



St John the Evangelist, Whittle-le-Woods

**Annual Report 2021  
Charity Number 1134259**

**The Annual Report on the proceedings of the  
Parochial Church Council  
And the activities of the Church  
To be received by the Annual Parish Meeting**

Received and adopted by the PCC on the 7<sup>th</sup> March 2022

Rev Philip Venables, Chairman

Lyndon Wright & Gill Menhennet, Churchwardens



## **The Parish of St John the Evangelist PCC Report**

### **The vision of the Church is as follows:**

We Seek Revival through: -

**Speak Out**

**Reach Out**

**Gather in for Christ**

During the year 2021 the following served as members of the PCC:

Rev Philip Venables – Vicar & Chair

Rev Paul Davies – Curate

Lyndon Wright – Churchwarden

Gill Menhennet – Churchwarden

Deborah Green – Deputy Churchwarden

David Barlow – PCC Secretary, resigned October. Treasurer, resigned December.

Kathy Bigio – Reader

Les Jones – Reader and Deputy Churchwarden

Gill Lancaster – Reader

Alison Wynne – Deanery Synod Representative

Chris Wynne – Deanery Synod Representative

Nick Brake

Stuart Cross

Chris Dawson

Anne Harris

Susan Parkinson

Gaynor Simons

Julie Summers

Val Whittle

Chris Woolham

Throughout 2021 the PCC met six times, either in person or on zoom. A co-ordinator report from each church was given at the meetings and a report from the various PCC teams as applicable. The Standing Committee did not meet.

### **Electoral Roll report 2021**

After deletions and additions, the total number of people on the electoral roll in 2021 was 169. 143 resident in the parish and 26 non-resident  
134 from St John's and 35 from Clayton Brook

## Vicar's Report for 2021

In some ways 2021 felt harder than 2020. There was no novelty factor about either lockdown or online church; we didn't have those amazing weeks of beautiful weather that we experienced during the first lockdown; deadlines for 'freedom' kept changing and uncertainty abounded; the death rate stayed stubbornly high for a long time; the future looked uncertain. It was significant that by the beginning of this year many people felt great weariness and were struggling to maintain their Christian ministries. In which case, it is surely encouraging that we have kept going and held together as a church family. Thank you to everyone for keeping going.

And there were, of course, some very good things in 2021:

Early in the year it was really positive to see many church members join thousands of others in the diocese for our Blackburn-wide **Lent Devotional** readings taking us right through Mark's Gospel. What a great initiative. It was good, too, that we managed to get **growth groups** up and running again in the autumn. These have been an encouragement to many after a long enforced break.

2021 also saw us move forward from pre-recording Sunday services for YouTube (which was becoming increasingly demanding and exhausting) to **live-streaming**. While I fear that this keeps some of us away from all-important meeting together, it is also a great thing that we can reach people who are housebound or whose work patterns keep them from attending. We have had fairly consistent weekly views of around 50. 'Live' attendance on Sundays is still a little lower than before the pandemic, but it feels as though we are living again, which is wonderful.

Towards the end of the year our six new **ALMs** (authorised lay ministers) were commissioned in the cathedral and it has been so good to have new service leaders on Sundays as well as training in pastoral ministry. (Two more ALMs are in training this year also.)

After an enforced stop to plans for **reordering** St John's in 2020, soon after the roof was finished, we were able to pick this up again in 2021. We have a good plan to provide toilets, a kitchen, flexible space and seating, a new stage, lighting and heating. The cost is likely to be around £800,000, of which we have half, so there is still much preparation work to be done. But it is happening and we are further forward than we have ever been over the many previous years. We are calling our project 'FaithBuilders' (building in faith and for faith) and our vision is to grow as 'a loving church family attracting others to Jesus.' May the Lord make us just that!

Roland Orr

It was a great blow to lose Roland in May—most of all to Cath and their family, of course, but also to the church family of St John's and Clayton Brook. Roland exercised a wide-ranging, varied, and fruitful ministry: leading and preaching on Sundays; taking the Lord's Supper to care homes and housebound individuals; a street pastor; and, during lockdown, a far-reaching telephone ministry. He was a friend to so many and was and is still deeply missed. Almost never did I hear a cross word from Roland, and certainly never an unkind one. A big fellow and a big character, he has most definitely left a big hole in the life of our church. We thank God for him and rejoice that he now experiences his glorious presence.

