

## PCC Secretary's Annual Report for 2023-4

### 1 Introduction

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) is a charity – the members are Charity Trustees and must ensure that the right policies and procedures are in place to ensure good governance and compliance. This report is compiled in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 and the Church Representation Rules 2020.

### 2 Aim and Purposes

The PCC consults and co-operates with the parish priest on matters of general concern and importance to the parish, and in promoting in the parish the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social, and ecumenical.

The PCC is also specifically responsible for the maintenance of the church buildings and management of the parish finances.

Our objective is to enable as many people as possible to hear the Good News of Jesus Christ and find faith in God.

Our services and worship put faith into practice through prayer and scripture, music, and sacrament.

We aim to enable people to live out their faith as part of our parish community through the Five Marks of Mission adopted by the General Synod of the Church of England in 1996:

- To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom
- To teach, baptise and nurture new believers
- To respond to human need by loving service
- To seek to transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and to pursue peace and reconciliation
- To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth

### 3 Membership and Administration

#### 3.1 Membership

Following the annual revision during March and April 2023, there are **currently 75 names on the Electoral Roll**, which is net change of -2 from last year.

The Electoral Roll officer is Monica Fowler.

The PCC consists of the Vicar, 2 Churchwardens, 3 Deanery Synod representatives, and 9 elected lay members. The membership is 14 people. At the end of 2023-4 we have 5 vacancies – 2 Deanery Synod Reps and 3 Lay members.

PCC members all completed the Trustee Eligibility declaration and HMRC Fit and Proper Persons declaration as required by law. These documents are held on file by the PCC Secretary.

#### 3.2 Meetings

The PCC met 6 times during the year:

Wednesday 16 May 2023 - immediately after the APCM to appoint officers

Tuesday 11 July 2023 – in Church

Monday 11 September 2023 – in Church

Monday 1 November 2023 – in the Norden Inn, Edenfield Road

Tuesday 30 January 2024 – in the Parish Hall

Tuesday 9 April 2023 – in the Parish Hall

### 3.3 Attendance

The average attendance at the six PCC meetings held during the year was 9 members per meeting.

Actual attendance was 83% of possible attendance.

All meetings reached a quorum of 6 members attending.

Our ordinand, Kirsten Rutherford attended all PCC meetings during the year as a guest.

### 3.4 Officers

PCC Officers were elected at the PCC meeting on 16 May 2023 that immediately followed the APCM.

#### 3.4.1 Chair

Rev Jason Powell chaired all meetings.

Andrew Mawson was re-appointed Vice Chair.

#### 3.4.2 Secretary

Ian Short was re-appointed PCC Secretary.

#### 3.4.3 Treasurer

John Richardson was re-appointed Treasurer.

#### 3.4.4 Independent Examiner

The APCM confirmed Philip Herd CPFA, 16 Shearing Avenue, Rochdale to act as Independent Examiner for the accounts.

#### 3.4.5 Standing Committee

The Standing Committee of the PCC consists of the Incumbent, both Churchwardens, PCC Treasurer and PCC Secretary. The Standing Committee is a sub-committee of the PCC authorised and accountable by and to the committee for the routine work of the PCC between meetings.

#### 3.4.6 Parish Hall Committee

The only other sub-committee of the PCC is the Parish Hall Committee, which is responsible to the PCC for the management of the Parish Hall in Black Pits Road.

## 4 Worship and Mission

Our Mission is to proclaim the Good News, it is why we're here, and it is always high on the PCC agenda. We have a Mission Action Plan for our Mission Community that forms the basis of our work together. This recognises the current activities and strengths of each of the churches and enables us to co-operate and support each other.

Priorities and highlights have included:

- Introduction of the new Mission Community XHALE service at St Michael's – building on the success of the Breathe service, which also continues to thrive. We aim to provide relaxed contemporary worship with contemplation, making use of the technology available at St Michael's.
- Special service with the local community to celebrate the Coronation of King Charles III
- A very successful event for Heritage Open Days, celebrating culture and creativity in Norden. This event demonstrated the potential to use the church building for community events

beyond Sunday services. The event was opened by the Mayor of Rochdale, was attended by over 400 people over the weekend and incorporated:

