



Stockton Country Parish
Annual report on the year 2022
Sunday 21st May 2023
St Cuthbert's Church, Redmarshall

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Aims and Objectives of the PCC

Stockton Country Parish Parochial Church Council (PCC) has the responsibility of cooperating with the incumbent, in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish, the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. The PCC is also specifically responsible for the maintenance of our five church buildings:

- All Saints church in Great Stainton village (at time of writing this church had closed and passed into diocesan care, however this report is for the year 2022, for the whole of which period All saints was in parish care).
- St Cuthbert's church in Redmarshall village
- St James church in Thorpe Thewles village
- St John the Divine in Stillington village
- St Peter's church in Bishopton village

Objectives and Activities

The PCC is committed to enabling as many people as possible to worship at our churches, and to become part of our parish communities. The PCC takes an active role in the planning of worship patterns throughout the year, and participate in leading services. Our services and worship put faith into practice through prayer and scripture, music, service and sacrament.

When planning our activities for the year, we have focussed on:

- Growing the church, in maturity of faith, service, and number
- Serving young families – specifically those bringing their children for baptism.
- Caring for creation

Our buildings and churchyards are cared for by our congregations and community. In addition the closed churchyards (Bishopton and Redmarshall) are mown by the local authority. The parish councils in Stillington and Thorpe Thewles award the PCC a grant towards mowing costs.

Significant developments

Attendance/Electoral roll

In 2022 there were 96 (down from 100) on the electoral roll and average weekly attendance in October was 25. This represents a 50% decrease on the previous year.

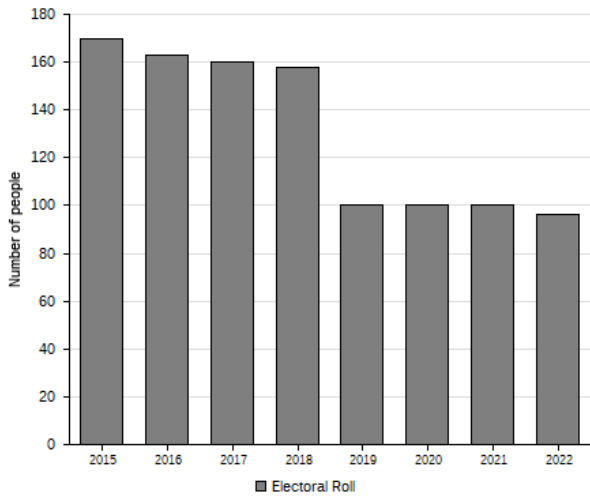


Figure 1: Number on electoral roll

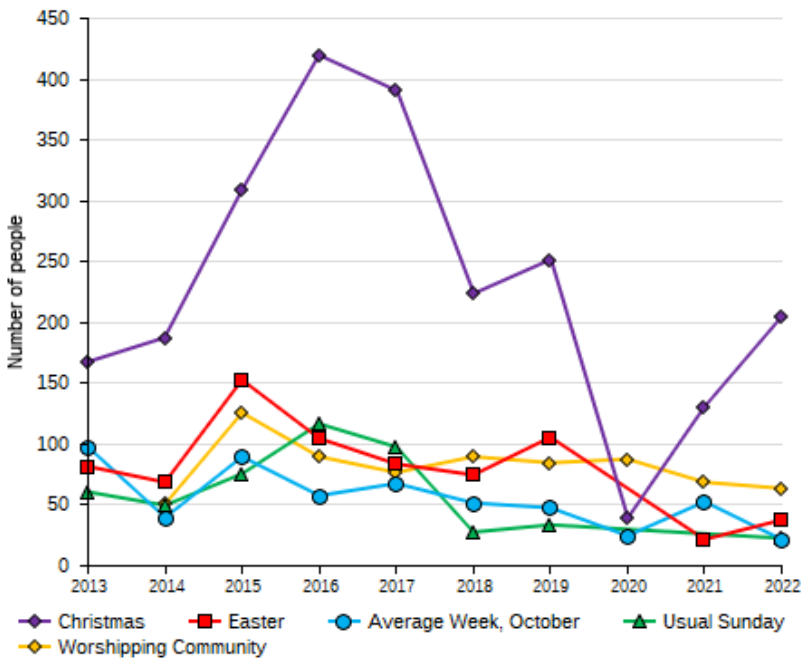


Figure 2: Comparing attendance/membership by 5 different measures

A quick glance at both figures 1 and 2 shows us that we are in decline, over the past 9 years. We are not alone in this - this is the trend nationally.