## **St John's Churchwarden Report 2021**

The New Year began with a further lockdown for Churches, continuing with our on- line services.

The roll out of the vaccination programme was a national priority.

Alleluia in February the work to deal with dry rot and the roof was completed and the scaffolding was removed. Following this we arranged for a hard-working cleaning day, many people joined in and we achieved a serviceable building once again.

At the end of February, we held a Church Family Quiz night on zoom which was well supported and enjoyed by all. Paul once again achieved great things using the technology at his disposal.

In March saw the end of the lockdown period, schools were open together with places of worship. Preparation was put in place with regards to proper social distancing, face masks, hand sanitizer and recording all who attended.

On 28<sup>th</sup> March there was a moving on-line, Memorial and Thanksgiving service for family and friends who we had lost.

Between Ascension Day and Pentecost, we celebrated Thy Kingdom Come via a daily vlog.

During the course of this year the Love Fund has remained strong and is there to support families in times of need.

The life of the church has continued to deal with the virus. Millions of us by April and May receiving our 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> vaccinations.

In May Roland Orr died, a trusted friend to us all, a lay preacher, a true man of God who I know was loved by many from both sides of our church family. We were able to celebrate his life at the funeral service with both sadness and joy. Cath has been steadfast in her faith and a true inspiration for us all.

Each Sunday in August after the service we held a food Sunday, consisting of Cupcakes, ice creams, doughnuts and on the last Sunday, bacon butties. Always a delight for many which hopefully will be reciprocated later in the year.

Anne Harris had organized an exciting afternoon of Shell Hunting on Ainsdale Beach, unfortunately the Weather that day was not kind to us, so hopefully we may reschedule this.

In September we had a prayer breakfast at Clayton Brook, introducing a speaker from Compassion UK, which was well received.

Later in the month Les, Cathy and Gill were relicensed as lay readers at Blackburn Cathedral, we have a lovely picture to remind us on our Facebook page.

I believe our lines of communication are strengthening, through Philip's uplifting emails, our weekly sermons and our inclusive church website and Facebook updates.

On 13.11.21 we held a family quiz night at Clayton Brook in support of Tear Fund a good night was had by all with some very intelligent groups. No need to name the winning team, they accepted their accolades on the night.

Thanks to Chris Wynne and his perseverance with BT we now have internet access into the building, this will provide further opportunities going forward.

Our growth groups have continued to meet some in person others via zoom. They continue to be a great source of instruction, fellowship and opportunity for prayer. However, we still recognize that some members of our church family do not have access to zoom and greatly miss the contact meeting regularly with others provides.

This year at the end of November we were able to present our Christmas Adventure, thanks to the leadership of Nick and Jen and the support of many others who were instrumental in making the afternoon a fantastic opportunity to come together in fellowship with one another. To be able to speak with people we had not had seen for a while. We estimate between 200 to 300 adults and children came into the church to enjoy the activities, music, cakes and not forgetting the animals outside.

Our meetings with the architect regarding the reordering of St Johns Church have continued with great purpose and a firm strategy for moving forward has been agreed. Now the hard work begins in identifying people with skills to support the project in fund raising, prayer, and a vision for the next generation of this building. This project will not succeed without strong minded people of our church congregation coming forward offering their time and skill set. There is no time for leaving this to others, that time has passed.

In October/November we were hearing about a new variant of the virus, later confirmed as Omicron. How quickly this variant spread, noticeably in South Africa and hitting the rest of the world by December harshly. A fresh national campaign was to enable the population to get a booster vaccination, which is continuing into the new year. Face masks became mandatory once again in Churches as in other areas of our daily lives.

Thank you, Gill Lancaster once again for facilitating the Shoe Box campaign, we reached 100 for the first time, great news and such a worthwhile cause, always good to be reminded of the joy they bring to so many children who have so little in material things, but have enormous hearts for the love of others.

Thankfully this year following government guidelines we were able to have our Carol Service in church which was a joyous celebration of song and scripture, followed by a comforting warm drink of mulled wine albeit outside. Our crib service was well attended and great to be able to share with one another on Christmas day in Church.

Once again this has been a difficult twelve months, where we have had to come along side one another with love and understanding. As a church family we continue to face challenges but will continue to meet them with a positive approach.

The deeper the darkness, the more brilliant will be the radiant glory of the sun of righteousness, Christ the Lord.