- A display of photographs, paintings, art and crafts produced or cherished by local people and community groups
  - A demonstration of hand spinning
  - A talk on local history and culture
  - Three concerts by local musicians – our organist, a singing group and a brass band
  - A Songs of Praise style service
- Communication – We have continued to increase the use of Social Media to promote St Paul’s events. However, we are aware that there is still very much more to do.
  - Continuing to manage the churchyard in line with Eco-church and the 5<sup>th</sup> Mark of Mission, and gradually evolving our practices to minimise our impact on the environment.
  - The contactless payments terminal in church (provided free of charge by the Diocese) has taken £2275 so far and continues to be used regularly, though some work is needed to site it in a more prominent location
  - The new Garden of Remembrance is now in use, though we still await the memorial stone, delayed by the stonemasons problems obtaining the correct stone
  - Finally signing off the Roof project and starting work to replace the heating – see Fabric Report below

## 5 Vicar’s Report 2022-23

Rev Jason Powell reports:

### 5.1 Children, Youth and Families

The @7 service has continued to be the service with the highest attendance of any across the benefice. Often with numbers between 100 – 150 people. This service is a short 30-minute act of worship shaped around the liturgy of Service of the Word. There is a welcome, confession, bible reading, exploration of the reading, intercessions, and songs. It is usual for the service to be child led, guided by one of the four leaders (Jane Clegg, Stuart Willis, Jill Din, Megan Griffiths), with children also reading the intercessions and taking other roles where and when required (such as running the laptop). It is fair to say there have been grumbles about the service from all quarters and these are mostly centred around the poor behaviour of a small group of the parents and children. None the less, the team have worked hard for many years with this service trying to share the gospel and show a faith which can be enriching to life for the individual, families, and community. Their passion for this has been incredible to see, especially when undervalued and under supported. Over the years there have been various iterations of the service to try and keep it fresh, though with such a small team, large numbers, and little support, it has proved to a taxing conundrum. Over the course of the year, we have benefited from the service being led by Deborah Smith (Head of the Board of Education) Melanie Barratt (St Michael’s Head teacher) along with other members of the diocesan Family and Children’s team who have sought to support and inspire both our congregation and our small team. The addition of the screens at St Paul’s (A flat screen TV donated by a member of the @7 service, and stand paid for by the @7 service) and St Michael’s has been warmly received not just by families and young people, but also by many in our congregations who find the images and text a helpful aid either for liturgy, sermons and or prayer times. The screen at St Paul’s has proven to be especially useful at events other than services such as school visits and the heritage weekend.

Returning to theme, both Stuart W and I have continued to be involved with local schools, principally Norden Primary, Whitaker Moss and St Michael's. Through collective worship, visits to school to talk about Christian practices, theology, and festivals we have continued to build on the existing relationships. The schools have also made use of our buildings for events such as carol services or part of curriculum learning about places of worship with schools such as Caldershaw and Whitaker Moss visiting during the year. The Wednesday lunchtime group Biblical Buffet which takes place at St Michael's has continued to delve into questions of faith, theology, and life in general with questions devised by the year 6 children who attend. This year St Michael's school began holding end of term collective worship in the church building. This time together is shaped around a theme with content and delivery being almost entirely led by the children. We are grateful to the new deputy head Mrs Lamb (also RE Lead) for her support and bringing this to fruition.

Baptisms continued to be regular with both the services at St Michael's and St Paul's (1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday at 1 pm). We were also able to bring to the Mission Community Confirmation service at St Ann's Belfield, 3 teenagers who had self-selected to be confirmed by +Mark Middleton. On the back of this there was a hope of bringing together our 3 teenagers together with some others from the deanery for the start of a new group. Sadly, we could not find a night or venue to accommodate, though the idea is not totally dead.

## 5.2 Pastoral Care

It is a joy to see the Thursday pastoral drop in at St Paul's Parish Hall continue to go from strength to strength. After a meeting during the year (where we invited Ruth Hughes Pastoral ALM at Christ Church Healey to come and share with us good practice and help us think about how we could grow the ministry) it was agreed to go beyond offering tea, coffee and cake and offer a simple service and or Songs of Praise karaoke for those who can't get to church on another Thursday in the month. This too has been received well with people picking hymns they have not sung for some time, along with a simple time of fellowship, as ever, served with tea and biscuits. The biggest issue holding back the small, dedicated team is a lack of hands to help coordinate and do.

While the question of Home Communion assistants has been asked (can we have some?), currently nobody has stepped up to support this ministry. Connected to this is the matter of Holy Communion Assistants in our principal services of which we are short in number at all three churches. A list of names for Home Communicants is being drawn up, but it will require more than the vicar to be involved. While communication regarding people wanting Home Communion has improved there are still too many people not informing either the vicar, wardens, or the pastoral team. There has been conversation about how to make this clearer for people which included running a note in the pew sheet, but more could be done.