However, there is cause for hope, and rejoicing. We are a small community, within small communities - growth will be in ones and two's. Jesus sought out the minority, and taught us to value the single lost sheep. While the regular worshipping community is small, and has shrunk over the past 9 years, we are seeing small growth. Christmas and Easter attendance is rising. Far more people have joined the worshipping community than have left.

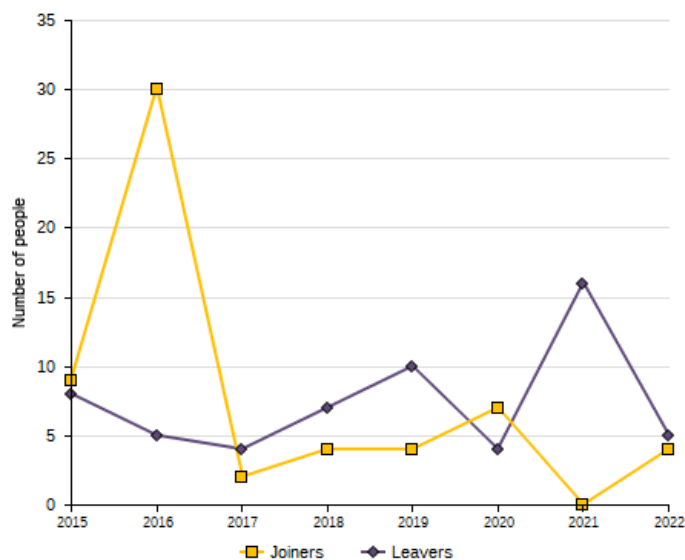


Figure 3 Joiners and leavers (worshipping community)

Perhaps more importantly - we have tried, and continue to try, new things. We are serving our community, seeking to find the need and opportunity. We should not lose heart. God is good, we are serving God. God will prosper that which God wants to bless our community with.

Worship and Mission

Sunday worship

We continue to worship in one church each week at 10:30am

- 1st Sunday: St John's Stillington - Messy Church
- 2nd Sunday: St James Thorpe Thewles - Holy Communion
- 3rd Sunday: St Cuthbert's Redmarshall - Holy Communion
5pm Wynyard Chapel - Evening prayer for wedding couples
- 4th Sunday: St Peter's Bishopton - Holy Communion
- 5th Sunday: location is determined by booking for baptism.

Baptisms are at 12noon in the building in which morning worship has taken place.

A weekly service of Celtic Communion is held in St Cuthbert's at 12noon on a Wednesday, except in the period January-Lent.

Messy Church in 2022 saw low numbers, never recovering to pre-Covid levels. In 2023 we have changed our pattern of worship to respond to this.

Seasonal festival services were held for Ash Wednesday, Easter, the Platinum Jubilee, the Queen's funeral, Harvest, Remembrance, Christmas.

Special Services

2022 saw the first 'proper' **Harvest festival** that we have been able to hold since before lockdown. St Peter's Church was beautifully decorated with flowers and produce. It was a deliberate choice to hold the service in Bishopton, as our most rural working church. We held a harvest lunch in the village hall afterwards.

Attendance was not high, or indeed, increased on the usual, but it was a joyful event.

We held a service in every working church for the **Jubilee**, with the thought that some in the wider community would want to mark the occasion in church - given that the Coronation is amongst other things an act of worship, and the appointment of the head of the Church of England. None of the services attracted anyone other than regular attenders.

All the churches were opened for signing the book of condolence on the death of Queen Elizabeth II. A service to mark the Queen's funeral was held. Again it was appreciated, and similarly it did not attract more than the regular attenders.

