

St Nicholas' Church, Burton Financial Statements and Trustees' Annual Report 2020

Registered Charity 1184831

ST NICHOLAS' CHURCH, BURTON
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS & TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT
YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020

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TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT

Reference and Administration Details

Charity Name: The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of St Nicholas' Church Burton-in-Wirral

Charity Reg. No. 1184831

Principal Address: The Vicarage, Vicarage Lane, Burton, Neston. CH64 5TJ

Name	Office (if any) & Elected Member	
Catherine Helm	Vicar, Chair of PCC and Trustee	
Nigel Griffiths	Churchwarden and Trustee	
Gian Abbott	Churchwarden and Trustee	
Bryan Blakeman	Hon. Treasurer and Trustee	
John Vinson	Hon. Secretary and Trustee	
Tony Carter	Deputy Churchwarden and Trustee	
John Morris-Best	Lay Reader and Trustee	
Ivor Thomas	Safeguarding Officer and Trustee	
Ruth Chesworth	Deanery Synod Representative and Trustee	
Amanda Ankers	Trustee	
Linda Jones	Trustee	
Ron Curnow	Trustee	
Robin Cowan	Trustee	
Barrie Marsh	Trustee	- appointed 17 October 2020
Philip Hillman	Trustee	- appointed 17 October 2020
Molly Ankers	None	- appointed 17 October 2020
Jessica Mackie	Trustee	- resigned 17 October 2020
Barbara Morris	Trustee	- resigned 17 October 2020
Ann Warr	Verger and Trustee	- resigned 17 October 2020

STRUCTURE AND GOVERNANCE

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) is constituted and governed by the Parochial Church Councils (Powers) Measure 1956 as amended and the Church Representation Rules 2006.

The method of appointing members of the PCC is set out in the Church Representation Rules. All church attendees are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll.

The PCC ensures compliance with laws and regulations by acting on advice received from Chester Diocesan Board of Finance, information and updates received from the Charities Commission, advice and guidance received from professional advisers e.g. Independent Examiner, attendance at courses and seminars relating to matters affecting compliance and by acting on information and specific directives issued direct to clergy. In 2020 the function of the PCC has been affected by issues arising from the Coronavirus pandemic and complied with all guidance and advice it received.

Standing Committee

Rev. Catherine Helm, Gian Abbott, Nigel Griffiths, Bryan Blakeman, John Vinson

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Objectives and Activities

The objectives and activities of the PCC are to assist the Vicar in promoting the parish and the mission of the church as well as the holding of regular services and the maintenance of the fabric of the church building and its environs.

The Trustees confirm that they have referred to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit when reviewing the Trust's aims and objectives.

Church Services - Weekly

Sundays	8.45am	Holy Communion
	10.00am	Morning Worship
Wednesdays	10.15am	Holy Communion

Church Services - Monthly

1st Sunday	6.30pm	Evensong
1st Monday	11.30am	Holy Communion - Sports & Social Club
Messy Church	<i>(As Announced)</i> For children & adults during school term time	

Covid-19

Throughout 2020 church services were subject to changes and interruption due to issues arising from the Coronavirus pandemic. During this time services were either replaced, supplemented or augmented by meetings delivered online.

Visitors

The church is normally open all year round, seven days a week during daylight hours.

When the church building is open visitors are provided with the opportunity for private prayer. They are also encouraged to sit and reflect and to view the historic building. Visitors to the parish have the opportunity to take away information relating to St Nicholas' Church which has been a place of worship for many centuries and to learn about the church's current activities and opportunities for worship.

Activities

A short report on each of the activities undertaken by the church is included with this Trustees' Report.

Church Finances

The PCC continues to exercise responsible stewardship of funds placed at its disposal.

The PCC wishes to place on record its grateful thanks to all those who support the church financially and in particular to thank those who donate regularly through planned giving, those who support the maintenance of the church building and churchyard through the Friends of St Nicholas' Church, those who have made single sum donations during the year and those who contribute in so many ways to the upkeep and preservation of the church.