There has been a considerable number of funerals in the benefice with a number being for members of our worship community. On the occasions they were called for, our choirs and organists represented us well, and our vergers ensured the buildings were well turned out and welcomed people appropriately. As a result, we are continuing to build good relations with our local funeral directors in a growing competitive market of 'straight to crem' funerals. Where we fall down is the post funeral follow up for the widow or widower.

## 5.3 Highlights and points of note

Looking back over the year there have been some lovely occasions where our churches stepped up and shone. There was the Strawberry Tea organised by St James and hosted at Ashworth Hall, the

heritage weekend which brought together all kinds of art and music, and had record numbers attend over the weekend (Including an excellent turn out for the Songs of Praise Sunday Service), the well-received carol services at St Paul's (with the wonderful addition of Cadence) and St Michael's both seeing an increase in attendance. There were also the wonderful fairs, the Christmas fair at St Paul's which is always a crowd pleaser; this year St Michael's joined with community partners Bamford Scouts (9<sup>th</sup> Heywood) and St Michaels school PTA to host a summer fair which was also a well-attended event which gave us the opportunity to work alongside others in our community for the benefit of our shared community.

The house groups continued with the Mapping Material. Each group is quite different, which is to be expected, and is to be encouraged. The key point of the groups is to create a space for Christians to talk about faith and life together, to begin normalizing seeing faith as more than Sunday. The Mapping courses have been successful in opening up those conversations.

For lent this year we invited all three churches to use the Bible Society's free Lent Devotional. It was free to anyone with an email address. Each day the participant received a short reading and devotional. The readings charted the story of the cross from Genesis all the way to the resurrection. This was coupled with the chance to gather at Jenny Buckley's house after the Christian Aid Lent Soup to discuss anything that had struck people in the devotionals and to explore that days reading together. The gatherings were attended by a good mix from the 3 churches and enjoyed a lively debate and discussion.

Our evening services continue to move along with a dedicated following. Evensong on the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday at St Paul's, Breathe 2<sup>nd</sup> and Xhale 3<sup>rd</sup> Sundays at St Michael's. Each service offers a unique way to connect with God through song and prayer. The Breathe congregation (made up with people from across the Mission Community) had wanted to organise a retreat, though finding a time and venue to suit has proven to be an obstacle, there is a hope of planning one for 2025 which would be open to all the benefice. There was also the introduction of new services such as the Blue Christmas which was well received by those who attended. The Wardens and I continue to meet to review, discuss, and plan future services to meet with our goals of being a mission focussed church serving the local area.

In August we received great news, we were to be blessed with another ordinand who will be on long term placement with us for 3 years, Megan Griffiths. It has been a great joy to welcome her to the team and see her settle in so quickly with the pastoral team, the @7 team, Biblical Buffet and many of our regular Sunday morning congregation. This year marked the start of Kirsten's final year as an ordinand with us. We are truly grateful for all she has offered to our benefice through her wisdom, friendship, and ministry. While it is Kirsten's final year, the bitterness of a departure has been assuaged for the bishop offered Kirsten a curacy with our benefice. This is due to begin on the 30<sup>th</sup> of June with a deaconing service at Manchester cathedral. We are immensely blessed to have such wonderful people as part of our church community.

Across our benefice we are still low on people to fill duties which keep the church ticking along. We do not have a full complement of wardens as is also the case with other important roles like sides people/welcomers, deanery synod reps; sometimes we struggle for the tea and coffee rota and for the cleaning of the church. As a result, more work has fallen into the hands of those that are already doing many things. In addition, our team of ALMs grows smaller as people lay down ministries. Sadly, this year Aileen Mallinder died. She leaves behind the wonderful legacy of a faithful servant whose ministry touched many lives.

Our Mission Community continues to meet for services and times of prayer and outreach which include services such as Ash Wednesday at St Chad's, Easter Sunrise service (a movable feast, this year at Christ Church Healey) along with seasonal events like playing a part at the Feel Good Family Picnic, carol singing in the town centre and more. Clergy still gather to pray for our Mission Community congregations and those who live and work in our area.

Church life does seem to revolve around cake and tea and so our ecumenical venture this year has been several cake and cuppa events across the local ecumenical area. These events have been well supported overall and have included St Clements, a church which I am sure feels very alone as it currently is still in interregnum limbo. In addition to these chats and times of fellowship we have sung at carols Cutgate precinct and continue to have regular meetings between leaders to try and keep the wheels turning with support of each other and our respective churches.