Schools

Incumbent's activity in schools

Rev Claire is a foundation governor to both Bishopton CofE and William Cassidi CofE primary schools. Since October 2022, she has taken a fortnightly assembly in Bishopton, and at least termly in William Cassidi. She has attended termly governors meetings, Updates on Church School governance, and training sessions on GDPR, Effective visits, and Equalities. At William Cassidi Claire was on the sub committees for Ethos, and for school places.

The practice of school communion had stopped during lockdown and never been picked up again. Both schools enjoyed their first communion services since then in the Autumn term of 2022. For the first time, William Cassidi came in to church for theirs. Many commented that this felt very special. The school are keen to continue this practice.

Since September 2022 Rev Claire has gone in to William Cassidi to hear Y3-5 read. This was in response to a report to the governors that there was a need for more opportunities for this for those children who are struggling with reading.

Claire provides input to RE lessons when asked, and joins the schools for celebrations such as the leavers service in Durham cathedral. William Cassidi has a long tradition of festival services (Harvest, Carols, Christingle, Easter) led by the pupils, in church. Rev Claire and church volunteers attend and support these - with the pupils very much in the driving seat.

Reports from the schools:

- **Bishopton-Redmarshall CofE Primary School**

The most significant change at Bishopton Redmarshall CE Primary School was my appointment as Headteacher in the Summer Term of last year. In September 2022, I began my journey into Headship.

We have, this year, ensured that being a pupil at Bishopton is built around a love of reading. To do this, we invested part of the budget into transforming a space in school into a whole school, central library. We have worked with the children to design the wall art and furniture- making it their space. This space is continually used- whether it be for teaching of groups, interventions or just simply allowing children the time to enjoy a book. This change also brought about a change to the environment around the school; we were able to brighten up work spaces and share our vision with pupils, staff and visitors by creating a large mural centrepiece in the school hall.

The school has invested in a new range of intervention strategies, allowing for more child-centred learning and taking the learning approach through to the home environment through improved accessibility. We have invested time into the development of staff through individualised CPD- ensuring that staff are eager and able to facilitate high-quality learning.

We have introduced a number of new after school clubs and have implemented leadership throughout our pupils; our Y6 pupils run games clubs for younger members of the school community and the atmosphere around school is very much geared around our children enjoying their time in school!

Jonathon Bull

Headteacher

Pictures of the improvements inside Bishopton-Redmarshall school:



- **William Cassidi CofE Aided Primary School**

Friday, 5th May 2023

Dear Members,

Times continue to be challenging for our school family, our children, our parents and our community in which we serve. We continue to be fortunate that our staff show resilience, compassion and care for each other and our families maintaining well-being for everyone. I continue to be proud to be a small part of the William Cassidi family.

Our Vision Statement remains at the heart of all we do:

Jesus taught his disciples many important lessons. He taught them about God, about what He had come to do and about themselves. He also taught them how they should treat each other.

Matthew 5 v.41

'And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with them two miles.'

Jesus taught that we should choose to go further than is required of us in our actions and attitudes. Jesus guided us by example, the way he lived and by putting others before himself. We endeavour to follow His example in all we do.

We continue our daily worships in school joining together as a community praying, celebrating and singing together. We have celebrated the Christian festivals of Easter, harvest, Christingle and Christmas including a wonderful carol Concert led by our children, together in school and St. John's Church and staff worked hard to hold Christmas productions for parents to attend in school.

R.E. continues to be ably led by Mrs. Allen who attends regular training and provides support and guidance to her peers. In addition, Mrs. Howell leads PSHE which also provides support for children to explore their feelings, anxieties and other issues. We continue to support National weeks and charity work including mental awareness, Anti-Bullying, MacMillan cake sale, Red Nose Day, Wear A Hat day (brain tumours) supporting local charities which support members of our school community.

One focus has been on supporting our families especially during the current financial crisis. Wherever possible we have funded all activities reducing expenditure. We have put all fundraising online to enable those who wish to contribute to do so and reducing peer pressure. We have continued with our pre-loved uniform arrangements and provided additional theme nights, clubs for all children including games and movie nights as we became aware of reductions in capacity for parents and carers to be able to provide these extras. We have contracted additional swimming sessions to 'plug another gap'. We will continue to provide support as soon as we are able to identify it within the constraints of a very tight school budget.

