



*St John's Church,
Sandiway
Activities in 2024*

Vicar's Report

In October 2024 I celebrated 5 years as Vicar of St John's – it's remarkable how quickly time has flown and conversely how long it seems since I took up the post! As I look back over my time as Vicar and the last year in particular, it seems to me that 2024 was a year of consolidation, both in terms of worship and development of the Heritage Building Project in Sandiway.



Worship

We were delighted that Dr Emma Morley joined us as Director of Music in January 2024 and quickly settled in to leading the choir and accompanying our morning and evening services on piano and organ.

Our weekly and monthly pattern of worship continued with a range of traditional and informal services in the church and church hall:

1st Sunday of the month: Breakfast Church/ Muddy Church

Evensong from Book of Common Prayer

2nd Sunday of the month: Morning Praise with Sunday Club

Celtic Communion

3rd Sunday of the month: Holy Communion with Sunday Club

Take 40 – a reflective service on a theme

4th Sunday of the month: Morning Praise with Sunday Club

Celtic Communion

5th Sunday of the month: Holy Communion

Open House – a café style evening service with an invited guest

In 2024 our Open House guests were Rt Rev Sam Corley, and Councillor Gillian Edwards.

Thursdays: 9.30am Holy Communion in church followed by refreshments

6.15pm Night Prayer in church

Since the pandemic we have worked hard to rebuild our work with children and families, and it has been good to see a number of new families at Breakfast Church and Muddy Church and a small group of children who now regularly attend Sunday Club. I am grateful to Janet Buttanshaw and Alison Harris for leading our work with children and young families.

Festival Services and Occasional offices

The Easter and Christmas services were well attended in 2024. It was wonderful to see regular members of the congregation alongside visitors at our Christingle service, the Carol Service and Christmas Communion. The church was full for each of these services with approximately 100 people in church for our Communion services and 130 adults and children attending the Crib service.

There were 13 baptisms and 6 weddings at St John's in 2024. There were 10 funerals conducted by the Ministry Team during the year: 7 were held at St John's, and 3 took place at the crematorium.

A House of Prayer

Weekday opening of the church continued in 2024 allowing people to drop in and enjoy the peace and quiet of the building, say a prayer or look around at the John Douglas architecture. Comments in the visitors' book show how valuable people have found the opportunity to come in and look around, and many appreciate the opportunity to spend time at St John's.

Our annual Prayer weekend in September drew people together to explore the theme of "Unity and Light" through crafts and music. Sandra Stevenson once again coordinated a brilliant weekend and also invited different groups within the community to contribute to a display that filled the church for Advent. Sandra's gift for reaching and inspiring so many different groups, from Nurseries to Nursing Homes, came to fruition in artwork displayed in church throughout December.



Changes to the Leadership and Ministry Teams

We said goodbye to John Fraser, one of our Church Wardens in February as he and Marian relocated to North Wales. It was sad to see them leave and I am very grateful for their contribution to so many areas of church life.

We are fortunate to have a team of people who lead worship, preach, preside and lead the congregation in prayer. In April 2024, Rev Lorraine Reed joined the Ministry Team and now regularly preaches, presides and leads worship at St John's alongside other members of team. In September 2024 Ben Fletcher began training to be a Reader and has begun to preach and lead services too.



Heritage Building Project

In 2024 we consolidated work on Phase 1 of the Heritage Building Project by installing new lighting in church. A sympathetic design by Brent Sansom was installed in church in August and September 2024 by the contractors. The difference has been stunning – the sandstone walls now glow under the new lighting and the baptistry, nave and chancel are beautifully lit. Phase 1 has now been completed thanks to the hard work of John Goulden, our project manager and the fundraising efforts coordinated by Julie Westgate and the Social and Fundraising Team who continued to work very hard throughout the year. I am very grateful to everyone who gave generously to the lighting fund and helped us complete Phase 1.

In the summer the PCC took steps towards selling the Vicarage Field so that the profits can be invested in the next Phase of our Building Project. The legalities of this have been very slow to complete, but we hope that the sale will be completed early in 2025.

Work with schools

I continued to offer Experience Easter and Experience Christmas sessions for local Primary schools in 2024. The church was decorated with displays that help to explain why Easter and Christmas are significant festivals for Christians and I led interactive visits for 120 children in March and December.

We also welcomed the Beavers and Brownies to church in December and enjoyed spending time with them as they gained their Faith badges.

I have taken assemblies at Cuddington Primary and Sandiway Primary School and also welcomed children into church for talks about John Douglas and the history of Sandiway.

Eco Church

In 2024 we were awarded a Silver Eco Church award as we continued to address issues of sustainability within our buildings and in our practices. Thanks to Alison Harris, Bev Goodger and Jane Green for coordinating and championing this work.

Vicar's Report

Governance

I am very grateful to our trustees who meet regularly in our Parochial Church Council (PCC) to oversee our mission and ministry within Sandiway and Cuddington and those who represent us within the wider Deanery. As Charity Trustees when planning the objectives for the year, the PCC gave consideration to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit. In August, members of the PCC and other team leaders gathered for an away day where we looked to the future. We had plenty of time to talk and share ideas, focusing on the things we celebrate as a church as well as our fears for the future. We recognise that there are significant challenges in the years to come, both in the demographic make-up of our congregations and the responsibility of caring for our buildings. The rising cost of Parish Share (monthly payments to the Diocese of Chester) is also a cause for concern as it is not clear how we can meet the sharp increase demanded of us in 2025.

