



ANNUAL REPORT
and
Summary of Finances
For the Parochial Church Council
of Christ Church, Lofthouse

Year ending 31st December 2024

Aim and purposes

Lofthouse Parochial Church Council (PCC) has the responsibility of cooperating with the Team Vicar, the Reverend Mandy Rhodes, in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish, the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. The PCC is also specifically responsible for the maintenance of the church, church hall, churchyard and off-site burial ground on Cemetery Lane, Lofthouse.

Reference and Administrative Information

Christ Church is situated on Leeds Road, Lofthouse. It is part of the Diocese of Leeds within the Church of England. The correspondence addresses are either, The Vicarage, 8 Church Farm Close, Lofthouse, Wakefield, WF3 3SA (though the postcode of the Church, for sat nav purposes is WF3 3SQ and What3Words reference ///create.hook.grand) or Mrs. Mary Liversedge (Secretary to the PCC), 10 Blacksmith Mews, Robin Hood, Wakefield, WF3 3TZ.

The PCC is a body corporate (PCC Powers Measure 1956, Church Representation Rules) and a charity currently exempted from registration with the Charity Commission. PCC members who have served at any time from 1st January 2024 until the date this report was approved are:

Ex Officio members:

Team Vicar: The Reverend Mandy Rhodes (Chair)

Churchwarden: Christine Laird

Lay Chair: Christine Laird

Deanery Synod Representative: Megan Thornton (until September 2024)

Deanery Synod Representative: Karen McLean

Elected members:

Mary Liversedge (PCC Secretary)

Jayne Elliott (Treasurer)

Sylvia Green

Harry Thompson

Karen McLean

Co-opted:

Angela Smith (Buildings manager)

Bankers – HSBC

Independent Examiner – Keith Kirwin

Day to day management of the Church was exercised by the Standing Committee: Revd Mandy Rhodes, Christine Laird, Mary Liversedge, Jayne Elliott, Megan Thornton (until September 2024), Tracy Scholey, with advice from assistant wardens and buildings manager.

Structure, Management and Governance

Lofthouse PCC is a body corporate and operates under the *Parochial Church Councils (Powers) Measure 1956* and the *Church Representation Rules*.

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules.

At Christ Church, the membership of the PCC consists of the incumbent (our vicar), churchwarden, assistant wardens and members elected by those members of the congregation who are on the electoral roll of the church. All those who attend our services / members of the congregation are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and stand for election to the PCC. The PCC members are responsible for making decisions on all matters of general concern and importance to the parish including deciding on how the funds of the PCC are to be spent.

New members receive initial training into the workings of the PCC. The full PCC met 7 times during the year with an average level of attendance of 88%. Given its wide responsibilities the PCC was, pre-Covid, split into a number of sub-groups, each dealing with a particular aspect of parish life. These committees, namely, mission and worship, children and youth, safeguarding and personnel, fundraising and stewardship (incorporating social and fellowship) and fabric and finance, were all responsible to the PCC and, pre-Covid, reported back to it regularly with minutes of their decisions being received by the full PCC and discussed as necessary. Since Covid, commitments of members has been such that additional meetings for subgroups have not been possible and much of the preparation work carried out previously is now done by the Standing Committee, reporting back to the full PCC.

Though this has been another challenging year, our electoral roll stands at 36 parishioners, 12 of whom are not resident in the parish.

Risk Assessments

Risk assessments are undertaken for all new or extraordinary undertakings and remain in place for regular worship events. The Safeguarding Officer receives copies of risk assessments and reviews them on behalf of the PCC.

Compliance with Law and Regulation

Individuals receive in-house and external training as and when deemed appropriate. Our procedures are reviewed regularly and formally reported to the PCC and our policies for Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults, Fire Safety, and Health and Safety have been reviewed.

Safeguarding

The PCC of Christ Church, Lofthouse has continued to comply with the duty to have 'due regard' to the House of Bishops' Safeguarding Policy and Practise Guidance. Christ Church strives to foster a healthy safeguarding culture.

Christ Church, Lofthouse is committed to safeguarding as an integral part of its ministry and mission.