We continue to provide many enrichment activities which are always so evident in our school including: our annual residential visit, science week and museum, school visits and visitors. Sporting activities including swimming, football, gymnastics, rounders and cricket and our annual Fun and Fitness Week including Sports Day is planned for the Summer Term. We celebrated the late Queen's Platinum Jubilee during our British Week and Museum and held a Spring Jubilee Tea Party and Fair. We are now celebrating the Coronation of his majesty King Charles III.

We will continue to support our children and families and we fully recognise the enormous ongoing strains and difficulties endured by so many. We will follow our vision and 'Go the second mile' in all that we do.

Yours sincerely,

Julie Cornelius

Mrs. Cornelius

Head Teacher

Ian Ramsey CofE Secondary School

While this school isn't in the parish, it is in the neighbouring one and is the only CofE secondary school in the area. Since 2021 we have been growing a relationship with the school, initiated by them when Rev Claire began to send recorded assemblies in. These were well received.

The school participated in the Art Exhibition in September 2022, and will do so again in 2023. We look forward to continuing to grow this relationship.

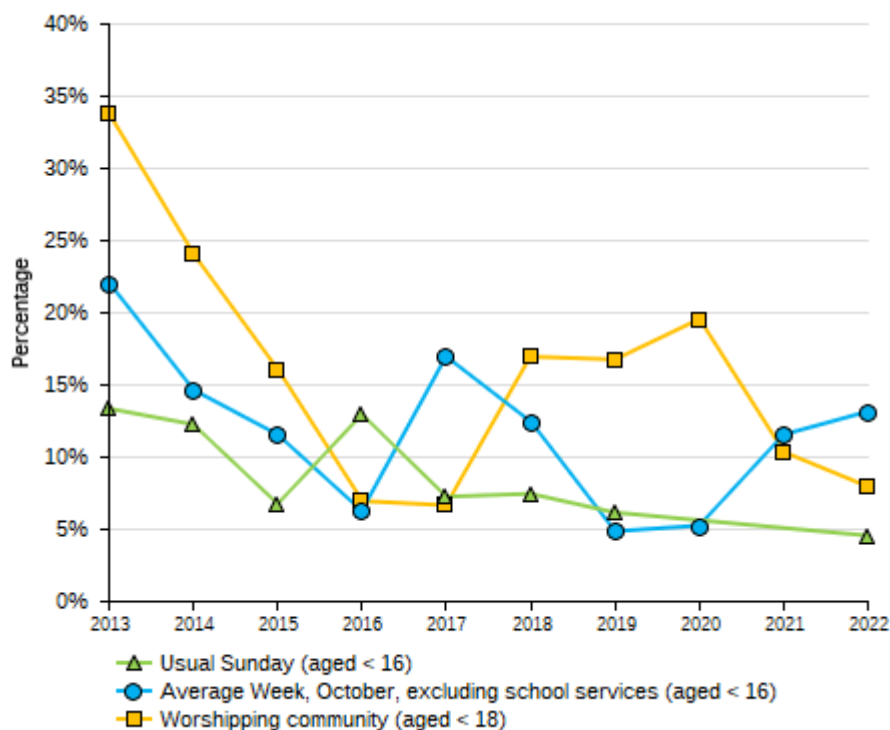


Figure 4 Under 16's

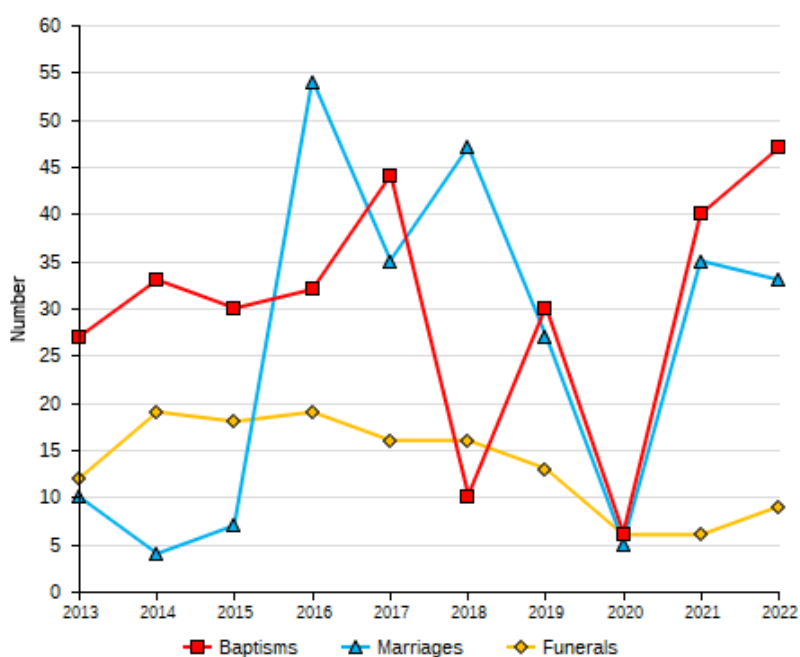


Figure 5 Baptisms, marriages, funerals

Pastoral Ministry

Baptisms

Trends in baptisms continue to fluctuate, and to be very popular, when taking into account the size of our population (around 4500, discounting Wynyard). Some families do come from outside the parish - but have family connections to it. The majority are resident within it.

Maintaining our relationship with baptism families, and making church accessible to them remains a challenge, and one that we are actively trying to address.

From September 2021 we ran Diddy Disciples once a week at Carlton Methodist Church. It was a carer and baby/toddler group with Bible stories, songs and crafts. We had hoped that this would become a Christian community for those with preschool aged children. The group grew steadily at first, but quickly dwindled again. We stopped running Diddies at Easter 2022

In March 2022 we made a change in the way that we run baptism prep. This had been an evening session, at St Cuthbert's for parents only. It had been hard for both parents to attend and it was difficult to find a suitable time, given children's bedtimes. Thus we shifted to running it as a Sunday afternoon session at Carlton Methodist church, for all the family, using play, and visual aids as well as more grownup conversation with the parents.