Looking Ahead – Priorities for 2025 and beyond

- ♦ Launching Phase 2 of the Heritage Building Project to add a purpose-built annexe to the south side of the church
- ♦ Exploring grant funding for the Heritage Building Project
- ♦ To recruit new members to the leadership team – particularly finding a second church warden.
- ♦ To find a sustainable way to meet the rising cost of our monthly Parish Share payable to the Diocese
- ♦ Developing Heritage materials, including videos to focus on the history of St John's
- ♦ Develop work with children through music

I would like to thank everyone who volunteers their time and talents to support our mission and ministry within Sandiway and Cuddington. Particular thanks go to Ali Fletcher, who has been the sole church warden since February 2024 and has worked very hard throughout the year, spinning numerous plates. There are so many people who use their gifts and talents at St John's that it's impossible to name them all individually but thank you to the lay ministers, the members of the PCC and the dedicated teams whose creativity and skills enhance our life together.

Rev Ruth Mock





The Ark

The Ark is a café founded by the church for the benefit of the community, run by volunteers. All profits are donated to local causes. Thanks to all our wonderful volunteers and customers who help make the Ark THE place to eat in the village on a Friday. We had a busy year. As a result we were able to help: Sandiway Rainbows by providing funds to train and insure 4 new volunteers; St Luke's new dementia care unit; the North West critical care unit; Sandiway Primary school's quiet outdoor space; Cuddington Primary school for pupil iPads; the Joshua Tree therapy kits, Northwich Salvation Army for their work with local homeless people.

During the year we also supported Rosebank Special School, MacMillan nurses and the Children's Society. In all a total of £3,500 from the year's profits.

In the summer holidays, each Friday we supplied over 30 free packed lunches to the Library for local families to pick up. This was all the result of many coffees and cakes enjoyed, lunches shared, new friends made and a lot of therapeutic chat along the way,

Arts in the Ark

Arts in the Ark continued to meet throughout the year with just short breaks for Christmas and the pantomime season. The weekly drop-in session has offered people in the church and wider community a friendly space in which to meet, paint or craft. For the first part of 2024 we continued to meet in the church hall and thanks go to John Palin helping to set up the trestle tables which he has done for many years. Julie Westgate, along with some group members, kindly stepped up and ensured the weekly session continued to run in the second half of the year. It was decided to move the sessions back into the Ark; setting up is easier and members enjoyed the change. Julie's dedication and kindness is much appreciated and she continues to set up whenever she can. Her support is invaluable. Artists and crafters alike now look forward to our tenth anniversary of creativity and friendship.



Book groups

Our book groups continue to meet to discuss a wide range of interesting and sometimes challenging texts.

Charitable giving

There is an annual meeting to discuss possible charitable causes to support through our outward giving.

Suggestions made by members of the church are considered and a list of possible good causes drawn up to reflect a balance of worldwide, national and local charities to be finally approved by Ruth and the PCC.

Examples of chosen charities include Mercy Ships and A Rocha, a global family of conservation and environmental organisations. Funds are also set aside for the Vicar's discretionary hardship fund. A file containing current information, newsletters and acknowledgments is compiled annually and placed in the church for reference.

Christian Aid

One of the charities we support every year is Christian Aid, which helps some of the poorest people in the world, campaigns for justice and responds with immediate help to the victims of natural disasters. In 2024 the theme of Christian Aid Week (12th – 18th May) focused on their work in Burundi where over 70% of the population suffer from poverty and malnourishment putting them on the edge of survival. One example was Aline who, after suffering abuse, became homeless and separated from her children. Her life was turned round through help from Christian Aid which gave her a loan and access to business training. As a result she was able to set up as a grocery wholesaler and now earns enough money to support herself and her children who are now back living with her. Together we raised £822 (+ Gift Aid) through a sponsored walk, lunches in the Ark and direct donations. At Sunday morning worship we celebrated and prayed for Christian Aid's work. This is one way in which we help to put God's love into action and contribute to the growth of God's kingdom. We are grateful to everyone who was involved in any way.

Eco Church

We are delighted that Jane Green has joined the team and we have really appreciated her involvement and contribution.

Wildlife gardening in the church garden has seen further developments:

- ◆ Relocating the bug hotel
- ◆ Planting English bluebells, primroses, violets and stitchwort along the holly bank
- ◆ Planting meadow perennials like ox eye daisies and red campion in the pollinator zone
- ◆ Planting meadow buttercups, birds foot trefoil and orange knapweed in the No Mow May zone.



Activities at St John's



The Eco team have continued meeting twice a year with Ruth, Ali and John Goulden to consider ways in which we as a church can reduce our carbon footprint. We have been particularly mindful of the limited life of the heating systems and have been considering possibilities for replacing them. Brian Harris completed the annual Energy Footprint return to the Church of England. Our poor rating in 2022 meant that we qualified for a free energy audit conducted

in December 2024 which gave advice about reducing our carbon footprint in the medium term. Advice was also given for the church hall where potential gains are greater.

We continued to contribute a monthly article to the parish magazine, and we maintained a noticeboard in the church hall to share updates of the work we do. We also offered quarterly 'walk and wander' events in our local area, open to all. Bev Goodger led these and provided interesting information about the habitat at stopping points along the way.

Muddy Church at 10.15 on the first Sunday each month between May and August offered outside worship with a more distinctly eco theme. We also had a Creation Tide evening service (Creation Tide is a season in the church year which starts on September 1st and finishes on October 4th) which the Eco team lead.

In the past year a diocesan eco team has been formed to offer help and advice: Alison Harris joins their on-line meeting to share information.

In December 2024 we were awarded the Arocha Eco Church Silver award. We are now working towards the Gold award though the requirements will be significantly more challenging.



Home groups

We currently have four Home Groups which meet regularly. The groups continue to follow different paths but each offers an opportunity to explore our faith, the Bible and our role as Christian people in an informal and pastorally supportive way.