- We promote a safer environment and culture.
- We safely recruit and support all those with any responsibility related to children and vulnerable adults with our parish.
- We respond promptly to every safeguarding concern or allegation.
- We have an appointed Safeguarding Officer during 2024 this changed from Megan Thornton to Tracy Scholey.
- Safeguarding is a standing item on every PCC agenda and the PCC receives a monthly action plan.
- All DBS checks are up to date and we have an appointed DBS administrator who regularly reviews renewal dates.
- Safeguarding training continues to be a priority, with all PCC members and volunteers having a good awareness of training requirements.
- Support is given to anyone needing to discuss or facilitate training.
- Safeguarding policies and procedures are reviewed annually.
- Contact details of the Incumbent, PSO, Churchwarden and the Diocese Safeguarding team are displayed within the church and church hall.
- Information for where to get help with any child or adult safeguarding issues is displayed.
- We comply with all Data Protection legislation.

Many thanks to everyone for your commitment to ensuring Christ Church, Lofthouse is a safe space for everyone it serves.

Objectives and Activities

The general functions of the PCC are stated within section 2 of the Parochial Church Councils (Powers) Measure 1956.

Subgroups

We are still in the position of having no formal subgroup membership, which results in longer Standing Committee and PCC meetings as discussions are unable to take place beforehand. It is hoped, in time, that subgroups (which include non-PCC members) will be more easily created, thus reducing the load on the PCC as a whole.

Achievements and Performance

Children and Youth

Messy Tots

Messy Tots continues to be well attended on a Wednesday morning during term time. The children arrive and have an hour of play, followed by a craft with a short story from the bible while busy with the craft. The children know it's then time to tidy up before having a snack. One of their favourite parts is choosing a musical instrument to sing our song, "Jesus' love is very wonderful" followed by other songs/nursery rhymes .

Lighthouse Kids

The Lighthouse Kids Sunday School meets three Sundays a month, four when there are five Sundays in the month. Lighthouse Kids started in October 2024 as a way of trying to bring more families to Sunday worship. We begin with a Bible reading and follow it up with a group craft project relating to the passage. It is early days still, but hopefully we will gradually increase our numbers. We have a small number of local children, still too young to attend, who join the main Sunday Eucharist with their parents.

Messy Church and Muddy Church

We were delighted when Megan Thornton was recommended to train for ordained ministry in June 2024. However this, plus illness of some leaders, resulted in the decision to end the Messy and Muddy Church sessions from July 2024. We hope to regularly review the situation as we move forward.

Foodbank

The Foodbank continued to benefit from some grants from Groundwork Leeds which helped us provide continuing support for struggling families and individuals this year. However, the grants are postcode limited, so we are now limiting provision to WF3 residents. We continue to log client visits and thanks to the leadership of Ann Maree Whitworth and Sandra Askew, pre-packed bags are now offered to clients, based on the size of their household.

Worship and Prayer

When planning our activities for the year, we have considered the Commission's guidance on public benefit, particularly the supplementary guidance on charities for the advancement of religion. We try to enable people to live out their faith as part of our parish community through:

- Worship and prayer; learning about the Gospel; and developing their knowledge and trust in Jesus. Gaining in confidence to share the Good News of Jesus Christ in the wider community and beyond. Baptism preparation is provided to the parents and carers of young candidates and adult enquirers. Revd Rhodes is assisted by S. Green and C. Laird at monthly baptism preparation sessions, which offer short video presentations and relaxed discussion for all attendees.
- Provision of pastoral care for people living in the parish, including home communions; a foodbank for struggling families across the Parish area and a Community Hub and Café offering bereavement listening, social activities, pastoral conversations and support.
- Mission and outreach work are also, to a significant extent, fulfilled by interactions in the Community Hub and Café. New friendships, support and signposting happen there, and there are many opportunities for faith conversations. Visitors are, if interested, offered a tour of the upstairs church and we have found some of these times to be quite moving as some share stories of bereavement or faith when they enter the worship space. The opportunity to light a candle and sit in the silence of the church is always offered. Social media platforms continued to be used to great advantage to promote the work and witness of Christ Church. Donations to the foodbank, the proposed Memory Garden and other appeals and offers to volunteer have emerged through contact with the café.

Our Welcome Leaflet, produced in 2023, had been distributed to some of the streets within the parish boundary, but with the advent of new benefice services and service patterns, much of the information therein was found to be, sadly, outdated.

The G2H bereavement support group continues to be a much-valued meeting place and safe space for a growing number of individuals, who are extremely generous with praise for our volunteers.

Throughout 2024, we continued to offer Eucharistic worship every Sunday, with an additional Café Church session on the first Sunday of the month and a midweek said Eucharist or lay-led Morning Praise.

Preaching is led by Revd Rhodes, with a monthly sermon from Megan Thornton (until September) and our newly-commissioned lay worship leader, Karen Mclean (commissioned in May 2024).