Lyndon, Church Warden

## Clayton Brook Churchwarden Report 2021

Our first Sunday service of 2021 was to be the last in church until 14<sup>th</sup> March due to the COVID virus. We gave thanks that God had sustained us throughout 2020, guiding us through a minefield of COVID regulations. We knew we could trust Him to do the same again in 2021, whatever struggles we faced.

We continued our online Sunday services and provided copies of the sermon and prayers for those who weren't able to access them online. Our growth groups, prayer groups, PCC and Coordinators meetings were all held via Zoom. These were a lifeline to our church family. With the wonders of technology and the expertise to set it up, we enjoyed a Zoom family Quiz night in January which reminded us just how important it is to meet together in whatever way we can.

Although our building was closed our Pastoral Team kept in touch with the congregation and provided help where it was needed. In January four of our members joined the ALM training programme which the Diocese had launched to encourage lay people to serve in their parishes. The Authorised Lay Ministry programme offered training in a variety of roles and following completion of the course our four members were authorised in a special service held at Blackburn Cathedral in September. They are now using their training to serve God in our church. God has brought new people to us throughout the year and the majority of our members have returned too. Sadly, Glennis, one of our church family passed away in July.

Following the launch of a COVID vaccine we reopened our church building for Sunday services again on 14<sup>th</sup> March, albeit with restrictions in place. Praise God, it was wonderful to worship in person despite wearing masks!

In May a group of volunteers delivered 'Pray for 5 people cards' to homes in the local area. This was to mark Thy Kingdom Come, a worldwide prayer initiative. We celebrated the Baptism of five babies which is a blessing for the whole church family.

In June, we welcomed Bishop Julian who encouraged us to focus on caring for each other as we reach out and gather in for Christ. Gradually, as restrictions eased, we began to visit our members living in care homes as well as taking Holy Communion to those unable to return to church.

Some of our user groups were able to restart and in September we held the first Prayer Breakfast for a long time. Steve from Compassion talked to us about their sponsorship programme and this resulted in a number of people signing up to sponsor a child in need. In November we hosted a TEARFUND Big Quiz which was great fun as well as raising much needed funds. Each year we support Operation Christmas Child who organise shoeboxes filled with gifts for children in need across the world. We were honoured to open our building for them to process over 7,000 shoeboxes given in the North West.

Thankfully, we were able to have our Carol Service this year and welcomed new people, some of whom are now coming to church regularly. Just days before Christmas we opened the church for those visiting the Chorley Borough Council food van which was sited on our car park. We provided a warm place for them to eat as well as an opportunity to chat to them over a hot drink. We pray for more opportunities to connect with our community. Our church building was well maintained throughout the year.

The heating pipes in the hall and lounge were boxed in and the internal doors repaired. The majority of this cost was covered by a £1000.00 grant from the Alice & Harold Bridges charity. Our outside grounds were also regularly attended to. I am thankful to all the volunteers who's hard work and commitment make our church a welcoming place with Christ at it's heart. I thank God for his provision again this year and ask Him to help us reach out further into our community in 2022.

Gill Menhennet  
Churchwarden

## Deanery Synod Report

Chorley Deanery Synod has been dormant for a while. During the first part of 2021 plans were made to get the Synod up and running again with a view to resuming meetings and become quorate again i.e. appoint chair, secretary and treasurer to suit normal Synod places. July 2021 saw the Area Dean position taken up by Rev Neil Kelley – rector of St Laurence's Chorley. Other positions tentatively are Lay Chair – Andrew Stokes, and Assistant Area Dean Rev Jo Smith. No secretary has been appointed.

Neil instigated an informal gathering of Deanery Synod reps to take place in his garden, at the Rectory in Chorley, on August 19<sup>th</sup>.

This could be counted as the first time many of us met for quite a while. Alison and I met a number of reps from around Chorley Deanery including of course Neil, as well as the vicar of Euxton Jo Smith, and her very recently joined curate Amy Bland among others. Jo is to be Assistant Area Dean.

The first business meeting was scheduled for 5<sup>th</sup> October at St James, Wrightington.

Unfortunately Alison and I could not go as St John's had a prayer meeting planned for that night.

5<sup>th</sup> Oct 2021

Meeting was in person – first since the original Covid-19 lockdown.

47 members attended and 8 apologies.

The Treasures report updated us that the bank account had moved then transitioned to Virgin Money. This means there are no branches so the standing committee are to meet to discuss what that means to the Synod.