Activities at St John's

JIMS

JIMS continued to meet on the second and fourth Saturday of each month from February to November playing songs from a huge range of musical styles. Average attendance at each session is 15/16 people. We welcomed several new members during 2024 - we are always looking for more. Typically we comprise acoustic guitars, ukeleles, piano and cajon but any musician or singer is welcome to come along and see what we do. It's all very relaxed and informal.



Lunchtime concerts

The 2024 season of lunchtime concerts opened with a welcome return by the Laiton Trumpet Quartet and ended with the Aaben Duo of harp and saxophone. A wide variety of instrumental combinations broadened our musical horizons throughout the year and there was something for everyone.

We had vocalists, instrumentalists, soloists, a sextet, trio, quartet. The young musician starting out on their chosen profession and the experienced. We are grateful to the RNCM for their cooperation in helping us to promote young talented musicians. It's a pleasure to see these artists asking to return to us when they've finished their student days and remember 'the friendly audience and excellent soup lunch'!

Mothers' Union

St John's branch continues to meet monthly; meetings usually comprise a short service, a guest speaker, tea, an update on MU matters and ends with the Grace. In May we met in church for a service followed by Vicar Ruth exploring some facts on church history. Marian Harris kindly hosted a 'bring and buy' coffee morning and over £100 was raised for MU funds. June saw us enjoying the blooms as Heather Pope from Wettenhall gave us a talk on gardens. In July we held our Summer Lunch in the Ark which was enjoyed by everyone.

The autumn season began in September with a meeting where members brought along (and explained) 'Something I couldn't live without'. We took to the canals in October with a talk from Stuart Tabeart about his life as a Waterways Chaplain. November brought us a woman of courage when Brenda Beesley described the life and times of 'Kitty Wilkinson, a noblewoman of Liverpool.' We finished the year in December with our annual Christmas Celebration and Tea; Sandiway School and Paul and Jenny from Delamere Folk Club provided the singing and musical backing during the afternoon. During the year we also sent representatives to both Deanery and Diocesan meetings and these were reported back to the members.



Music

Emma writes: This report marks my first year as Director of Music having taken over from Kathryn in January 2024. Since then there have been some changes to the church's music. Several new hymns and songs have been introduced in the morning services to broaden the repertoire base. The morning congregation continues to worship enthusiastically and has embraced all the new songs. They are aided by our fabulous collection of percussion instruments and bolstered by instrumentalists who have played alongside me throughout the year. The Breakfast Church band goes from strength to strength playing and singing to a very high standard and enriching worship.

The choir leads worship at the majority of evening services. We have seen a few choristers move on to pastures new and have also welcomed new/returning members to the ranks. The choir has enjoyed getting to grips with a new anthem book and has learned many pieces from it. They have built up a collection of motets and hymns sung a cappella during communion. This provides an opportunity for the congregation to listen and to reflect. The choir has been working hard to improve vocal technique and choral blend. The choir has continued to lead the wonderful tradition of Evensong. The canticle settings have been fixed for a period of time to aid congregational participation. The choir has sung an anthem at Evensong regularly. The liturgical music in the Celtic Communion service has been changed and now includes more pieces by John Bell of the Iona community. New songs/hymns have been introduced to the evening services and the St John's songbook has been updated. It is now common practice for the choir to sing before the start of the Take 40 service creating a settled space for worship. It was wonderful to be part of St John's for Easter and Christmas 2024. It is fair to say that the choir favourite for Christmas was 'Immanuel' by Michael Card arranged by Paul Leddington Wright. The choir sang carols at Toolerstone at their Christmas market and were spoilt with mince pies, mulled wine and seeing real reindeer. We also took part in the carol service at Sandiway Lodge, leading worship alongside Ruth.

I have now done over a year as Director of Music and feel very much at home at St John's. My thanks to Ruth, the ministry team, instrumentalists and choristers for their continuing fellowship, kindness and encouragement.



Activities at St John's

Praise and Play

Praise and Play has continued throughout 2024. This is a group for pre-school children and their parents/carers. We meet in the church hall on Thursday afternoons in term time from 1.45 – 3.00pm.

Our aim is to create an informal, friendly space where everyone can be supportive of one another and where adults and children can feel comfortable as we gently explore some things about church and the Christian faith.

We follow the same pattern each week – a short time of play as families arrive, then we gather in the Ark for a song (with actions, instruments or the parachute); a story which could be from the Bible or a children's story from which we can draw some Christian significance; a sharing of news and a celebration of a special time such as a birthday. We then return to the hall for 'snack time' and time to enjoy the activities set around the hall.

Overall the number of families coming to Praise and Play has been very much 'up and down', sometimes only having 2 or 3 families. The WhatsApp group has continued and has helped families to keep in touch and support one another and it has been encouraging to see how Praise and Play helps some families maintain their contact with the wider church family, particularly Breakfast Church, after they have moved on from Praise and Play.

Grateful thanks go to the great team of adults who help set everything up, supervise activities when needed, make the tea, chat with adults and children and help clear away at the end.

Prayer Support

The focus for Prayer Support over the past year has been 'Unity and Light'. It has been central to our meetings and our prayers.

The annual Prayer Weekend was well attended both on the Saturday with live music, crafts and refreshments and on the Sunday for the special services. 300 bags were distributed far and wide. The wonderful display of 'Unity and Light' in the church during December brought together people of all ages (spanning 100 years!) from all parts of our community. It was visited and enjoyed by many.

The annual Advent Ribbons were much appreciated as always and Saturday Sanctuary continues to offer a warm welcome every Saturday morning with a new Prayer Point with resources to use or take away. This is also available to those visiting when the church is open during the week.

Many people have been prayed for and with. We will continue to seek to support everyone in prayer in the coming year.



Activities at St John's



Social and fundraising events

2024 was another busy year. Having helped raise the funds needed for the installation of the beautiful ramp, we turned our attention to assisting fundraising for the LED lighting in church which has made such a difference.