Overall, church finances remain finely balanced. Regular income has shown a decline in recent years while expenditure on church running costs and ministry has risen.

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Full details of St Nicholas' Church finances relating to 2020 are explained in the finance and accounts section of the Trustees' Annual report on pages 12 to 17.

Throughout the year the PCC continued to challenge all aspects of regular expenditure in order to ensure funds were deployed efficiently and responsibly and that value for money was achieved.

Expenditure on projects is always subject to rigorous cost control, quotation and tendering to ensure that work is undertaken within budget as agreed and formally approved by PCC members.

Reserves

The trustees aim to maintain free reserves in unrestricted funds at a level which equates to approximately three months of unrestricted charitable expenditure.

Church Architect

The church's architect is Stephen Quicke of FSP Northern Architects Ltd., 41 Hamilton Square, Birkenhead, Wirral.

Independent Examiner

The services of Phillip Bates and Co. Ltd are retained for the purpose of providing an Independent Examination of the church accounts.

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PCC REPORT

The PCC is committed to enabling as many people as possible to worship at the church and to become part of the Parish Community.

A key objective for the PCC is to continue to attract and welcome both current and new members and to provide ministry, opportunities for worship and other church activities for the next generation of church members and to provide the opportunity for them to become the stewards of the future.

The PCC met twice during 2020, in January in the vestry and in December via Zoom.

Throughout the year the PCC responded to the advice and regulations issued by the government and the Church of England regarding the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Adherence to the regulations had a major impact on church life. Risk analysis for the opening of the church for services or private prayer was carried out by the Churchwardens and the Vicar. Appropriate safety measures were proposed by the Standing Committee and approved by the PCC prior to implementation.

No safeguarding issues were reported to the Safeguarding Officer or other members of the PCC during the year.

CHURCHWARDENS' REPORT

2020 was a very unusual year for the Church and Parish because of the Covid-19 pandemic. In March the whole country was placed in lockdown and church services stopped. Services resumed, with strict social distancing and other restrictions, after lockdown ended. The social distancing restricted church attendance to a maximum number of 24 people. Lockdown was resumed in November and the church was closed again. Private prayer was available in the church at set times and with similar restrictions put in place in late Summer and during the November lockdown.

During various difficult times in 2020 Zoom services were deployed for those able to utilise the technology, together with service sheets distributed via post and email to maintain the church's contact with people and to promote Christian worship and fellowship. This offered support to parishioners who were also supporting each other by helping with essential shopping items, the collection of prescriptions and other health needs, as well as through prayer.

The local community was encouraged to make contributions in aid of Wirral Foodbank which enabled a special donation of £3,726 to be made to the charity. Blankets for the homeless were made by parishioners and subsequently distributed to those in need by church volunteers.

Zoom was also used for various church meetings and gatherings including one PCC meeting.

Towards the end of 2020 plans were laid for the resumption of church services and events once the virus recedes and circumstances permit such activities, with an emphasis on all the richness that church life is able to offer.

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MANAGING RISK

The PCC is mindful of its responsibilities to manage and mitigate risks which could affect the running and operation of the church and the achievement of its objectives.

