been rescinded, or
- b. any resolution under the House of Bishops Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests 2014 has been passed.

None of the three P.C.C.'s has adopted resolution A or B or have petitioned for extended Episcopal Oversight.

5. LOCAL COMMUNITY

The three parishes which make up the Benefice of Littleborough are semi-rural being on the northeastern edge of Greater Manchester. There is a mixture of housing, some older terraced houses and some newer developments. The population remains largely stable, but this may change with recent house building within the boundaries of the Benefice.

At the last census 95% gave their ethnicity as white British and 50% Christian, 40% no-religion. The Deprivation Index varies between the parishes but is in the lower deciles due to age and health issues, Littleborough and Calderbrook having lower indices than Shore.

Littleborough is mainly residential but there are shops in the centre near to the railway station, also some small offices and factories. There are good transport links with rail connection to Manchester, Rochdale and Leeds. The M60 is only a few miles south at Milnrow.

Local councillors:

The Benefice covers parts of two council wards -

- Wardle, Shore and West Littleborough
 - Councillor Ashley Dearnley
 - Councillor Adam Branton
 - Councillor John Taylor
- Littleborough Lakeside
 - Councillor Tom Besford
 - Councillor Janet Emsley
 - Councillor Richard Jackson

Member of Parliament: Paul Waugh MP

5.1 SCHOOLS AND VOLUNTARY GROUPS

Within the Benefice there are four primary schools:

- Holy Trinity CE Primary School (VA)
- Stansfield Hall CE/Methodist Primary School (VC)
- Littleborough Community Primary School
- St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School

The Benefice has links with the two church schools (On both of which the Incumbent of the Benefice sits Ex-Officio), and in addition to this we are working on building a stronger relationship with Littleborough Community Primary School.

5.2 WORSHIP AND WORSHIPPERS

As a Benefice of three parishes, our worship brings a variety of styles.

The current pattern of worship was reviewed under the previous incumbent to allow him to be with each parish weekly, and the pattern is:

Sunday

9.00 a.m.	CW Holy Communion at St Barnabas, Shore
10.15 a.m.	CW Holy Communion at Holy Trinity, Littleborough
11.30 a.m.	CW Holy Communion at St James, Calderbrook

An 8.00 a.m. Said BCP Holy Communion at Holy Trinity each Sunday, monthly Healing Service at Holy Trinity and mid-week services at St Barnabas and St. James were suspended during the Covid lockdown and have not yet been reinstated.

On High days and Holy days, as well as 5th Sunday in the month the three churches gather for a Benefice service at 10.00 a.m. – During the course of a three-year cycle all three parishes will observe the main festivals of the church year.

Currently baptisms take place within the main worship of the day on a rota between the three churches.

The three parishes would welcome a review of the current pattern of worship.

Vesture for ministers is traditional.

All three churches have a similar mix in the congregations, with a small number of young families and older, regular members.

Each of the three churches in the Benefice has a different tradition, with Holy Trinity being more evangelical, St. James more catholic and St. Barnabas being in between.

5.3 CHURCH-BASED ORGANISATIONS AND GROUPS

Between the three churches, a variety of events are organised.

5.3.1 Holy Trinity, Littleborough

Located in the centre of Littleborough, close to the shops and railway station, our friendly church has been a part of the community since the 15th century. The church maintains close ties with our church school, and Leavers', Harvest, and Nativity services are held in the church. This year we held a successful "Back to School Sunday" service.

There is a Bible Study group that meets on a weekly basis, usually at one of the churchwarden's homes, and is led by a variety of people.

Sunday school runs for primary age children during school term time.

The Holy Trinity Youth Theatre Workshop meets in church on a Friday evening for young people, aged 9-18, with additional rehearsals as required. There are about 25 regular members, but children from the local primary schools' choir are invited to take part in an annual production. This is part of our outreach to the local community; no charge is made. The group has been invited to take part in local events. The group puts on two shows a year, one of which is a full-scale musical theatre production.

There is an annual Art Exhibition every summer and regular band concerts.

Throughout the year there is a programme of fund-raising events. Coffee is regularly served after the service.

In 2018 Holy Trinity started Project 2020 to reorder the church as a way of making the building fit for the future and more adaptable for community events, sadly after some early success with fundraising the Covid lockdown caused the suspension of all fundraising events, and the project has since struggled to re-start.

The church is an emergency evacuation centre for Littleborough in the event of flooding.

5.3.2 St Barnabas, Shore

Located on the outskirts of Littleborough, St Barnabas is a friendly, welcoming and well-equipped church and developing community space nestled in the centre of the village of Shore which was a former close mill community. It has evolved over the years and now enjoys a mixture of private and local council housing. Up to recently St Barnabas was the home to a large Church Lads and Church Girls Brigade, 30 children plus, a thriving Sunday School and a weekly Luncheon Club which attracted over 35 older people each week.

The Benefice Christingle is held every year to raise money for "The Children's Society" after the previous incumbent arrived, this moved to Christmas Eve, the first year (2015) we had 80 in attendance, in 2016 this grew 50% to 120, and we expect this to continue growing.