#### 5.4 Other ministries

For the first time since before covid, Manchester Diocese ran its Spiritual Companions course which I am fortunate to be a tutor on. I am also a member of the team which has responsibility for Spiritual Companions and prayer and spirituality in the diocese. I continue to offer Spiritual Direction for a number of people. In October I completed the 2<sup>nd</sup> 10 days of silent retreat required by the Ignatian exercises. It was fruitful and I look forward to completing the full 30 days later this year.

I still inhabit the envious role of Mission Community Leader, which provides me with further training and the opportunity to work with colleagues in our MC and with other MC leaders.

I am School Governor at St Michael's and provide pastoral support to staff.

With the departure of Rev Ian Bullock to Leeds Diocese, I have taken his responsibilities as one of the chaplains to the Readers in Rochdale Deanery working under the Warden to the Readers, +Matthew Bolton.

I continue to support, through tutoring, the ALM and FFM courses and the training of curates as an ILG tutor.

Finally, to all those who clean the church, ensure there are refreshments, sing in the choir, turn up in all weathers to the PCC and sub-committees, clean and look after the halls, help out at occasional offices, provide pastoral support, pray for the church and her ministry and so much more, I am hugely grateful for your service to Christ. Over this next year may we all commit to give ourselves as a lively sacrifice for him who gave everything for us.

*Rev Jason Powell*

## 6 Church Fabric

As required by the Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction and Care of Churches Measure 2018, the Churchwardens, Andrew Mawson and Jenny Buckley, regularly inspect the building and grounds and, in consultation with the PCC and the Vicar, arrange necessary remedial work. We are particularly grateful to PCC member Rodney Fowler who supports the wardens as our Fabric co-ordinator.

2023-4 finally saw the closure of the Roof project. Due to the insolvency of the main contractor and the Covid pandemic disrupting our plans we underspent on the project and were required to refund £12486 to Heritage Lottery Fund. Fortunately, this money was already ringfenced for the project so does not affect other funds.

Other fabric related activity included:

- Completing the Garden of Remembrance (apart from the memorial stone, which remains outstanding)

- Starting work on planning the renewal of the entire church heating system, following expert advice that the current system is well beyond its life-expectancy and is about to fail. The Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC) has advised us that “...it is important to recognise and point out that the heating system required for this Church does need to satisfy both the conservation requirements and comfort level requirements, which can only reasonably be provided by a wet system of heating detailed and supplied via a "hybrid" ASHP/boiler plant”. We have received strong advice from the Archdeacon that we should take this opportunity to develop the building into a welcoming community space by planning for the replacement of the pews with chairs, and the installation of solar panels to improve energy efficiency. The PCC is currently obtaining comparable quotes for this work and will commission a competitive tendering process to obtain best value for money.
- Safe removal of asbestos found in the boiler room will be required, and we have received £5000 grant funding from Rochdale Council towards this.
- We continue to keep health and safety under review and have undertaken a variety of minor remedial works as they became necessary.

The Terrier is available for inspection in the vestry and at the APCM.

## 7 Finance

Please see John Richardson’s Treasurer’s report, appended to this document.

## 8 Pastoral Team

The Pastoral team continues to be well supported by members of St Paul’s and St Michael’s. Looking forwards it would be good if there was representation from St James. The pastoral team continues to communicate through a Whats App group, to aid communication across members of the benefice, as well as verbal communication. Members of the team have also continued to make home visits.

The Thursday Coffee and Cake Drop In continued in 2023, meeting at St Paul’s Parish Hall, using the small room in the Winter, and large room in the Summer. The number of people attending on average is 15 including the team. The sessions are aimed at bringing people together for fellowship, particularly those who may be lonely. Refreshments and lifts are provided by the team.

In May 2023 we met at St James, Ashworth to enjoy the floral display and were provided refreshments from St James.

Sept 2023 the drop in was moved to the Friday 8<sup>th</sup> where we met in St Paul’s Church to enjoy the Heritage Weekend Display, refreshments were provided by St Paul’s.

Nov 2023 was cancelled due to the funeral of a parishioner, where many of the team and those that attend the drop in were attending the funeral.