Possible Risk Areas	Actions Taken
Governance:	
Lack of key skills	The PCC has identified PCC members and others with technical and professional skills capable of supporting its key operations
Budgetary constraints	Regular planned giving provides a stable income platform and expenditure on major items is assessed and budgeted prior to costs being incurred
Conflict of interests	PCC members are required to declare any potential conflicts of interest
Confidentiality issues	The PCC adheres to Data Protection legislation and all information relating to church finances and donations is restricted to key individuals
Loss of records	Church records are primarily held electronically by the Treasurer, Gift Aid Secretary or Churchwardens and year end accounting information is also lodged with the Independent Examiner
Operational Matters:	
Fire, flood and building	Assessments relating to all potential risks and other maintenance matters is handled by a sub committee of the PCC (Maintenance Committee) with input from the Church Architect
Health and safety	A Health and Safety Policy is in place and kept under review
Theft and vandalism	The PCC takes steps to safeguard its property by locking away valuables and minimising exposure to risk as a result of theft and vandalism. The PCC also has insurance cover in respect of such risk through Trintas Insurance.
Technology	Minimum use of technology is deployed onsite. The Vicar is provided with access to technology in order to support communication and church services
Financial:	
Fraud	Online banking is utilised with Barclays and a passbook account is operated with Skipton and transactions vetted. Churchwardens' records and statements are checked by the treasurer and reconciled independently. Church cash donations are always counted by two people and banked promptly
Parish Share demands	The PCC has taken steps to ensure that its Parish Share contribution remains in line with what it is able to afford based on its ordinary income
Loss of regular income	The potential loss of regular income remains a significant risk. Regular promotion of planned giving amongst church members has continued to prove to be successful
Gift Aid	The PCC continues to maximise opportunities to encourage donations to be made under HMRC's Gift Aid regulations
Regulatory:	
Safeguarding	A Safeguarding Officer has been appointed and procedures have been implemented to ensure safety for all and compliance with regulations
Discrimination	The PCC promotes equal opportunity for all and ensures that access to every aspects of church life is available to everyone irrespective of their circumstances
Charity Commission	The church is registered with the Charity Commission and complies with its regulations
Diocese	The PCC seeks and receives advice from Chester Diocese and complies with the guidance issued in respect of ministry and regulatory affairs

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MAINTENANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

Renovation of the six tower bells, for which project funds had been raised in 2019 thanks to the generosity of parishioners, the Mill Wood Trust and other trusts, began in February, with the working parts of the bells being renovated or replaced at the works of Taylors in Loughborough. Their re-installation started in March, but could not be completed until lockdown rules were relaxed following the first wave of the Covid-19 pandemic. Sadly, owing to ongoing Covid-19 precautions, they could not thereafter be rung in peal; only a single bell at a time has been rung.

Invasive ivy along the eastern wall of the churchyard was cleared back to the wall itself, revealing some previously concealed gravestones. New grass has been planted in its place. A similar exercise was continued along part of the northern wall between the churchyard and Church Wood.

The tower clock's weight having broken free and smashed earlier in the year, a specialist company, The Cumbria Clock Company were instructed to prepare a full report on the clock. The company's report recommended a major overhaul if the clock is to continue to operate properly into the future, and an order was placed with them for its refurbishment, which will involve the clock being taken to their works in Penrith. This work is expected to start in the spring of 2021.

The Quinquennial Report, by church architect Steve Quicke, began in December, and identified a number of areas in need of attention. The report has been reviewed by the maintenance committee and submitted to the diocese. Most of the remedial tasks, repairs to the parapet and a crack in the sandstone, are typical of such inspections and the estimated cost is likely to be about £6,500. Half of this, repair of the gatepost at the top of the steps, may be reimbursed by the insurers.

The sandstone wall between the churchyard and Church Wood is collapsing because of pressure from tree roots. Some of the trees are old and all are in the conservation area. Any work on the trees will have to be approved by the County and Diocese. An arboriculturist is being consulted.

Minor maintenance works, and the upkeep of the churchyard, continued throughout lockdown.

EVENTS COMMITTEE REPORT

Two Coffee Mornings were held during the year. The first event took place on 21 January in the Sports and Social Club and the second event was held in Church on Shrove Tuesday in February. These events are held in aid of church project funds.

A Games Night was held in the Sports and Social Club on 1 February with games, pizzas and a competition with prizes. It was well attended by parents and children.

All other planned events then had to be cancelled due to Covid-19 restrictions.

On Monday 28 September the Events Committee met in the Vicarage Garden.

On Sunday 4 October a short Harvest Festival Service was held in church with those attending asked to bring a vase of flowers to decorate the window sills.

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The church participated in the Village Pumpkin Festival with pumpkin models of David and Goliath displayed at the bottom of the church steps.