As of late the congregation has diminished, however numbers have increased over recent months, and we are positive that we have turned the corner and started to rebuild.

A Facebook page was launched recently and is attracting more interest in the parish.

St Barnabas PCC are working towards removing the old pipe organ and creating a room which can be used for small prayer meetings etc. Two grants have now been secured to repair the church roof and replace lighting; however, our church has been well maintained over the years and overall is in a good state of repair.

Music in the church is provided by an electronic organ which replaced the dilapidated pipe organ. All hymns, carols and service music are recorded and played through the organ via a connected laptop. The organ can still be played in the traditional manner when required.

We have a peal of eight bells and a chime frame, there is a ringing team of 10. The chimes are used on Sunday mornings, and at weddings if requested, by a former member of the old ringing team. In addition, the Bells are rung several times a year by visiting bell ringers' associations.

- Church Hall

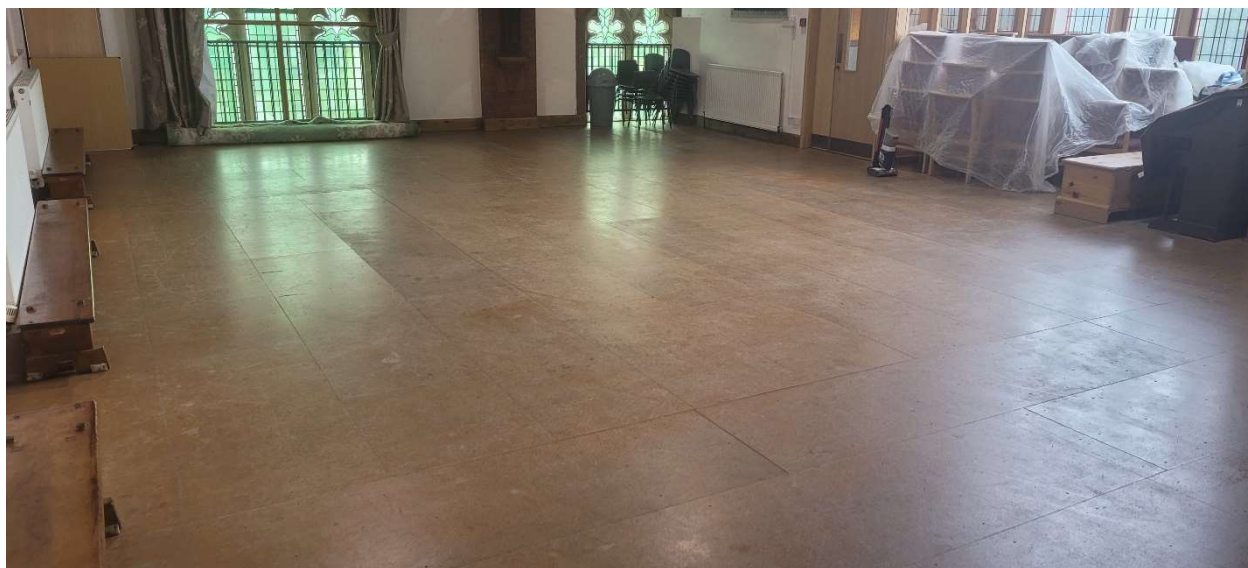
St Barnabas Church Hall is now a hub for Shore and Littleborough. It is used five days a week with the following groups:

- Dance and Drama, Monday and Wednesday evening
- Yoga and Mindfulness, Monday, Tuesday and Thursday
- Youth Club, Friday
- A before and after school group is to in January which will use the facilities five days a week for breakfast club and afterschool activities. They will also be running a holiday club in the school holidays along with the Drama Club.
- A warm space coffee morning club will be opening shortly to provide a venue for our older friends with the view of helping these people overcome loneliness and rising heating bills.

The income from all these groups is helping St Barnabas grow. It does not just have a monetary value; it is also welcoming more adults and young people into our church building which we hope in turn will increase our parish numbers.



View of first floor hall.



View of first floor hall.

5.3.3 St James, Calderbrook

St James is a small, friendly church on the border of West Yorkshire. Visitors always comment on its welcoming and prayerful atmosphere. Our popular Ladies' Fellowship, Gardening Club, and Macmillan coffee mornings have yet to be reinstated following lockdown.

The church maintains close ties with the local VC primary school, and Leavers', Harvest, and Nativity services are held in the church. St James is now an official polling station, a role previously taken by the school, which necessitated school closure on polling days.

St James plays host to, and famously caters for, fell races held throughout the year, helping to raise the profile of the Church (and much needed funds) in the local area. An unofficial "Friends of St James" help with the catering.

Our graveyard attracts local wildlife, especially now we take part in 'No Mow May'.

5.3.4 Benefice

The Benefice has its own website - <https://cofe-littleborough.co.uk>

The Benefice also has a Facebook presence and a healthy following; we currently have two editors, although we need to make much more use of this facility.