As always we have tried to vary the events to appeal to as many people as possible within the church and the wider community. 2024 saw us quizzing, singalongs, pie eating, spring wreath making, ceilidh dancing and murder mystery solving. Together with other musical, craft and food themed events we have raised £8,120 from 17 events. We also helped at other events for Christian Aid, Gift Day, Prayer Weekend and Harvest which raised a further £2,175 for other charities and St John's building fund.

We are always incredibly grateful to all those who support us at our events, particularly those who make cakes or wait on tables; as a small team of 4, we couldn't achieve what we do without these amazing volunteers including those who organise and run events without charge. This year we will do all we can to support the PCC in raising funds. We love what we do and hope you enjoy the array of social events we have planned. We are only a team of 4 and are always very keen for others to join us and become involved.

Sunday Club

We have provision for children during the morning services, Breakfast church once a month and Sunday Club the other weeks where we have different activities to help us explore the Bible passage. We are a small team (Janet Buttanshaw and Alison Harris helped by Janet Hammond, Penny Hardy and Jill King) but would welcome others to join us.

Youth group

Youth Group met throughout 2024 on a monthly basis, usually on the 4th Sunday of the month in the church hall. We've done Night Walks, helped with Christingle, played wacky games and many games of Werewolves (I still don't understand the rules). Pizza is our favourite meal together though toasted marshmallows come a close second. Dave Mock is group leader but the sessions could not happen without the wonderful team of Nicola Cowie, Ben Fletcher and Ellie Rushworth. Hitherto the group has met monthly but is currently paused for the rest of 2025.

St John's Heritage



Our 3rd Heritage Day was held on Saturday 14th September 2024.

There were 10 sparkling treasure chests to find and treasure to keep to remind the children (and adults) of St John's: wooden eagles and golden feathers for the lectern, little egg cups to decorate for the font, tiny baby dolls wrapped in swaddling bands for Jesus on the carved Nativity litany desk, toy dogs for the dog in the window in the porch, and many more. New Heritage information booklets were given out and there were crafts and refreshments free to all.

Several weeks before we had joined the National Churches Trust who advertised our event with an illustrated description of St John's. This brought in several new visitors armed with cameras on the day.

There has been a monthly "Heritage Snippets" page in our Parish Magazine throughout 2024. This covers many new facts that have been discovered about John Douglas, our church's architect, and about St John's past generally.

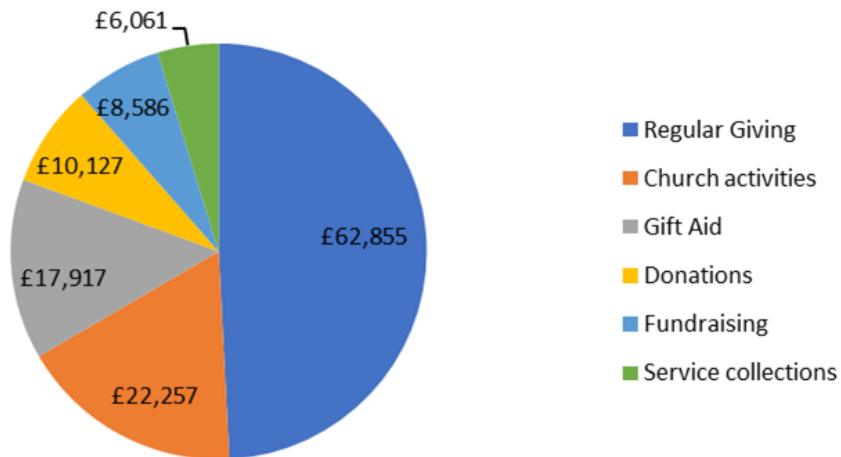


The book St John's Church Sandiway 1902-2022: Its History and a Myriad of Memories was published in 2022 and bought by many within and outside the parish. Well over 100 people contributed and 30 were interviewed in their own homes. In 2024 the book was revised and a small number published. One was specially bound by Chester Bookbinders and is left on display for all to read in the Baptistry.

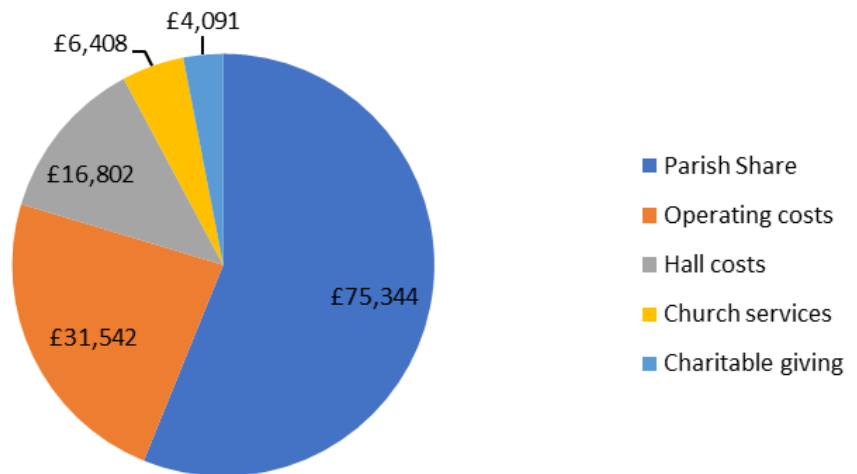
An illustrated history of the interior and exterior of St John's was added to the Heritage tab on the church website. The two videos Welcome to St John's Church Sandiway and A new ramp for Sandiway have also been a welcome addition to the Heritage tab.

Finance Summary

Where does our money come from?



Where does our money go?



Please see appendices for financial report and accounts.

Safeguarding Statement

2024 was a very busy year for the Church of England as a whole. It was not a particularly good one for the hierarchy after the release of the Makim Report into the activities of the late John Smyth, a serial abuser within the Church of England. This only highlights the importance of our vigilance as a church community in keeping those around us safe and happy in their contact with the church.