For the 'Time to Remember' service to be held on Sunday 1 November, a large wooden cross was laid on the grass in the churchyard and people were invited to write the name of the person they wished to remember on a stone and place it on the cross.

The church was open for private prayer from 10.00am until 12 noon on Saturday 31 October to provide people with an opportunity to light a candle for those being remembered. The Time to Remember service was held on Sunday 1 November by invitation only.

As it was not possible to organise an Advent Windows celebration in 2020 with individual window displays, residents in Burton and Puddington were invited to consider displaying an angel in one of their windows which would be visible to passers-by.

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S REPORT

Children's Groups

The two groups, All Stars and TBY, continued to meet until the Covid-19 restrictions came into being.

It was recognised early in the pandemic that young people were becoming overwhelmed with online learning, online social activity and increased reliance on screen entertainment due to the lockdown restrictions. Therefore, in consultation with parents, it was agreed that the church would not place any additional online demands on children so there was no 'virtual' format for the groups. However, regular support and encouragement was maintained via social media and the use of WhatsApp Groups.

Messy Church

Messy Church continued to thrive prior to the outbreak of the pandemic with a consistent core of people planning and resourcing sessions. Messy Church at Home has been provided by the Vicar with teaching resources delivered to each Messy Church family. This also included Light Party activities at home. Parents of Messy Church children normally meet regularly for informal social evenings when restrictions allow.

Christmas Activities

The Christmas services and celebrations were managed creatively. The Vicar hosted Christmas Book at Bedtime and Carols Around the Christmas Tree via Zoom.

Family and Youth Worker

During the year further consideration was given to the possibility of recruiting and funding a youth worker and this matter remains under active consideration.

SAFEGUARDING OFFICER'S REPORT

During the course of the year and with the unanimous approval of the PCC, Ivor Thomas was appointed as the new Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO).

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In implementing safeguarding policies and procedures the PCC adopted the safeguarding guidance promoted by the church's House of Bishops' policy, Promoting a Safer Church. This included the introduction of a parish safeguarding handbook. A hard copy of the book is available in the church porch along with the information poster, Promoting a Safer Church.

An updated Parish Safeguarding Policy Statement covering children, young people and vulnerable adults was agreed by the PCC during the year. The new policy was signed formally by the Vicar and two Churchwardens and a copy is displayed in the church porch. This policy will be reviewed annually.

All members of the PCC were briefed by the PSO on their safeguarding role and responsibilities. In the latter part of the year PCC members were encouraged to complete the Safeguarding Basic Awareness Training. As at the year end six PCC members had successfully completed the course with a further seven members committed to completing the course in early 2021. As at the year end one PCC member had also undertaken the Safeguarding Foundation Training course.

New policies covering safer recruiting and the recruitment of ex-offenders have been introduced along with a safeguarding checklist.

BURTON AND PUDDINGTON MOTHERS UNION REPORT

The Mothers Union held its Annual General meeting in February in church. Attendance was good. The 20 members present enjoyed the short service, presentations by the Secretary and Treasurer and a time of fellowship together. Unfortunately this was the only meeting held in 2020 as a result of Covid-19 restrictions. However, members did keep in touch with each other by telephone, text and email.

FSNC REPORT

Membership of the Friends of St Nicholas' Church (FSNC) is open to all those who appreciate the presence of the historic church and ancient churchyard in Burton.

Regrettably, FSNC was not able to hold any of its planned fund-raising events in 2020. However, £3,190 was raised during the year through regular standing order donations and other small contributions from FSNC members to help support the upkeep and maintenance of the church building and its churchyard.

The first stone church in Burton was erected on the site of St Nicholas' Church in 1086. However, the present church which will, according to the stonemason's inscription over the door, be 300 years old in 2021.

DEANERY SYNOD REPORT

The Wirral South Deanery met on Thursday 5 March 2020, at All Saint's Parish Hall, Thornton Hough. The meeting was opened with prayer by the rural dean. The meeting was well attended with some apologies including that of our now late Hon. Secretary John Lewis, who died in August 2020. His service of at least 23 years as Secretary and also as Hon. Secretary of Wirral South Deanery was noted and our thoughts and prayers were directed towards John and his very loving family.