Lorraine (Treasurer?) is no longer a Deanery Synod member. Proposal received that she should be co-opted as a member.

The main discussions were around firstly what have we lost? What do we regret losing?

Various items related to these questions:

- Children's work. Children no longer being brought to church
- Sharing the peace in a physical way
- The fellowship of coffee/tea after church
- Full communion, not sharing the cup
- Pastoral care for those no longer attending, following up on their absence

Secondly what are we giving thanks for? What have we gained? Responses relating to these questions:

- Live Streaming and services broadcast online
- Embracing technology for monetary giving

- Getting to know each other better
- Standing orders/direct debits increasing in number
- Impact on the community

Following on the question was asked – who is our congregation now – just those in church or inclusive of those watching remotely?

Third discussion about what we are struggling with and what can we offer other churches in the deanery? Responses to this:

- Money, particularly fundraising events and lower congregations, losing the routine of giving
- Shortage of helpers/volunteers for everyday tasks
- Clergy cover

Out of this it proved that it's difficult to offer help to others yet, as we have not fully assessed where we are. But having a central contact might help co-ordinate requests and offers of help across the deanery.

After general notices and Night Prayer the meeting closed.

## **St John's Junior Church Report**

After all the uncertainty of 2020, we were so grateful to God to be able to re-start Junior Church in the church basement. At first we were constrained by social distancing and the necessity to keep the children apart. More visual aids were used to make the teaching more accessible to children aged between 3 and 11. Without the space or teachers for a separate preschool Bubbles group, we tried to cater for all the children who came. Activities were carried out and worksheets filled in on clipboards on knees. We were so grateful that God provided everything we needed and the children enjoyed the weekly sessions.

As the regulations were relaxed, the chairs were moved closer together and child participation in the lessons increased. It was great to see the children helping the bible stories come to life by acting out the different parts.

As more teachers and assistants came forward, the pathfinder group restarted in the vicarage with the children/young people enjoying age-appropriate bible reading and discussion.

Pathfinder after-school club re-started on Tuesdays in April and we all enjoyed the mix of food, garden sports, activities and a lively bible study. In September we were thrilled to welcome back 3 year 8s, 3 year 7s and 9 year 6s. Please join us in praying that we can continue to cater for the spiritual needs of all our young people.

We continue to thank God for every child and every leader and for leading, inspiring and sustaining us week by week. To God be the glory.

Caroline Venables

## **Clayton Brook Community Church Junior Church Report**

We started the year with all groups suspended as Covid lockdowns continued. We were finally able to commence Sunday teaching in May (for church family children), completing risk assessments and attempting to comply with regulation and advice. Instead of our usual 3 groups, we combined to form one Kings Kids group. We have been blessed with an enlarged group of leaders which has allowed us to operate a teaching rota. Thanks to all for their service and commitment.

From September we were able to open to children from the wider community, which boosted numbers to an average of 12, with over 20 on register. Over the months we taught through some of our Life of Christ series, with a focus on miracles and the power of God.

Sadly we have not been able to restart Friday Club due to a lack of leaders. This is very sad after over 25 years of church hosting such a club, with the positive family connections it brings, and special events which it supports. However, we ask God for direction as to how to redevelop our outreach to the children and families in our community.

Highlights of our year include the Hallow Light party, our Christmas party, and our new initiative of sponsoring a child through Compassion. The children of Kings Kids give to, and correspond with Justine from Ghana.

Thanks to all for your prayer support, and to all who serve God faithfully week by week.  
Stuart Cross

### **Worship group St John's**

After being locked down for the whole of 2020 and unable to sing, we were truly blessed to be able to start the year with a small Worship Team of 4 to lead the congregation and we meet every Wednesday evening to go through the music for the Sunday service. During the year our Worship Team has grown and we now have a keyboard player and 2 extra singers which is a great asset to the team and means that we can do more with the music. Praise the Lord for His wonderful provision.

### **Worship group Clayton Brook**

We sing a lovely song at CB 'Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise' and as the new year started with the vaccine rollout we certainly were singing God's praises and looking forward to the day when the congregation could sing along with us. However, within a couple of weeks another lockdown was announced and CB was advised to close its doors, silence fell once again.