Holy Week services included a Maundy Thursday Sung Eucharist and Tenebrae, Good Friday Hour at the Cross, Good Friday Reflections, a Holy Saturday Vigil Service and Easter Party, followed by the Easter Sunday Sung Eucharist.

The preacher at our Patronal Festival on Christ the King was the Rt. Revd. Arun Arora, Bishop of Kirkstall.

The proposed new service formats and pattern for Christ Church, from January 2025, to allow for the remaining two full-time clergy across the four churches in the Benefice to realistically manage eucharistic worship plus ongoing pastoral care, will look like this:-

1st Sunday: 9.30am Parish Eucharist

2nd Sunday: 9.30am Grace Space-a lay-led Service of the Word

3rd Sunday: 9.30am: Parish Eucharist

4th Sunday: 9.30am All Together Now! Lay-led Intergenerational Service

5th Sunday: 9.30am Said Eucharist

Our annual Advent Sunday Memorial Service was very well-attended and provided support and a time for reflection and remembering for recently bereaved families, many of whom stayed behind for refreshments in the church hall. Our long-standing association with the local funeral director company ended earlier in the year after their branch moved premises out of the area.

The Christmas Eve Nativity service was combined with a Christingle once again and proved ever popular. Our Midnight Mass service was, sadly, not as well-attended as previous years, though was thoroughly enjoyed and appreciated by all present. The Christmas Morning service was a joint Eucharist at St. Oswald's, Methley.

The material for our Lent Course in 2024 was based on the popular BBC TV series, Call The Midwife.

The Benefice

Revd Sarah Hancox's final service in the benefice took place on 18th February 2024, before her licensing service the following month in Brislington (Bristol Diocese). We welcomed Revd Lisa Senior on 24th March at a special service in All Saints; Parish Hall, Woodlesford, as interim minister for the period of one year, during which work would take place to cement a new service pattern across the benefice and consolidate both clergy and lay roles and responsibilities to ensure more efficient and collegial working as we move forward together.

Deanery Synod

South Leeds Deanery Synod Report 2024 for APCMs in 2025

The Deanery Synod met on 25th January 2024 at St Peter's Church, Gildersome. Stuart Ward, Lay Chair, thanked Rev Phil Harris for serving as Area Dean, and also thanked Sarah Hancox for serving as Assistant Area Dean. Bishop Nick licensed Rev Phil Arnold as Area Dean and Rev Sharon Wilkinson as Assistant Area Dean. Bishop Nick reflected on Jeremiah 29:4-14 and gave an overview of where we are as a Church and nation. He also referred to Psalm 137 and that we should be 'singing the Lord's song in a strange land' as he talked about us living in a time of fragmentation and danger. As we entered a year of General Elections for half of the world's population, the bishops would be identifying political issues and calling people to look at them through the lens of the Lord's Prayer,

particularly seeking the Kingdom of God. Bishop Nick talked about the Diocese being a community of people with a diversity of views, and the need for us to keep our focus on the Kingdom of God together.

The Area Forum at St George's Church on Tuesday 12th March 2024 focused on Church Growth.

The next meeting of the Deanery Synod was on Tuesday 14th May 2024 at Christ Church, Upper Armley. There were updates on the Deanery Synod elections, the practicalities of finding cover during a vacancy and an update on Parish Share. Rev Emily Tidball had been appointed as Priest-in-Charge of the parishes of Gomersal and Birkenshaw and as she had been serving as Deanery Secretary there was a need to appoint someone new for this role. There was a presentation by Janet Edmonds and Alena Rose-Douglas from the Diocese on using church buildings for mission and grants to support mission in our churches.

The third meeting of the Deanery Synod was on Thursday 12th September 2025 at St Wilfrid's, Calverley. Elections to Mission & Pastoral Committee – Rev Phil Arnold volunteered as Clergy Member and Stuart Ward led the election of Ian Waterhouse, previous Lay Chair, who was happy to continue. Brenda Pickard from Calverley agreed to take on the role of Deanery Secretary. Phil mentioned the Selection Panel for Ordinands and asked for any names, clergy or lay to be forwarded to him. DDV Advisors were also mentioned and Rev Rob Denton, who is an Advisor, gave a brief explanation of how it works. Rev Graham Blackwell was unavailable to speak about Artificial Intelligence so Rev Chris Balding shared a few tips on how it can be used practically. Rev Mark Watson spoke about his experiences of 3-year Interim Ministry at St Michael's.