Our PCC have made a fabulous effort in ensuring compliance with the requirement for all to be checked on national databases (DBS) and to be up to date with safeguarding training. There has been 100% compliance!

The new Safeguarding Dashboards were introduced for all parishes within Chester Diocese. We have been completing our action plan slowly and are doing very well. It is a slow process but it has made us more aware of how to recruit staff and volunteers more safely and focused our thoughts around ensuring our activities with children and young people are run safely. Our Youth Group, Praise and Play group and Sunday Club now all have risk assessments in place and role profiles for their leaders.

Most important for us, though, is that we all look out for each other and for those who come as visitors to our church community. We must not be afraid to speak out if we are not comfortable with something someone has said or done.

Thank you all for making St John's church community a safe place to meet.

Julie Westgate, Parish Safeguarding Officer



St John the Evangelist, Sandiway

2024 Annual Report Appendices

The Annual Report of Sandiway Parochial Church Council (PCC) 2024

Objective and Activities of the PCC

The primary objective of the PCC is to promote the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to the doctrines and practices of the Church of England. The PCC has the responsibility of co-operating with the Vicar in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish of Sandiway the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. It is charged with good stewardship of finances and has maintenance responsibilities for the church and church hall both in Norley Road, Sandiway.

Structure, Governance and Management

The PCC is made up of the Vicar, Churchwardens, Readers, parish representatives on the Deanery Synod plus a number of elected and co-opted lay members. The appointment of PCC members is governed by the Church Representation Rules and all church members who are on the electoral roll are encouraged to stand for election.

Parochial Church Council, following the APCM on the 19th May 2024, was as follows:

Vicar	Reverend Ruth Mock Vicar / Chair	Vicar and PCC Chair From 1 st October 2019
Churchwarden	Alison Fletcher	Elected 19/5/2024
Churchwarden	Vacancy	
Reader & Deanery Synod Rep	Paul Stevenson	Licensed 21/10/2017
Reader & Deanery Synod Rep	Sue Hadden	Licensed 21/10/2017
Deanery Synod Rep	Ben Fletcher	Elected 19/5/24
Elected Member	Ann Lucas	Elected 21/5/23
Elected Member	Eric Wright	Elected 21/5/23 & 14/10/20
Elected Member	Jane Green	Elected 21/5/23 & 14/10/20
Elected Member	Nicola Cowie	Elected 21/5/23 & 14/10/20
Elected Member	John Goulden	Elected 19/5/2021 & 19/5/24
Elected Member	Cherry Jackson	Elected 19/5/2021 & 19/5/24
Elected Member	Heather Williams	Elected 19/5/2021 & 19/5/24
Elected Member	Jim Wren	Elected 29/5/2022
Elected Member	Helen Lilley	Elected 29/5/2022
Elected Member	Stewart Hadden	Elected 29/5/2022
Elected Member	Peter Westwood	Elected 29/5/2022
Elected Member/ PCC Secretary / Deanery Synod Rep	Mandy Shaw	Elected 19/5/2021 & 19/5/24
Treasury Team Leader	Andy Carter	Co-opted 29/5/2022

PCC Contact and location information

Vicar: Reverend Ruth E Mock, The Vicarage, 50 Norley Rd, Sandiway CW8 2JU
Email: vicar.stjohnsandaway@gmail.com telephone 01606 883286

Sandiway Parochial Church Council (PCC)
Care of The Vicarage, 50 Norley Rd, Sandiway CW8 2JU

Electoral Roll Report

As per Church Representation Rules, Spring 2025 a new Electoral Roll was prepared and at the close of the revision period the new roll stood at 177.

The revised Electoral Roll will re-open after the APCM to receive further applications throughout the year. Please contact Gill Carter, Electoral Roll Officer, via Reverend Ruth.

Note: The last occasion where was a completely new electoral roll was for the APCM in 2019. All PCCs are required to produce a new roll every 6 years and in between a formal revision has to be made ahead of the APCM. All members of the congregations are encouraged to register for the Electoral Roll to enable them to take part in the governance of the parish.

Churchwarden's Report of the Church Fabric, Goods and Ornaments 2024

Fabric

Phase 1 of the Heritage Building Project was completed in 2024, with the installation of new lighting to provide better visibility for congregations and enhance the heritage features of the church.

Electrical checks prior to the installation identified some deficiencies in the electrical system, and work was undertaken to correct these. There were significant issues with the electrics outside the building, and the floodlights have been disconnected pending a decision about a way forward on external lighting: this will need to be considered in the context of the Phase 2 plans.

Other maintenance of the church and hall has continued. During 2024, work has been completed to address dry rot in the church tower, and emergency work has addressed leaking gutters and downpipes on the north side of the building.

At the hall, following evidence of rodents, work has taken place to secure the building against future incursions and we have entered a contract with Rentokil to monitor and respond to any further incidents. Policies and practices were changed.

Thanks to the Eco Team and their volunteers and our gardener, the grounds are subject to continued improvement.

The vicar, John Goulden and other volunteers undertook an audit of the Terrier in early 2025 and reported as follows:

Goods and Ornaments

No change

Inventory

No significant change in the inventory (Bibles, prayer books, service books, hymn books, etc)

Ali Fletcher, Churchwarden

Deanery Synod Annual Report 2024

Deanery Synod met three times in 2024, at Winnington, Moulton and Davenham.

The Guest Speaker in February at Winnington was Rev Peter Froggatt (Diocesan Director of Outreach). Rev Peter reminded us that we are 'together in Christ' and have a responsibility to share that hope. We are aiming to make a difference to the 1.5million people in the Diocese who have no meaningful church connections. It is important that we believe in the Gospel and that we are local and transformational.