We celebrated the return of live music on Easter day, what a joyous occasion it was, even more so when we took our last song outside so the congregation could sing and proclaim 'He is Risen' to the passing community. From then on this is how we ended our services, the congregation singing their hearts out while socially distanced on the car park and the Lord blessing us with dry weather week after week until August when everyone was able to sing again indoors.

Christmas was another jubilant festival that brought much joy and singing as we celebrated the birth of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and a much loved return of our carol service that the children were able to participate in.

At the beginning of every month we take great delight in acknowledging family members birthdays by singing our own rendition of 'Happy Birthday To You'. It's a lovely way to celebrate together.

Since the return of live music at Easter, our dedicated team of musicians have met faithfully every week to practice a mix of traditional and modern songs ready for the Sunday morning service and have also introduced five new songs to the congregation. We've also been blessed by the willingness of other people who have stepped in and supported us from time to time. A huge thank you to those involved and may God continue to use you in His service .

As a team, we pray that the Lord will continue to use our ministry through music and song, to encourage the congregation to praise him in a way that enables them to draw closer into God's presence and help them to rejoice in His life, death and resurrection.

Janette Digney (music team leader)

## **St John's – Prayer Report**

During the year intercessions were offered each Sunday either in church or on line depending on the restrictions for people in church. Thank you to everyone who does this important ministry. The prayer chain remains faithfully active for urgent or emergency prayers. An increasing number of prayers, over 52, have been requested during the year. Thank you to every member who prays so fervently. Tuesday evening parish prayer meetings were held once a month either in church or by zoom. Small prayer groups continue to meet regularly, again by zoom. A new idea was started in October. A church prayer diary was produced every month which contained prayer suggestions for both churches for people involved in services, groups, meetings, activities, events, training courses, missions we support, the re-ordering of St John's church, sick & bereaved, care homes & housebound, clergy, churchwardens, ALMs, our bishops and the Diocesan Vision prayer. This ensures everything and everyone is covered in prayer. The prayer diary was emailed out to our congregations and with copies also available in church.

## **Clayton Brook Church – Prayer Report**

I would like to thank everyone who have done prayers during the services this year. Ethel, Peter, Gill W, Gill M, Kathy, Les, Chris, Stuart and Brenda. Our 2 Prayer groups have done well with lots of answers to prayer, which we thank God for. I made a little box for people to put prayer requests in and announced it in church, but only one person has made use of it . We thank God that we are a praying church and I feel it is important that everyone in the church should feel that they can get prayer and can feel secure and confident in personal discretion at all times.

God Bless you all your sister in Christ, Julie.

## **St John's – Pastoral Team**

During the past 12 months the house bound have been contacted by phone and doorstep conversations have taken place where appropriate. Similarly, those who have found it difficult to return to church, for whatever reason, have received the Gazette, Philips e-mails and the weekly sermon printed and delivered by hand.

Roland Orr in particular had a wonderful ministry on the phone and each day would find him ringing up several from his long list of 20 plus. He continued doing this as his own health deteriorated, even from his hospital bed. It was a great loss to us (but all gain to him of course) when Jesus took him to be with him in May. His death has left a HUGE gap in our pastoral care, which we are still struggling to fill.

Communion to the sick hasn't been offered as it's not considered safe in the present Covid climate.

The lady living in Highgrove House and one of the housebound has sadly died.

Contact with Brookside & Arrowsmith Lodge Care Homes continues via the monthly Gazette along with a card addressed to previous church members who are now resident there.

Over the summer, Caroline Venables and Gill Wright both attended the Diocesan Pastoral Care Course with a view to provide some in-house training and build up the team. We are moving forward slowly here.

## **Clayton Brook Church – Pastoral Team**

The Pastoral Team met on 4 occasions during 2021 to appraise and update the pastoral needs of the congregation. We adapted to the changing Covid guidelines well, making sure that people who were attending services were safe.

Regular contact of those unable to return to church continued by telephone, visits to front doors and delivery of typed sermons/prayers and the monthly Parish Gazette. The contact extended to offering prayer on doorsteps, offers of help, shopping and providing meals during times of sickness. Visits to care homes restarted and home communion offered to those unable to leave home. The contact still continued with those returning to church. Philip Venables and Paul Davies carried out some home visits from a list provided by the Pastoral Team.

The Pastoral Team wanted to reach out to the community so in April permission was gained from McColl's store in Clayton Brook Centre to have a mini booklet stall in the store. This is regularly stocked with seasonal and topical scriptural booklets particularly relating to managing life's challenges and with cards showing church services and contact details. The booklets are being taken slowly but surely and feedback is that they provide comfort in difficult times.