This time and context has been a positive development. We are all less tired and stretched, the building is more family friendly, and we make the children deliberately welcome. Families do appreciate it.

We had hoped that this would be a joint venture with the Methodist church but this connection had not developed, other than using the building.

It remains the case that few families maintain regular contact with church. We continue to try new things to address this.

Weddings

The chart above shows significant growth in the number of weddings. The majority are at Wynyard Hall chapel - and conducted by retired or

self supporting clergy. In 2022 this was Revs John Hearn, Tim Ollier, Caroline Philips and Daniel Ackerley. We are deeply grateful for the time and love they put into supporting the couples through this ministry.

The majority of those marrying in the hall need to qualify by attendance, over the course of six months. We hold evening prayer at the hall chapel once a month, which serves the dual purpose of a dedicated service for the couples and enabling the hall to keep its marriage license for a place of public worship. The service is aimed specifically at those preparing for marriage, with an assumption that they are not habitual worshippers. Couples also choose to worship with us on Sunday morning. We enjoy welcoming them. Many couples also come subsequently to hear their banns read. We offer an afternoon session of marriage preparation at the hall to all couples.

In order to sustain the Wynyard Hall ministry, with the large additional administrative burden, we employ a dedicated weddings administrator - who works 5 mornings a week. We are permitted to charge an additional administrative fee to the couples. The Hall make a £100 donation per wedding, to support the wider work of the parish - which needs to exist in order for them to have chapel weddings.

Where Wynyard Hall weddings give us a short, but concentrated, relationship with the wedding couples, parish weddings build our relationship with the community. There were four in 2022. Welcoming and celebrating with these local couples is a delight and often part of an ongoing relationship around significant life events, and festival attendance.

Funerals

The number of church funerals seems to have, finally, followed the national trend - of falling markedly. Pre lockdown, rural funerals were behind the curve but we now seem to be matching it. There were 9 church or clergy-led funerals from the parish in 2022, slightly up on the previous year but continuing the longer term decline.

We continue to hold our annual (Advent/Christmas) bereavement service. This attracts around 20 people and is deeply appreciated. Notice is placed in the parish magazine and individual invitations are sent to next of kin of the deceased over the past two years.