Dec 2023 was the annual Christmas Dinner. A three course lunch was provided for 21 invited guests. St Michael’s School Choir came and sang which was thoroughly enjoyed by all. The team worked exceptionally hard to provide a wonderful lunch. The lunch was funded by monetary donations from the congregations, food donations from members of the pastoral team, and the transport for the school choir funded by Manchester Diocese Mothers’ Union.

In August 23 a meeting was held with the pastoral committee. We met with Ruth Hughes an ALM from Christ Church Healey to hear how they structure their pastoral support systems.

After discussion with Reverend Jason there is now a second afternoon taking place in St Paul’s Parish Hall, meeting on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of the month. The aim of this second Thursday is to give an opportunity to gather for worship through the Eucharist and Song and also for fellowship, particularly

for those who find it difficult to attend church on a Sunday morning. This started in Oct 23 with Holy Communion, Nov 2023 Hymn-a-long where those attending could request to sing their favourite hymns, and Dec 2023 Carol-a-long.

*Kirsten Rutherford, Ordinand*

## 9 Safeguarding

The PCC has complied with the duty under section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 (duty to have regard to House of Bishops' guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults).

PCC members are expected to undertake Safeguarding awareness training. Most members have now done this and provided certificates of completion; the remainder have undertaken to do so as soon as possible.

Our Parish Safeguarding Co-ordinator for the protection of children and vulnerable adults is Jane Clegg – her contact details are on the noticeboards in church, scout hut and parish hall, and on the benefice website.

### “Safeguarding Report for St. Pauls 2022

I, Jane Clegg of 5 Hutchinson Road, Norden, Rochdale OL11 5TX am currently in the role of safeguarding officer for St. Pauls church Norden, Rochdale.

I am responsible for the protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults involved in church activities.

I am committed to:

- Promote a safer environment and culture.
- Safe recruiting and supporting all those with any responsibilities relating to children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- Care pastorally for victims/survivors of abuse and other affected persons.
- Care pastorally for those who are subject of concerns or allegations of abuse and other affected persons.
- Respond to those that may pose a present risk to others.

There have been no incidents during the period of commencing my role in 2017 to present.

I have completed a refresher online training session in 2023 and have completed 3 DBS check renewals in 2023 for members of the pastoral team.

I will continue to keep all our people updated.

There are safeguarding policies displayed in church, scout hut, parish hall and side rooms which are updated and changed when necessary.

The safeguarding policy can also be accessed through our benefice website.

This concludes my report for 2023.”

## 10 Deanery Synod Report

We are in Rochdale Deanery, with Rev Karen Smeeton as full-time Area Dean.



Our lay representative on Rochdale Deanery Synod is Ian Short. We currently have vacancies for 2 more lay reps. The Vicar is also a Synod member. Appointments run for 3 years, and elections are not due until 2026. However, nominations are sought to fill our 2 vacancies.

Deanery Synod met 4 times during 2023-4.

The main topics discussed were:

- Parish Share and giving
- Young People's concerns – Watch our World - reducing plastic waste
- Focal ministry
- Prayer

## 11 Conclusion

2023-4 has seen St Paul's make progress in many ways – the roof project is done, the Garden of Remembrance is in use, and thanks to the hard work of many people both in and beyond the congregation the Heritage weekend was a resounding success.

There are challenging times ahead, of course – renovating the church heating system and improving the interior will be exciting, but will require a huge effort to raise the necessary finances.

The Parish Hall remains a valuable asset, in use 7 days a week for community groups, parties, meetings and events. We are grateful to the small group of dedicated people that look after the hall. The continued success of the hall depends on all of us lending a hand when it's needed – in particular helping to organise the most important fundraising event of the year, the Christmas Fair.

Under Rev Jason's leadership, the PCC continues to work to further improve connections with the local community. We are still, 4 years into Jason's incumbency, looking forward to the purchase of the promised new vicarage and having Jason living in the benefice. That would be a significant step towards us being seen as an integral part of local life, and cannot happen soon enough.

With God's help we'll continue to build on our strengths and fix our weaknesses as we move forward, seeking to understand and implement His plan for our village.

Thank you to the PCC members for their commitment to the life and work of St Paul's.

Thank you as well to all the other people in our church family that do so much, often unsung, unthanked, and sometimes even un-noticed. We're very grateful to each and every one of you.

Anyone who is over 16, receives holy communion, and is on the Electoral Roll of the parish is very welcome to put themselves forward for election to the PCC.

Please pray and think about joining the team. We need you!



Ian Short

PCC Secretary,

St Paul's, Norden