The Area Forum at St George's Church on Tuesday 12th November 2024 focused on Lay Training.

We are thankful for all those who serve on Deanery Synod and, in particular, the work of Rev Phil Arnold, Area Dean, Rev Sharon Wilkinson, Assistant Area Dean and Stuart Ward, South Leeds Deanery Lay Chair and Brenda Pickard, Deanery Secretary.

Church Building & Churchyard

At the beginning of the year, PlusNet informed us that they were discontinuing their Business Broadband which we used in the church hall. EE provided mobile WiFi in church. We decided to replace both contracts with BT who offered us the best option. The new contract began at the end of February with BT Smart Hub in the church hall and two new WiFi discs in church. The result has been very satisfactory.

Work on the Lightning Conductor was completed in early 2024 and is now functioning correctly.

We received permission under Minor Works for our second shed to be installed and were also granted List B consent to repair two of our chalices. The work has been completed and both are now back in use.

The faculty application for the new parking area was reduced to a List B and permission was granted.

The work was completed in the Autumn, in appalling weather, and is now in constant use. A huge improvement on the previous untidy area.

Christ Church was left a large legacy and after much discussion it was decided to investigate the possibility of removing the existing pews, installing underfloor heating and completing with wooden flooring. However, having obtained all the quotes it was realised that the expense was too large and that the money would be better spent on projects needed for the upkeep of the church building.

After a long wait the stone mason completed the restoration of the two pillars at the church entrance. We still have to have the gates repaired, repainted and hung correctly.

Unfortunately all the outside painting to the wood and metalwork, plus certain repairs, are still awaiting permission from the DAC. This has been a long and arduous journey which is still not over. Hopefully next year all will move in the right direction and result in a positive outcome.

Those of us who work on a regular basis in the TLC Café are aware of the low water pressure in the hot taps in the kitchen. Thinking there could be a leak somewhere, Yorkshire Water came out to investigate. Unfortunately the real cause of the problem is still to be discovered. What did transpire though was that we share the mains water supply from the main point on the A61 down the driveway with The Limes Hotel to their car parking area. From there a junction in the mains pipe cuts across into church grounds and enters church property via the boiler room. We do not have a leak on our property fortunately and Ecclesiastical covered all the expense incurred for the inspection. Yorkshire Water did inform us that there is a leak at the back of The Limes Hotel which they need to fix.

In October, three of our treasured books in need of restoration were taken to Spink & Thackray (book restorers) to be repaired, namely The Gospel, Lectionary and Holy Bible. They are now looking pristine and are in constant use.

Towards the front of church on the southern side we have a lot of penetrating damp caused by the wear and tear of the sandstone bricks plus the proud mortar, which should never have been used, and needs to be replaced. As you will have noticed the plaster on the internal walls has been removed on instruction from our architect Tony Blaza to help with the drying out process. It's an ongoing job which will continue into 2025.

Both Angie Smith and I would like to apologise for the delay in getting things done this year. Angie has had a lot of health issues and I have had family problems. We hope to do better in 2025.

The Hall

Brownies and Guides use the hall on a weekly basis during term time.

The Keep Fit group, which had met weekly in the hall for many years, had to close during the year due to falling numbers. The Pounding fitness class still meets weekly.

G2H bereavement support group meets weekly.

The ante-natal classes closed at the end of the year.

The hall was used by Leeds City Council as a Polling Station for elections. The M.P. for the constituency, Mark Sewards, holds monthly surgeries in the hall.

There have been several bookings for children's parties and a group from the GP surgery held a wreath-making day and buffet lunch in December.

During the week while the TLC Café is open there are weekly Indoor Curling and board games sessions, and Crafty Friends crafting group meets monthly.

Local artists and craft workers exhibit their work.

Pastoral Care

Revd Mandy Rhodes, as the incumbent, has the cure of souls for every person in the parish and this is exercised through her ministry in church, in the TLC Café, within the three Primary schools in the Parish, in care homes and in people's homes and other locations in Lofthouse, Carlton, Thorpe and Robin Hood (and beyond to any church members who reside outside the parish boundary). Home Communion ministry was offered by Revd Rhodes and Megan Thornton to two people in the parish throughout the year. After Megan's departure, Tracy Scholey began accompanying Revd Rhodes on some visits, with a view to undertaking home communion ministry training and subsequently receiving the bishop's licence.

Tracy has completed training for Lay Eucharistic Ministry and is awaiting her licence from the bishop and her Lay Pastoral Ministry training is currently ongoing.