Pastoral care and home communion.

We are a caring community and we all visit those in need of company, love and support - especially at times of illness and struggle. Rev Claire visits the sick and housebound, taking communion to those who desire it. In 2022 this was two individuals.

Discipleship and evangelism, outreach

In Lent 2022, we held a Lent course around creativity - exploring who God is, and who we are in relation to God, through our creativity. This was held in the village hall in Bishopton. After two years of being starved of community and social contact, the onus was on being community more than bible study - short reflections on bible verses around creativity were shared, and we enjoyed being creative with clay, together. The group was small (around 6) but those who came found it nourishing.

After Easter we held our first ever Alpha course, in Thorpe Thewles Village Hall. Over 8 weeks we met, ate, listening to presentations and discussed. Delicious home cooked food was provided by Rob and Jane Armitage, from Thorpe Thewles. We began with 18, and settled at a steady 6 (which is about usual level of drop-off). Several people from the fringes of the church made contact, some have stayed in touch. One has returned to subsequent groups.

Alpha was appreciated and enjoyed. It was good to have an event to invite people to which was about faith and community, but was not formal worship.

The Course included a quiet day, at Brancepeth Castle. Being away from the parish, being looked after, in a beautiful place, was recognised as a 'good thing'.

In response to feedback from the Lent course, Alpha and the Away Day, further groups and events have been run in 2023.

Caring for Creation

Treating the natural world with reverence and gratitude is an oft forgotten part of our discipleship and mission. Thus we made a conscious effort to change, by setting aside areas for wilding throughout the parish. The majority of All Saints (Great Stainton) churchyard, and areas in Thorpe Thewles, Stillington and Redmarshall, have been left unmown apart from one cut in September. It is early days yet, in terms of seeing an increase in the biodiversity, of flora or fauna, but we look forward to seeing this

develop. A sparrowhawk was sighted going to ground at All Saints - which is an encouraging sight.

In Stillington there was feedback from the community that the area set aside in front of the church was unsightly, and very visible. In response the area has been switched to that to the West end of the Church.

Ecumenical relationships

Carlton Methodist Church are the only other worshipping community within the parish. We shared in Carols on the Green in Carlton, but no other shared worship this year. As stated above, we use the Methodist church for baptism preparation but this is not a shared ministry. We would like to work together more.

Social and fundraising events

Summer Fair

In July we held our first Fair since before lockdown. It was held in the back garden of the Smith's Arms, in Carlton - at no charge and with considerable support from them. A team from across the parish came together to organise and run stalls. It was a joyful community event, and raised £1300 for the parish.

Art Exhibition

In September, we held a community art exhibition in St John's, Stillington. Local artist, Shirley Wells, premiered her set of 12 silk banners, depicting the local area through 12 months of lockdown. Both our primary schools, William Ramsey CofE Secondary, and Stillington Art Group all exhibited their work.

The event was intended to be a celebration of community creativity, and a form of harvest celebration. It was very popular, the community feedback was warm, and we met many local people for the first time - saying happily that it was the first time they had set foot in church. As an event aimed at building community, widening welcome and celebrating creativity in all ages, it was a great success.

Communication and Publicity

Parish Magazine

We continue to publish a parish magazine 10 times a year and to deliver it to most homes in the parish, as well as copies going to both schools, plus Wynyard Primary school, both shops, and some of our pubs. A paid editor is employed part time and delivery is carried out by volunteers. We rent a complex photocopier to produce it - which is far cheaper than paying for printing services.

This remains a key way to communicate with the parish.

Facebook

Since Lockdown we have used Facebook both regularly and frequently, to communicate events and services across the parish. It is definitely a question of needing belt and braces: paper and online communication.

Finance

We work towards continuous improvement in terms of monitoring and understanding our finances, and continue to benefit from streamlining our accounts management. **Full audited accounts are at the end of this document.**

The State of Our Finances

From our Audited 2022 Accounts (Main Accounts including Wynyard)

Gross income £76,704

Gross Expenditure £96,226

Loss £15,958

Our loss for 2022 looks substantially larger than that in 2021 (£3,348). However, we sold the parish hall in 2021, which artificially inflated our income. If we remove this one-off income, our loss actually fell 18% compared to 2021, - a significant improvement, given current price inflation and the way in which household incomes are not keeping up.