To maintain Covid safety we decided not to have a church Christmas meal. A Young at Heart session was held in December. We coloured Christmas cards and enjoyed fellowship, tea and cake with St. John's and Clayton Brook church family. Also in December the Pastoral Team invited people to join us on a day retreat at Whalley Abbey

with Bishop Jill ministering where we were refreshed and uplifted by spending reflective time together and with the Lord.

We thank God for his provision and care throughout 2021 and look forward to another year of providing pastoral care with his loving guidance.

Gill Wright

## **Fabric & Finance**

No meetings were held last year.

## **Communications**

Our church has a Website and a Facebook page, both of which are used to publicise our services and events, and is a valuable resource for church members and the public to discover more about church life. We also have a page on the *A Church Near You* website for each of our churches. This is a Church of England resource that is often the first place someone goes to when looking for a church, so it is vital that the information on this is accurate and up to date.

We have recently begun to use an electronic Church Management System (ChurchSuite). This has greatly improved our ability to communicate with members of the church family. It enables us to easily and accurately send emails to different groups of people, and will be able to form an internal church directory for members. Members are able to keep their own details up to date using this system. Most churches are now using a system such as this, and it is exciting to be able to plan for a well organised method of communication within the church family.

## **Social & Outreach Team**

The SOT met just three times in 2021. With the threat of lockdowns coming and going so often, it was extremely difficult to plan anything. Some annual events, such as the vicarage garden parties and the Clayton Brook Festival simply didn't happen. However, we had some happy successes. We had an excellent prayer breakfast with a speaker from Compassion UK, and a good turnout. We had a great fun online games evening for all ages—that was a huge success. With some opening up in the summer we were able to have four 'food Sundays' again in August, serving various refreshments after the morning services. And we were so delighted to be able to run a Christmas ADVENTure again this year, at which we had more than 300 people come into the building at St John's. Thank you to everyone who helped make these events happen.

## Mission Team Report

The Mission Team works on behalf of the PCC to make decisions about how the 10% tithe of church income should be distributed. This amounts on average to ~£10k per year. The 10 ministries that we regularly support are Barnabas Fund, Churches Ministry among Jewish People, Church Missionary Society (CMS – Alf and Hilary Cooper in Chile), Crosslinks (Alex and Kate Phillips in East Asia), Compassion (through individual sponsorship), Open Doors, Street Pastors, Tearfund, The Salvation Army, Wellfield Church in Leyland. These were selected on the basis that they are on the whole well-established, working alongside local churches worldwide, and that we have advocates within our churches willing to speak out and pray on their behalf. Intercessors are asked to pray for our mission partners regularly throughout the year.

Despite COVID we were able to hold a number of events this year. An online prayer breakfast was held by Philip Venables in March on his trip to Uganda with Crosslinks, with a video clip from the family he stayed with. A second prayer breakfast held in person in September with Compassion speaker Phil Briggs resulted in ~10 children being sponsored! This year monetary harvest donations were directed to Tearfund, and food donations were taken to Living Waters food bank. In October/November we took part in Operation Christmas Child (OCC) supplying 102 shoeboxes (5 online) to children overseas, and Clayton Brook was used as a processing depot for OCC for one week in December with volunteers helping from both churches. In November we held services at each church dedicated to World Mission with several short video clips and Philip Venables and Les Jones preached, and dedicated to the Suffering Church with Gill Lancaster preaching at both churches. During the services this year we held focus spots with video clips on the work of Open Doors, Crosslinks partners Kate and Alex, CMS partners Alf and Hilary in Chile, the Salvation Army and Operation Christmas Child.

The mission team met twice during the year. Several people wrote Gazette articles to highlight mission activities. Angie Hobson wrote an article on the destination of OCC shoeboxes including her own in June. Gill Lancaster provided an article for the launch of OCC in October, and another asking for feedback on our mission activities for the November gazette. Questions asked were: Are we supporting the right ministries? Is the balance of giving right? Has the congregation been involved over the past 6 years? How are children being engaged? What are the needs of the nation and the world in the light of COVID (eg. homeless, food poverty)? Four responses were received, all favourably supporting our activities. David Barlow continued writing articles for the gazette each month highlighting the plight of persecuted Christians worldwide.