The Parish report was given by the Rector the Rev Vicky Barrett. The accounts were presented by the Treasurer Basil Keys, having been examined by Dr Elly MacBeath, and were accepted.

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The Treasurer reported that the Deanery subscription which had remained at £60.00 per Parish had not been increased since 2005 and invited a discussion on an increase. It was proposed and seconded to increase the subscription to £75.00 per year to allow for inflation etc. There were no objections raised by the members present.

The speaker the Rev Steve Clapham from Stoke on Trent arrived unwell. He spoke very briefly about 'Fresh Expressions and Churches Together'. Much of what he had to say was based on a book written by the Rev Alison Burton, a Baptist Minister. Much of what the Rev Clapham said revolved around the fact that the Church is no longer run by the Clergy. Today the church is run by all who are called to serve in it, in many and differing roles. The traditional church is continuing to change. To fill the gaps in his shortened talk, he recommended reading the Rev Alison Burton's book.

No other meetings were held in 2020.

OTHER CHURCH GROUPS

Other groups within which church members participate include:

Hardy Perennials Monthly lunch-time meetings at Pollards Inn at Willaston for people who live largely independently.

Music Group and Singers Musicians and singers who support church services.

Handbell Ringers A group of church members interested in learning the art of handbell ringing. The group has played at various local venues including nursing homes and community events.

Church Bell Ringers The ringing of church bells in the tower for services, festivals, weddings and special occasions.

PARISH VOLUNTEERS

The PCC would like to record its thanks to all the volunteers who work so hard to make the church a lively and vibrant community in the Parish. St Nicholas' Church is indebted to all members of the PCC, the churchwardens, members of the various subcommittees, each of the church groups and especially people who just turn up to help with the many tasks that are needed to be undertaken to make the church and its events function.

OUTWARD GIVING

St Nicholas' Church supported several charitable organisations during the year including:

Home

Save the Family

Wirral Churches Ark Project

Charles Thompson's Mission

Chester Clergy Family Trust

Bible Society

Church Pastoral Aid Society

Wirral Foodbank

Abroad

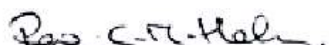
Church Mission Society

Melanesian Brothers

Mango Tree

Approved on behalf of the committee on 20 April 2021

Rev. CM Helm - Incumbent



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**INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF
THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF ST NICHOLAS CHURCH BURTON**

YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of The Parochial Church Council of St Nicholas' Church Burton for the year ended 31 December 2020, which are set out on pages 12 to 17.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees of the Trust you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011('the Act').

I report in respect of my examination of the Trustee's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

- (1) accounting records were not kept in respect of the Trust as required by section 130 of the Act; or
- (2) the accounts do not accord with those records.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

.....
Janet Jones ACA
Phillip Bates & Co Limited
1/3 Chester Road
Neston
CH64 9PA

Date:

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Receipts and Payments Accounts 2020

	Unrestricted General Funds	Unrestricted Contingency Fund	Restricted Churchyard Fund	Restricted Fabric Fund	Total 2020	Total 2019
Receipts						
Voluntary Income						
Collections	2,743.87				2,743.87	3,370.49
Envelopes	3,102.00				3,102.00	7,033.00
Planned Giving	53,628.00				53,628.00	49,650.00
Friends of St Nicholas'	3,190.00				3,190.00	6,132.42
Income						
Interest		10.03	7.14	78.21	95.38	167.62
Dividends			787.17		787.17	741.68
Event	623.70				623.70	7,010.85
Other Income						
Bld. Soc. Interest	252.84				252.84	0.00
Tax Refund	15,802.30				15,802.30	17,585.70
Shotwick Contribution	1,680.00				1,680.00	1,600.00
Fees	7,135.10				7,135.10	11,246.50
Magazine Income	1,265.00				1,265.00	1,579.00
Sundry Income	96.28				96.28	521.28
Special Donations	4,982.33				4,982.33	27,434.59
Chester Diocese	2,000.00				2,000.00	0.00
VAT Ref					0.00	5,404.61
Insurance					0.00	3,311.97
Total Receipts	96,501.42	10.03	794.31	78.21	97,383.97	142,789.71