In June, Synod met at Moulton for a service of "songs of praise" followed by tea, cake and chat.

In October, Katy Herrera, Diocesan Families, Children and Youth Advisor was the guest speaker at Davenham. Katy pointed out that we worship a creator God who has a big heart for children and that children are a part of the church of today. By 2030 we aim to double the number of children and young people in our churches, but we will need faith to do this, and faith comes from God.

We need to link church, home and school as we live in a different society than previous generations.

At the end of 2024, Revd Ruth Mock, incumbent at Sandiway remained as Rural Dean and Paul Stevenson, Reader at Sandiway remained as Lay Chair.

Paul Stevenson
Deanery Synod Representative and Lay Chair of the Middlewich Deanery

Safeguarding Statement

At St John's, we take extremely seriously our duty and obligation to protect all.

We have adopted the Church of England's robust procedures and guidelines, and in all our activities, have given due regard to the House of Bishops' guidance on safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults. You can find out more at www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding.

If you have any safeguarding concerns, please contact our Parish Safeguarding Officer:

Julie Westgate
Mobile: 07713813147
Email: safeguarding.stjohnsandaway@gmail.com

Alternatively, you can contact the Chester Diocese Safeguarding Team on 01928 718834 or email safeguarding@chester.anglican.org

If a child or adult is at immediate risk please contact Cheshire Police on 101 (or dial 999), the local Safeguarding Children's Board on 0300 123 7047, or Adult Social Care on 0300 123 7034. The Emergency Duty Team for concerns about children or adults out of normal working hours can be contacted on 01244 977 277.

SAFEGUARDING POLICY: PROMOTING A SAFER CHURCH

In accordance with the Church of England Safeguarding Policy St John's Church Sandiway is committed to:

- Promoting a safer environment and culture.
- Safely recruiting and supporting all those with any responsibility related to children, young people and vulnerable adults within the church.
- Responding promptly to every safeguarding concern or allegation.
- Caring pastorally for victims/survivors of abuse and other affected persons.
- Caring pastorally for those who are the subject of concerns or allegations of abuse and other affected persons.
- Responding to those that may pose a present risk to others.

The Parish will:

- Create a safe and caring place for all.
- Have a named Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) to work with the incumbent and the PCC to implement policy and procedures.
- Safely recruit, train and support all those with any responsibility for children, young people and adults to have the confidence and skills to recognise and respond to abuse.
- Ensure that there is appropriate insurance cover for all activities involving children and adults undertaken in the name of the parish.
- Display in church premises and on the Parish website the details of who to contact if there are safeguarding concerns or support needs.
- Listen to and take seriously all those who disclose abuse.
- Take steps to protect children and adults when a safeguarding concern of any kind arises, following House of Bishops guidance, including notifying the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser (DSA) and statutory agencies immediately.
- Offer support to victims/survivors of abuse regardless of the type of abuse, when or where it occurred.
- Care for and monitor any member of the church community who may pose a risk to children and adults whilst maintaining appropriate confidentiality and the safety of all parties.
- Ensure that health and safety policy, procedures and risk assessments are in place and that these are reviewed annually.
- Review the implementation of the Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Practices at least annually.

Each person who works within this church community will agree to abide by this policy and the guidelines established by this church.

This church appoints Julie Westgate as the Parish Safeguarding Officer.

This policy was reviewed, updated and agreed at the Parochial Church Council (PCC) meeting held on the 6th May 2025.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS OF THE PCC

FINANCIAL REVIEW

by the Treasury Team 6th May 2025

Background

This report covers the financial statements and balance sheet for the year which ended 31st December 2024, copies of which are included with other APCM papers.

Financial administration

The treasury team manages the parish finances on a day-to-day basis. The PCC members scrutinise the actions of the treasury team and the committee provides information and advice to the PCC on financial matters.

Commentary

The accounts for 2024 show a loss of £4,851, which with a profit on revaluation of investments of £524 is reduced to £4,327. We are very fortunate that our parishioners continue to contribute either by monthly standing orders or by making regular donations to the Church. We are also thankful for the Social and fundraising team who do a magnificent job in reducing the deficit, as well as putting on some great events.

In 2023 we decided that we should simplify our Accounts by transferring reserves in Restricted Funds, and all income and expenditure on the Heritage Building project to the Building Fund account. The Ark Account also has a separate Bank account. These changes have made the Accounts very much clearer.

During the year we completed work on new lighting for the church. We are very grateful for the many donations made for this project and for the funds raised through events. The lighting in the church is a vast improvement.

We are constantly looking at ways that people can give to St John's. We already have online giving; donations can be made via St John's website or via our card reader or our tap and go system in church.

Where does the money come from?

St John's does not receive any government grants or other funding towards its running costs.

The primary source of income for general funds continues to be the planned regular giving of members of our worshipping community, in addition to donations and collections in services. Gift Aid is collected where possible.

Additional sources of regular income are derived from fundraising events, weddings, funerals, church hall hire and investments.

Where is the money spent?

The biggest item of expenditure is the Parish Share due to the Chester Diocese which was £75,344 in 2024 and takes most of our Giving (including Gift Aid Tax Recovery). The Parish Share is the amount of money we are asked to contribute to pay for mission and ministry, specifically for clergy stipends and housing, and for providing central services such as safeguarding, legal and financial services. Through the Parish Share we also contribute to supporting other parishes that are in a worse financial position than our own. We have been advised that our Parish Share will be increasing by 5% per annum plus inflation over each of the next 4 years, a total increase of 20% – if inflationary increases remain at 3%, then we will be facing a Parish Share of more than £100,000 in 2028.