Income From Giving

Giving is the total figure of all donations, standing orders and plate donations. Income from giving was down 1% on what was received in

the 2021. We are always grateful to those who can make donations and whilst the figure was slightly down it is much appreciated that despite the cost of living crisis, people are still generous.

We claim Gift Aid and GASDS (Gift Aid Small Donations Scheme - plate collections) from HMRC. Total income from Gift Aid received in 2022 was £3,183.61 (£1848.83 of that total being received in January 2023).

GASDS claims are made once a year and cover the period of the tax year. In 2022 we received £1,390.84 for the year. This figure reflects the return of in-person worship after the lockdown period.

A breakdown of our expenditure:

	2021	2022
Salaries & Expenses	17%	19%
Parish Share	43%	44%
Buildings & Maint.	2%	2%
Insurance	10%	11%
External Charities	0%	0%

Re the above table: Our Insurance costs rose by only 1% in 2022 - this small increase reflects the Diocese taking over All Saints Church in Great Stainton. In reality our insurance costs in terms of % would have been greater.

Parish share is our largest single item of expenditure - Parish share is the money that we (and every CofE parish) contribute to the diocese to pay for their clergy, support and being part of the wider work of the diocese. Whilst it is a large amount, it should be noted that the total cost, to the diocese, of supplying a vicar and associated costs such as salary, housing, pension, plus the support of the diocese for the parish, is around £56,000.

In 2022 we paid £40,000 as our Parish share. This was the same as was paid in 2021. The diocese continues to work with every parish, in order to agree what a fair contribution looks like. This figure is based on

our congregation, local population, local wealth (this area is in the top 10% of income, nationally) and our unrestricted reserves (monies in savings not legally bound to be spent on anything specific). The calculation is that a fair parish share would be £51,185. If we paid this (and all parishes paid by this calculation) the diocese would be able to continue its work as it stands - that is, clergy numbers could remain the same.

Following the sale of the Village Hall in Great Stainton we continue to hold a reasonable amount in general funds. However, It must once again be stated, and as a note of caution, these funds will not last forever and are depleting with meeting a large Parish share payment every year. Whilst accepting the true cost to the Diocese of supplying us with a Minister, as a parish we continue to maintain our pledge to pay £40,000 but with our accounts as they currently stand we will drain the general funds we have quickly. We have no more assets to sell and the bottom line is if we were do not increase our pledge from the £40,000 we have maintained over the last few years, we will have used up our reserves in around 2 years. Now that we are hopefully free from Covid lockdowns, fundraising activities have resumed along with normal in plate collections. We are aiming to see improvement in our general income and resume previous levels of past years.

If we are running a loss, why is there a lot of money in the bank?

A valid question from previous years and the answer remains the same. As a parish we continue to appear cash rich, at the end of 2021 the total amount held in general/designated funds was £123,812. As at the end of 2022 that total is now £109,654 - a clear demonstration that we continue to eat into our reserves.

Of the £109,654 held in general/designated funds at the end of 2022 £26,596 is allocated to maintaining our buildings. However, there are no covenants binding us to spend it in that way. That is simply what is currently planned. We also hold a good balance (£46,161.49) in restricted funds, but the use of these funds is restricted to a specific area and cannot be allocated for any other expenditure areas.

This report covers 2022, and a positive we can take is that we continue to maintain our Parish share at £40,000. We are not on the verge of collapse, and in the light of cost of living rises we are fortunate to maintain loyal donors.

Looking forward

The PCC, under the guidance of Revd Claire, have been working hard to address our accounts and what steps can and could be made to cut down on our expenditure. Our utilities were fixed at the beginning of 2021 and smart meters fitted to all churches so that all our bills are accurate rather than estimated.

We continue to benefit from the upgraded photocopier at a reduced rental. BT costs have been renegotiated in our favour. Small steps but ones that have a positive impact on our accounts.

We have been praying, planning and working towards maintaining growth going forward.