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	Unrestricted General Funds	Unrestricted Contingency Fund	Restricted Churchyard Fund	Restricted Fabric Fund	Total 2020	Total 2019
Payments						
Diocesan Expenses						
Parish Share	52,239.84				52,239.84	50,965.68
Chester DBF	2,652.00				2,652.00	3,211.00
Council Tax	3,103.91				3,103.91	2,978.22
Water Rates	625.22				625.22	623.57
Light & Heat	556.17				556.17	419.72
Gardening	429.00				429.00	957.00
Telecoms	392.84				392.84	320.04
PPE	188.99				188.99	0.00
Other Expenses						
Resources	450.65				450.65	730.19
Travel	401.40				401.40	968.95
Locum Vicar Costs	0.00				0.00	603.50
Building & Upkeep						
Water Rates	53.31				53.31	68.11
Oil					0.00	3,294.18
Electricity	618.00				618.00	315.18
Insurance	1825.90				1825.90	2,468.18
Maintenance Costs	989.64				989.64	262.00
Churchyard	2,516.19				2,516.19	1,325.00
Sundry	27.00				27.00	68.00
Professional Fees	1,482.00				1,482.00	1,440.00
Church Admin						
Vergers	50.00				50.00	700.00
Upkeep/Cleaning	1,193.00				1,193.00	500.00
Youth	0.00				0.00	213.70
Magazine	277.00				277.00	2,260.00
Stationery & Copying	346.11				346.11	654.67
Books & Materials	88.99				88.99	282.80
Flowers & Resources	0.00				0.00	604.88
GVH Hire	528.00				528.00	693.00
Licences/Subscriptions	247.00				247.00	275.39
Website & IT	233.00				233.00	238.00
Organist Fees	260.00				260.00	1,245.00
Publications	52.50				52.50	74.05
Equipment	255.26				255.26	4,926.60
Events	115.68				115.68	823.78
Friends of St Nicholas	0.00				0.00	430.36
Other	75.00				75.00	0.00
Charitable Giving	10,626.25				10,626.25	9,609.00
Project Expenditure	15354				15,354.00	49,549.13
	98253.85				98253.85	144,098.88
Divs Reinvested			787.17		787.17	741.68
	98,253.85		787.17		99,041.02	144,840.56

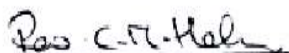
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	Unrestricted General Funds	Unrestricted Contingency Fund	Restricted Churchyard Fund	Restricted Fabric Fund	Total 2020	Total 2019
Receipts	96,501.42	10.03	794.31	78.21	97,383.97	142,789.71
Payments	98,253.85		787.17		99,041.02	144,840.56
Net	-1,752.43	10.03	7.14	78.21	-1,657.05	-2,050.85
Bank & Cash Balances 1 Jan 2020	85,701.33	2,361.16	1,683.68	18,419.99	108,166.16	110,217.01
Bank & Cash Balances 31 Dec 2020	83,948.90	2,371.19	1,690.82	18,498.20	106,509.11	108,166.16

	General Funds	Contingency Fund	Churchyard Fund	Fabric Fund	Total 2020	Total 2019
Statement of Assets & Liabilities						
Barclays Account No 1	20,903.83				20,903.83	32,194.75
Barclays Account No 2	16,737.06				16,737.06	16,737.06
Skipton Building Society Cash	46,308.01				46,308.01	36,650.62
					0.00	118.90
CCLA Fabric Fund				18,498.20	18,498.20	18,419.99
CCLA Contingency		2,371.19			2,371.19	2,361.16
CCLA Ch'yard Fund			1,690.82		1,690.82	1,683.68
	83,948.90	2,371.19	1,690.82	18,498.20	106,509.11	108,166.16