During the year we had one application to the Mission Fund (supporting the work of Pastor Kennedy Solano in Kenya) amounting to £200. Money from the mission fund was added to Roland Orr's funeral collection and £500 was donated to Street Pastors in memory of Roland and his work. We also made year end donations of £400 to Salvation Army and £300 each to Barnabas Fund and Open Doors. Susan Parkinson continued to collect stamps for the Leprosy mission. Sue Lillie continued to display mission information on the noticeboard at Clayton Brook.

This year for Thy Kingdom Come 5000 leaflets were ordered and the Clayton Brook team delivered them to the whole of Clayton Brook! St Johns held prayer times in church and volunteers delivered ~1000 leaflets. One evening in church was growth group led (David Barlow) and Paul Davies led a few other evenings.

We would like to thank everyone who has supported Mission within our two churches over the past year, and encourage everyone to get involved. Please see our mission leaflet for more information (available online or in church).

Mission Team: Gillian Lancaster (chair), Kathy Bigio, Stuart Cross, Hetti Johnson, Philip Venables

## **Café Life Report**

Due to Covid restrictions the café hasn't opened this year.

## **Beehive Report**

The Beehive re-opened at the beginning of May this year after being closed for most of 2020 but we were only allowed small numbers at first because of the Pandemic but later on, there were no restrictions on numbers. We closed for the summer holidays and re-opened in September. Our numbers have grown steadily since then and we now have approximately 30 people including children who come regularly each week. We bought some new toys from the Co-op Grant which the children love. Our programme consists of Free Play, Bible Story and Craft activity and we finish with singing a mixture of Christian choruses and Nursery Rhymes. We ended the year with our Nativity Play which the children loved and entered into with enthusiasm and our annual Christmas Party when we welcomed Father Christmas to give out books for the children. God has truly blessed us this year with a wonderful team of mums and grandmothers/grandfathers who help with running the Beehive and we look forward to what God will do next year.

## **Parish Gazette**

The gazette continues to maintain its content and quality and produces at least 16 A4 pages per issue. It is a good source of communication and information for the parish. The gazette was emailed out to over 135 people each month. These copies have been produced in colour and are greatly appreciated by many. Several large print copies are produced each month for church members who prefer larger print. For those who are not on email 12 copies are distributed either by post or by pushing through letterboxes. Thank you to Susan Parkinson for helping with this task. The Parish Gazette is also available on the church website and there are a few printed copies in church each month. Thank you to everyone who has contributed articles throughout the year.

## **Safeguarding Report 2021**

The Safeguarding Team which oversees safeguarding policy and practice within the parish met once during the year but unfortunately the training session of Domestic Abuse, arranged for the PCC in 2020, has not yet been rearranged due to resource difficulties at the Diocese. It is intended that a refresher course on Safeguarding will also be arranged for 2022.

The team consists of the Vicar, Curate, two Safeguarding Children's Champions, two Adult Safeguarding Champions, the Disclosure and Barring Service Administrator and the Parish Safeguarding Officer. Following the sad bereavement of Roland Orr a new Adult Safeguarding Champion is required for St Johns church.

The team's terms of reference remain as follows:

- Completing the Parish Safeguarding Self Audit at least once a year,
  - Reviewing the safeguarding needs within the parish, at least annually,
  - Reviewing the Parish Safeguarding Policy and Procedures at least annually,
  - To consider safeguarding training requirements within the parish on an ongoing basis, with particular regard to Diocesan recommendations,
  - Ensuring that appropriate records are kept in a safe place,
  - Signing off the Annual Safeguarding report to the PCC and Annual Parochial Church Meeting Activity
- There were no safeguarding incidents during the year.

During 2021 the Safeguarding Team completed a new safeguarding self-audit which was forwarded to the Diocese and made the following recommendations all agreed by the PCC.

### **1. Safeguarding Policy**

It was agreed that as there were no changes to the Diocesan Safeguarding Policy the PCC will continue with the current Parish policy for a further 12 months.

### **2. Identifying and Reporting Serious Safeguarding Incidents**

Following updated advice from the Church of England on identifying and reporting serious safeguarding incidents, it was agreed that,

- a) the PCC delegate the reporting of a serious incident to the Charity Commission, to the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser in place of the Diocesan Secretary.
- b) the PCC delegate the identification of a serious safeguarding incident to the PCC Standing Committee (Incumbent, curate, wardens, PCC Secretary) and the Parish Safeguarding Officer.