All other costs must be met from other income, including Fundraising, which is vital to us and the efforts of the Social and Fundraising team are appreciated. Other costs include the upkeep of the church and grounds, church hall (net of rental income) and part of the costs of the Vicarage. It also

includes the cost of all services, relief clergy, clergy expenses and administration. After these costs have been met there is little income to cover other repairs that are needed. Our outward giving from PCC funds is based on a percentage of the receipts from planned giving. The PCC is determined that our outward giving promise should be maintained as it is a fundamental Christian principle to help others. We have kept control of both church and church hall running costs during the year, and it is gratifying that the Buildings Management Team continues to examine how best to manage our resources.

Reserves Policy

Our reserves policy focuses on the level of unrestricted reserves we need to maintain cashflow. The PCC have reviewed the reserves policy and taking account of the increase in Parish Share required, the age of many regular givers and considering the risks that the Church faces have agreed a range of unrestricted reserves. This range is currently £27,000 to £92,000. On 31st December 2024 we had unrestricted reserves of £46,266, which is within the range set.

Thank you

To everyone who so generously contributed to our finances, by planned giving or by donations during the year.

To all the people who work so hard to make applications for any grants available for our projects. To our Gift Aid Officer, for keeping our claims with HMRC up to date.

To our Independent Examiner, Harry Stephenson, for the work he has put in to satisfy himself that St John's has a set of accounts that satisfy all statutory requirements and in which the PCC and the parish can have confidence.

To the Treasury Team, for dealing with receipts and payments efficiently and promptly.

To the Buildings Management Team for their understanding of the Church finances.

The continuing challenge

The PCC has set a budget for 2025, which shows that we will be showing a loss of approximately £24,000; this projected loss assumes no income from social events or other fund-raising activities and is also before we address the maintenance schedule arising from the 2020 quinquennial inspection. The PCC acknowledged that the challenge for us therefore remains the same as it has in previous years, and as it does in all other parishes. We, as members of the worshipping community of St Johns, Sandiway, need to give freely and generously if we are to continue to meet our aims of:

- Spreading God's word within the parish.
- Providing a diverse range of religious services and other opportunities for worship through the week.
- Providing a sacred space for worship.
- Supporting members of our worshipping community within their homes.
- Contributing to the spiritual and moral education of children and young people.

Please continue to give all the help that you can and as often as you can

Andy Carter, Treasury Team Leader

On behalf of the PCC

GENERAL ACCOUNTS

REPORT BY THE INDEPENDENT EXAMINER

This report on the financial statements of the PCC for the year ended 31 December 2024, which are set out on pages 23 to 28, is in respect of an examination carried out in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations 2006 ('the Regulations') and s.43 of the Charities Act 1993 ('the Act').

Respective responsibilities of the PCC and the examiner

As members of the PCC, you are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements; you consider that the audit requirement of the Regulations and s.43 (2) of the Act does not apply. It is my responsibility to issue this report on those financial statements in accordance with the terms of the Regulations.

Basis of independent examiner's statement

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission under s.43(7)(b) of the Act and to be found in the Church guidance, 2006 edition. That examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the PCC and a comparison of the accounts with those records.

It also includes considering any unusual items or disclosures in the financial statements 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:

(1) Which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements

- to keep accounting records in accordance with section 41 of the Act; and
- to prepare financial statements, which accord with the accounting records and comply with the
- requirements of the Act and the Regulations have not been met; or

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

H Stephenson
Independent Examiner

GENERAL ACCOUNTS**INCOME AND EXPENDITURE**

	Notes	2024 £	2023 £
Incoming Funds			
Planned Giving, Gift Day, Tax claim, donations and cash collections	2	96,960	100,987
Operating activities			
Fundraising activities	2	8,586	10,762
Church activities	2	22,257	23,928
Investment income	2	1,533	2,722
Total Incoming funds		129,336	138,399
Expenditure			
Donations made	3	4,091	4,580
Church activities	3	124,172	121,715
Administration	3	5,924	6,642
Total expenditure		134,187	132,937
Transfer from (to) Restricted Funds	4	0	230
Net Incoming (outgoing) General funds		(4,851)	5,692
Gain (loss) on revaluation of investments	5	524	1,985
Net movement of funds		(4,327)	7,677
Funds b/fwd. at the start of the year		50,593	42,916
Adjustments in respect of prior years		-	-
Funds c/fwd. at the end of the year		46,266	50,593

The accompanying notes are an integral part of this statement of income and expenditure.

GENERAL ACCOUNTS**BALANCE SHEET**

	2024	2023
	£	£
Assets		
Investments		
Ministry Fund	23,429	22,904
Current assets		
Debtors	12,844	8,751
Cash at bank	25,876	32,889
	62,149	64,544
Current liabilities		
Creditors	9,397	7,143
Net assets	52,752	57,401
Unrestricted funds	46,266	50,593
Restricted funds	6,486	6,808
Total funds	52,752	57,401

The accounts on pages 22 to 30 were approved by the PCC on the 29th of April 2025 and signed on its behalf by:

AW Carter – Treasury Team Leader

Reverend R Mock – Vicar and Chairman of the Parochial Church Council

6th May 2025

The accompanying notes, on pages 25 to 28 are an integral part of these accounts.

GENERAL ACCOUNTS

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

1. Accounting policies

A summary of the principal accounting policies, all of which have been applied, consistently throughout the year and the preceding year, are set out below.

Basis of accounting

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations 2006 together with applicable accounting standards and the Statement of Recommended Practice – Charities 2005. The accounts are prepared under the historical cost convention except for the valuation of investment assets, which are shown at market value.

Funds.

- Restricted funds represent income from trusts or endowments which may be expended only on those restricted objects provided in the terms of the trust and bequest and donations or grants received for specific objects or invited by the PCC for a specific object. As the funds may only be expended on the specific object for which they were given, any balance remaining unspent at the end of the year must be carried forward as a balance on that fund. The PCC does not usually invest separately for each fund.
- Unrestricted funds represent moneys in general funds, which are used for PCC ordinary purposes.