The Benefice Church Council (BCC) was set up to plan mission activity across the Benefice and was responsible for creating the Benefice prayer and our mission statement – "Sharing Christ with Littleborough". It is also responsible for organising the Lent groups.

During the Covid lockdown a Pastoral Response Group was set up on WhatsApp to provide prayer support, this group is still active today.

There is a Benefice social committee which meets regularly to arrange fundraising functions for the Benefice and have a full calendar for this year which include Afternoon tea, Tombolas for the rush bearing, and Christmas lights switch on, a quiz night at St Barnabas, band and choir concerts at both St. Barnabas and Holy Trinity, and afternoon tea with Santa at St James.

The Benefice participates in Littleborough Churches Together and over the past two years we have begun to make a much more visible presence in the community. Annual events now include – service for the week of prayer for Christian Unity, Harvest praise.

Each week, the Benefice publishes its services / weekly events in the Rochdale Observer (the main paper of the area).

5.4 NEIGHBOURING ANGLICAN CHURCHES AND PARISHES

The Benefice of Littleborough is adjacent to two Benefices in the Diocese of Manchester and together we form Mission Community 4 in the Deanery of Rochdale:

- Dearnley, Wardle and Smallbridge
 - St Andrews, Dearnley
 - Wardle Village Church (Anglican / Methodist Local Ecumenical Partnership)
- Milnrow and Newhey
 - St James, Milnrow
 - St Thomas, Newhey

North and east of our Benefice are parishes in the Diocese of Leeds.

6 ECUMENISM

In addition to the three churches within our Benefice, who are all members of Littleborough Churches Together, we also have links with the following:

The Roman Catholic Church
 The Methodist Church
 The United Reformed Church
 A non-denominational fellowship

7 MINISTRY

There is an Authorised Lay Minister with elective in Administration based at St James. Sadly, our Reader left the Benefice in December 2023 for family reasons. There are currently sixteen Eucharistic Assistants in the Benefice. Nine people have volunteered to take out home communion.

8 MISSION

Our understanding of the Mission of the church is based on the words of Jesus in the Great Commission. We express it in two forms, that of teaching in order to grow disciples and that of reaching out to share the gospel with others.

We have a Benefice prayer, which sums up our mission:

**Heavenly Father,
send your Holy Spirit
to give vision in our planning,
wisdom to our actions and
grace through our witness,
as we seek to serve you as a Benefice
in sharing Christ with Littleborough.
Amen**

8.1 Teaching:

We have a well-established group that meets weekly for Bible Study and prayer.

We teach our children through the Sunday School which meets during the morning service (term time only).

Our clergy have maintained strong links with our Voluntary Aided Primary school, leading assemblies and teaching some lessons.

Holy Trinity church has a lending library, for adults and children. We hope that the inspirational books on display and the book reviews will encourage and build faith.

8.2 Outreach:

Several members of the church serve as governors at the church schools.

Members of the church assist in school as volunteers hearing children read.

We are incredibly proud of our Youth Theatre Workshop. It has been running since 2012 and is the gift of the church to the local community. The group, for which there is no charge is open to any child aged 9-18. We put on two shows a year, one of which is a full-scale musical theatre production. Over the four nights of the main show, over three hundred people come into our church. Whilst only two children are currently members of churches in our Benefice, this group has enabled us to encourage members of the local community through our church doors. In addition, many of them joined us to support the young people who were invited to take part in the Carol Service. Whilst they have not made a commitment to Jesus, we ensure that they have a positive experience of the church and hope to build bridges in our community that may result us being able to reach them for Christ at a time that is right for them.

Once a week a small group meets for coffee in a local cafe. This is important as this group bases itself in the local community. Members are from all three churches. They place

themselves in a situation where they are now recognised locally. It is also important in building relationships between members of the church and has been instrumental in helping people to begin to feel a part of the church and ultimately to join in helping with the work of the church.

8.3 Annual Art Exhibition:

Whilst this exhibition is held in Holy Trinity church and is an opportunity for local artists to sell their paintings; as a church, we view this as another opportunity to welcome the public into our building. We hope that they will take time to read and talk about items that we have on display besides the art. It is another opportunity that we make to help others to get to know us in the hope that should they come into church one Sunday, they will see familiar faces.

We recognise that we are a part of the Worldwide Church and support the work of Open Doors. Rather than send each other Christmas Cards, we ask people to send one card and to make a donation to Open Doors. We have a display in church which helps keep us all up to date with information. We also pray for the persecuted church.

9 FINANCE, STEWARDSHIP AND SUSTAINABILITY

Stewardship is practiced in the Benefice, but it is several years since the last campaign. Giving was severely impacted by the COVID pandemic and has not fully recovered. The Benefice is committed to full payment of the Parish Share, St James has paid in full but Holy Trinity and St Barnabas have struggled to pay in full since COVID, not helped by extra expenses to deal with church building repairs caused by lead theft at Holy Trinity. St. Barnabas aims to pay their parish share in full in 2024. All three parishes aim to keep a balanced budget.

The parish priest's expenses were met in full.

All parish officer posts are currently filled, but succession planning has become difficult.