	Total 2020	Total 2019
Investment Assets at Valuation		
CBF C of E Inv.Fund Income shares		
Contingency Fund		
Churchyard Repair Fund	28,617.07	25,997.33
	28,617.07	25,997.33

Approved by the PCC on 20 April 2021 and signed on its behalf:



Rev. CM Helm, Incumbent



B Blakeman, Treasurer

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Notes to the Accounts

1. Basis of preparation of accounts

The accounts have been prepared on a receipts and payments basis.

2. Receipts

Voluntary income for 2020 was £62,664 compared with £66,185 in 2019 (-5.32%). In addition, the church received a further £4,982 in donations towards the completion of ongoing projects. This decrease in voluntary income continues a pattern experienced in previous years resulting from a reduction in the number of established church members (death, moving away, residential care etc.) who, over the years, have largely contributed very generously towards church funds. The level of contributions from these longer-established church members is not currently being replaced by contributions from newer church members. Along with all parishes in the Diocese, St Nicholas' Church received a Covid-19 discretionary support payment of £2,000 from Chester Diocese.

In 2020 the PCC received a tax refund of £15,802 through Gift Aid compared with £17,586 in 2019. This refund figure represents 16.2% of total income for the year, emphasising once again the importance to PCC finances of regular planned giving by church members using Gift Aid where it is possible to do so.

Total income for the year, including special donations, tax refunds etc. amounted to £97,383 and total expenditure was £99,041.

In terms of the ongoing risk to church finances the PCC continues to rely on contributions from a relatively small number of very generous donor households. In many instances, these significant contributors together with other long-standing donors, represent an ageing generation. The evidence suggests that in recent times such donors are neither being replaced nor supplemented by a new and younger generation of church members. In the event that the church was to experience a loss of one or more of the contributions of significant donors, the finances of the church would inevitably come under pressure.

The church also normally relies on funds raised through various events such as those organised by Friends of St Nicholas' Church and the Events Committee as well as other fund-raising activities. The opportunities to hold fund-raising events in 2020 were extremely limited. Nevertheless, regular donations received through the Friends of St Nicholas' Church amounted to £3,190.

In addition to £27,434 raised in 2019 through special donations the church received such project funding in 2020 amounting to £4,982 which enabled planned expenditure on building, maintenance and improvement projects to be undertaken.

3. Investments

Funds to support day to day expenditure are held on deposit with Barclays Bank and with Skipton Building Society. In addition longer-term funds are managed in designated funds by CCLA Investment Management Ltd who manage investments for charities, religious organisations and the public sector, including the Church of England.

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4. Payments & Expense Costs

No unforeseen items of expenditure were incurred during the year. Certain items of expenditure reduced in 2020 compared with 2019 due to restrictions on church services and activities. For example whilst the upkeep of the building and churchyard continued throughout the year no expenditure was incurred on heating oil in 2020, compared with £3,294 in 2019.

5. Parish Share

All ministry expenses (Vicar and related on-costs) are shared with St Michael's Church, Shotwick. St Nicholas' Church pays 77.25% of the cost and St Michael's Church cover 22.75% of expenditure. The PCC is currently paying the Diocese charge or Parish Share, pro rata, at the rate of 105% of a standard Parish Share rather than at the rate of 145% as requested by the Diocese.

In 2020 the parish share cost to St Nicholas Church, as levied by Chester Diocese, amounted to £52,240 which equates to some £1,004 per week. In the light of a continuing decline in the PCC's ordinary voluntary income and with the church's operating costs remaining largely fixed, the Treasurer has advised the PCC that the present funding model operated by Chester Diocese, is unlikely to be sustainable in the medium to longer term.

6. Trustees Remuneration

St Nicholas' Church PCC did not have any employees during the year and no expenses were either claimed by, or paid to Trustees in performance of their duties as Trustees.