### **3. Behaviour Policy**

That the PCC agree the behaviour policies for Clayton Brook and St Johns. They are broadly similar.

### **Change in Parish Safeguarding Officer**

David Barlow resigned as Parish Safeguarding Officer and the team were delighted that Carol Wright agreed to take over the role. This was agreed by the PCC in September and Carol will attend at least 2 PCC meetings a year, or if the agenda requires her attendance.

## **Treasurers Report – 2021**

Thank you again to all those who have contributed financially over the past year, particularly in light of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. The PCC is especially grateful to those people giving regularly either by envelope or standing order, with a substantial number also gift aiding their donation. This allows us to claim an additional 25% from the HMRC (nearly £17,000 in 2021) which goes a long way to pay our bills. Thanks to everyone who does gift aid their offerings and donations and to Marion Barlow, for her very efficient work in making the claims.

## Unrestricted Income

Planned giving increased by 1.8% over 2020, and total giving of £85,451 was slightly up on 2020; as in previous years over 96% of our income comes from our congregation in the form of weekly giving, donations and gift aid.

We had budgeted a deficit of over £12,400 in 2021; however, thanks to careful management of expenditure and a reduction in activities together with the modest increase in giving above the actual deficit was only £3,762, leaving us with unrestricted reserves of £26,713 at December 2021.

The PCC have agreed a deficit budget for 2022 of some £12,900 which will leave unrestricted reserves of just under £13,800 at December 2022.

**We anticipate that finance will continue to be a test of our faith. However, we worship a generous God and praise Him and our congregation as we have always been able to pay our bills.**

## Expenditure

The largest areas of expense were again:

- Our Parish Share to the Diocese of £69,914 (2020: £66,342). The Parish Share paid for Philip and Paul, together with support for ministry in many of the more deprived areas of the Diocese.
- Utilities and services were £17,841 (2020: £17,233) covering electricity, gas, oil, water, Council Tax, and insurance. Steps were taken during the year to secure gas and electricity supply at prices before the large increase seen at the end of the year.
- Repairs at Clayton Brook were minimal again this year, with major expenditure at St Johns, noted below.
- Ministry and outreach spend was £2,739 (2020: £2,194) which is some £2,800 down on 2019, reflecting reduced activities.
- Finally, even in these challenging times, the church remains committed to giving 10% of its unrestricted income to charity which this year amounted to £10,100 (2020 £10,450).

Whilst the refurbishment work at St Johns was delayed, a further £62,448 (2020: £86,876) was spent on the major repair to the church west wall and addressing the dry rot in the roof. This leaves £410,722 (2020: £448,000) in the restricted St Johns Refurbishment Fund. Thank you to those who continue to give to the Fund.

During the year the Love Fund continued to help people in the parish who were suffering hardship; thank you to those who contributed £1,611 during the year. £1,369 was distributed to help people in need, leaving a balance of £3,232 (2021 £2,291) at the year end. Other restricted fund amounted to £10,028 at the year end, the largest balance, £7,733, referring to a donation to support the employment of a Vicars PA.

## **Independent Examiner's Report to the Parochial Church Council of St John the Evangelist, Whittle le Woods, for the year ended 31 December 2021.**

This report is made solely to the Charity's Trustees, as a body, in accordance with Section 145 of the Charities Act 2011. My examination has been undertaken so that I might state to the Trustees those matters I am required to state to them in an Independent Examiner's Report and for no other purpose.

### **Respective responsibilities of trustee and examiner**

As the members of the PCC, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts, and you consider that an audit is not required for this year under Section 144 (2) of the Charities Act 2011 and that an independent examination is required.

It is my responsibility to:

1. examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act;
2. to follow the procedures laid down in the general directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145 (5) (b) of the 2011 Act; and
3. to state whether particular matters have come to my attention of a material nature.

### **Basis of independent examiner's report**

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners under S145(5) (b) of the Act. That examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the Charity and a comparison of the accounts with those records. It also includes considering any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seeking explanations from you as Trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the view given by the accounts.

### **Independent Examiner's Statement**

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

(a) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:

1. to keep accounting records in accordance with Section 130 of the 2011 Act, and
2. to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act;

have not been met; or

(b) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed: Gill Taylor

Dated: 6 February 2022

### **Accounts**