Incoming funds.

- Planned giving, collections and donations are recognised when received.
- Tax refunds are recognised when the incoming funds to which they relate are received.
- Dividends are accounted for when receivable, interest is accrued.
- All other income is recognised when it is receivable.
- All incoming funds are accounted for Gross.

Expenditure.

- Giving is accounted for when due.
- The Parish Share is accounted for when due.
- All other expenditure is generally recognised when it is incurred and is accounted for gross.

Fixed assets

- Consecrated and benefice property is not included in the accounts as they are treated as inalienable property as are moveable church furnishing held by the Vicar and Churchwardens on special trust for the PCC.
- Expenditure on equipment has been written off.

Investments.

- Investments are valued at market value as at 31st December 2024.

2 Incoming funds

	2024 £	2023 £
Donations		
Planned giving:		
Standing orders and pink envelopes	61,676	61,398
Blue giving envelopes	1,179	925
Tax recovery	17,917	17,970
Collections (open plate)	6,061	4,429
Gift Day	0	5,788
Donations and legacies	10,127	10,477
	96,960	100,987
Fundraising events		
Concerts, social and other activities	7,638	8,709
Christmas Raffle and Gala Day	948	2,053
	8,586	10,762
Church activities		
Hall rents	12,458	13,278
Magazine sales and advertising	3,447	3,462
Wedding & funeral fees	6,352	7,188
	22,257	23,928
Investment income		
Field rent	215	850
Trust income - School Fund	471	473
Dividends and Interest	847	1,399
	1,533	2,722
Total Incoming funds	129,336	138,399

3 Expenditure

	2024	2023
	£	£
Giving		
To secular charities	1,740	3,335
To Christian charities	2,351	1,245
	4,091	4,580
Church activities		
Parish Share to diocese	75,344	71,757
Vicarage costs	4,646	4,407
Clergy expenses	1,070	1,125
Church Services	6,408	8,216
CDBF Assigned Fees	2,327	3,094
Junior church & youth group	127	125
Church operating costs	7,093	5,421
Church maintenance	5,298	7,521
Magazine production costs	4,082	4,038
Outreach	975	975
Hall operating costs	14,724	13,410
Hall maintenance	2,078	1,626
	124,172	121,715
Administration		
Administration costs	3,934	4,247
Photocopying	706	1,206
Bank charges	1,013	979
Telephone	271	210
	5,924	6,642
Total outgoing funds	134,187	132,937

4. Transfers from (to) Restricted Funds

As explained in the Report moneys raised and spent on Building Projects is now shown in the Building Fund Accounts. There are no longer any transfers of income through the General Fund Accounts

	2024	2023
Transfers from Restricted Funds	0	(230)
Transfers to Restricted Funds	0	0
Transfers to The Ark	0	(8,733)
Transfers to The Building Fund.	0	(68,091)
Net Transfer	<u>0</u>	<u>(77,054)</u>

5. Gain / (Loss) on revaluation of Investments

	2024	2023
Unrestricted funds – Ministry Fund	524	1,985

6. Related party transactions:

PCC members have during the year received reimbursement of items of expenditure properly incurred upon the business of the PCC.

7. Related trusts:

The Vicar and Churchwardens are trustees of the school fund set up on the sale of the premises which were originally the Church school. The school fund comprises 762 income shares in the CBF Church of England Investment fund; the shares originally cost £5,073 and have a current market value on 31 December 2024 of £17,619 (2023 £17,225). The capital is not shown on the Balance Sheet as under the terms of the trust only the dividends from the fund are mandated to the PCC and must be used for "Youth and Junior Church" purposes only.

8. The Ark Café

The Ark Café is non-profit making with any surplus being used to help the community. Ark funds are held outside of the General Church Funds. Reserves at the end of 2023 were £11,086 and £1,750 was paid to local good causes. During 2024, the Ark turned in a Net Profit of £2,268, giving reserves of £13,354 at the end of the Year. Donations of £3,000 are scheduled to be paid out in 2025.

BUILDINGS DEVELOPMENT APPEAL FUND

REPORT BY THE INDEPENDENT EXAMINER

I have examined the Building Fund Financial Statements for 2024 which are set out on page 30.

No matter has come to my attention:

(1) Which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements

- to keep accounting records in accordance with section 41 of the Act; and
- to prepare financial statements, which accord with the accounting records and comply with the
- requirements of the Act and the Regulations

Have not been met; or

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

H Stephenson
Independent Examiner

BUILDING DEVELOPMENT APPEAL FUND

	2024	2023
	£	£
Income and Expenditure		
Income		
Funds transferred from Church restricted Funds.	0	68,091
Fundraising and Donations	9,829	44,602
Gift Day	13,339	0
Bank Interest Received less paid	<u>0</u>	<u>449</u>
Total Income	<u>23,168</u>	<u>113,142</u>
Expenditure		
Expenditure on Tower	0	53,108
Expenditure on Ramp	0	70,357
Expenditure on Lighting	29,504	0
Bank charges	2	0
Retentions Due	<u>(18)</u>	<u>4,001</u>
Total Expenditure	<u>29,488</u>	<u>127,466</u>
Profit / (Loss) in Year	(6,320)	(14,324)
Funds B/fwd.	8,656	22,980
Funds C/fwd.	<u>2,336</u>	<u>8,656</u>
 Represented by:		
Current Assets		
Debtors	3,385	2,923
Bank Balances	<u>345</u>	<u>9,734</u>
Total Current Assets	3,730	12,657
Current Liabilities		
Creditors	1,394	4,001
Net Assets	<u>2,336</u>	<u>8,656</u>

Note: The Building Fund was transferred to its own set of accounts in 2010.