Mission and Outreach

Lessons and Collective Worship in the 3 local primary schools included themes of 'How and why people pray', Harvest, Christingle and 'Objects of Christian Faith'. Thorpe Primary School once again brought their Year 2 children to church for their annual Christmas Carol Service.

The TLC Community Café continued to generate new opportunities for pastoral conversations and support for visitors. We welcomed two new volunteers and said goodbye to two due to both relocation and career progression.

Collaboration with art and craft providers brought art workshops plus the beginning of regular craft sessions in the lower hall, all held whilst the café is open for trading, thus increasing footfall and custom.

Sadly, there were no services held in or on behalf of Lofthouse Lodge or Grange in 2024. A change of management and the absence of their social activities coordinator has created something of a brick wall for church contact. However, it is hoped that once things settle down again, contact may be renewed and occasional worship services may resume.

Knitted churchyard displays including poppies for Remembrance and flowers, bees and butterflies for Creation brought colour to the area once again. Reaction on social media platforms was very positive, appreciative and encouraging.

Ecumenical Relationships

The previously longstanding arrangement between Christ Church and Lofthouse Methodists to share Good Friday evening services was, again, absent this year but we continue to enjoy fellowship with some of the Methodist members at our Indoor Curling sessions and their regular visits to the café. Some of our members attend functions at the Methodist Church throughout the year too.

Social Events and Fellowship

The TLC Café provides a safe meeting place into which people in groups, as couples or alone feel welcome to enter. There is always someone to talk to and new friendships have formed.

Once again our Christmas Craft Market and Fair was successful with so many requests for stalls that the church was used as well as the hall

Two gardening days to tidy the churchyard were held with free pizza provided for lunch.

Fashion shows were held in May and October with the usual appreciative audience for the skills of the models and the choice of garments on sale.

Financial Review 2024

A fuller, detailed report is available as a separate document on request, but in summary:

The account balances on 31st December 2024 were:

Charitable (current) Account: £12,482.60 (including restricted funds of £2,676.23 for the Foodbank and £2,793.45 for the Memory Garden fund)

BMM (deposit) Account: 42,640.66 (of which £4,380.00 is restricted funds for the Windows Fund)

Total receipts:	Unrestricted	£ 72,214
	Restricted	<u>£ 4,497</u>
	Total	£ 76,711

The restricted funds we received were for the Foodbank and the Memory Garden.

Regular giving was received through standing orders (10), envelopes (11) and the Parish Giving Scheme (8)

Gift Aid recovered through HMRC was £3,258 and through Parish Giving Scheme (PGS) was £1,317

During 2024 Karen McLean organised 6 raffles which raised a total of £543 for the Memory Garden Fund. A total of £411.96 from the jar in the church hall was donated to the Memory Garden Fund. The Church Hall Stall raised £651.94 in 2024, although there were expenses of £152.17.

Due to our commitments in TLC café, we were limited in the number of events we were able to organise during 2024. We did, however, organise a Fashion Show in May and October (£939) and a Christmas Fair (£725), which were well supported. This was reflected in the increased profits at all the events. There were also record takings of £608 in the café at the Christmas Fair.

All the 100 Club numbers were again taken in 2024 at a cost of £52 per number. This resulted in a profit of £3,000 which was paid into the account in January 2025 and will therefore be included in the 2025 accounts. £2,800 profit from the 100 Club 2023 was credited to our account in January 2024.

TLC Community Café:	Income	£24,017.75
	Expenditure	<u>£ 8,760.99</u>
		£15,256.76

Legacy Funds: We started the year with the remaining £34,430.53 of the legacy in the BMM account. £1,778.53 was used as part payment to Bolton Stone Restoration, the remainder coming from the current account. £2,652 is to be used to pay WMS Site Services in due course, leaving £30,000 to be used for the restoration work inside and outside church, needed due to damp.

Our Parish Share Request for 2024 was £37,503. We ensured that we made a contribution each month, paying a total of £29,503 by the end of the year. This left £8,000 outstanding.

Both our electricity and gas contracts are with SmartestEnergy and are fixed for 2 years, ending in March 2025 and September 2025 respectively. We spent almost £5,000 more for gas in 2024 than in 2023 and that included 4 months (September to December 2023) on the increased tariff.

Reserves Policy

It was PCC Policy to try and maintain a minimum balance of £1,000 in the Charitable Bank Account to cover monthly outgoings.

The BMM Account tries to keep a balance of £2,500 for emergencies, in addition to holding restricted income.

+Summary of finances (final page)