We need now, more than ever, to be courageous, holding to the hope that God promises, that He is always with us, and when we seek to further His kingdom, will prosper that work. We will need to be bold, and willing to let go and trust God. That may mean loss. But we are a people of love, called to focus on people, on giving ourselves. This is who the church is. We are promised transformation when we serve God and welcome in God's Kingdom. Transformation, life, growth - all of these are change, so we need not fear, though loss is painful, it is not bad when it ushers in growth.

Buildings

Buildings are many things. For many, they are the Church. The visible sign of the presence of God's people. Of God. A symbol of hope. A symbol of permanence in a changing world. A precious thing handed down the generations.

They are also just that, buildings. Places to gather. Places for people. Structures that need maintenance, sustained by volunteers and voluntary donations.

To be sustainable as a church we must make sure we do not spend all our time and energy on buildings. It's not what we're here for. Buildings are a useful, inspiring, beautiful place for the people of God and the work of God. But it's the people and the work that are our reason for being as a church.

Below is a summary of where our buildings are in March 2021.

- *All Saints, Great Stainton.*

In 2021 the PCC had consulted the community and taken the decision to close All Saints. During 2022 we proceeded with this - the diocese undertaking a lengthy legal process of consultation with statutory interested parties. It was envisaged that by the end of the year, ownership of the building would have passed into Diocesan hands - this was delayed, but had happened by February 2023.

The churchyard remains open and in use for burials.

It is a sadness that All Saints has had to close, but it is a necessity. There were not the volunteers to look after the building, nor the congregation to justify it. As a parish we are profoundly grateful for the years of loving and worshipful service that has maintained the building. Thankyou, sincerely.

- *St Peter's Bishopton*

The process of developing a project specification and applying for faculty for repairs/replacement of rainwater goods, and repointing of the walls of the nave continued in 2022.

St Peter's was represented on the PCC in 2021 by two Bishopton residents.

Worship takes place in St Peter's, once a month.

Work undertaken on the building in 2022:

Both main and side gates of the churchyard have been painted in matching colour and quality by a qualified parishioner.

The Local Authority continues to maintain the churchyard, mow grass etc during the growing period and repairs have also been undertaken to make safe the tarmac paths. Parishioners have tended the rose beds around the church and have done a general "tidy up" of the over growth around the gravestones.

Unfortunately, the oil boiler is no longer reliable. The engineer was unable to manage a permanent fix last autumn and we were fortunate that a parishioner was able to lend some bottled gas space heaters on a temporary basis. These were very efficient in heating the church, but

called for manual ignition, which was not straightforward, and the heaters were rather noisy. Nevertheless we were most grateful for the help. The heating system is now “limping by” as and when required.

Recently the music system (a CD player) in church developed a fault. Thought will be given to the way forward. Fortunately this only becomes a problem when our organist is not available.

- *St Cuthbert's, Redmarshall*

The long awaited tree work in the churchyard was carried out in 2022, lifting the crowns of the large sycamores on the East boundary, removing weed trees from graves on the North side, and outside the chancel window at the East end.

Owing to the residency of rats in the ivy growing in the haha between the churchyard and the Old Rectory, the owners of the latter cleared the ivy on the banks. It became apparent at this time, that when the Old Rectory was sold, it was not made clear who owns the strip of ground in the haha. It was agreed that to avoid the lengthy process and cost of establishing legal ownership one way or another, we agreed that the owners of the Old Rectory should have access to the haha to do grounds and building maintenance.

Thanks to the kind volunteering of Mr Paul Lakin (Quantity Surveyor), of Redmarshall, the Langton Chapel roof project has been picked up again. Specifications and quotes are being developed, in preparation for faculty application. £27,000 still sits in our bank account: money raised to cover the cost of this re-roofing work.

St Cuthbert's congregation provided four members to the PCC in 2022, including a churchwarden. The team of volunteers maintaining the building are active senior people. This small worship space is used weekly, for Celtic Communion and monthly for Sunday worship.

- *St James, Thorpe Thewles*

St James is our most flexible building - the pews were replaced with chairs some years back. This enables re-arrangement for special services such as the annual service of light, and small family funerals.

The regular congregation from Thorpe Thewles is very small. In 2022 there were no nominations from Thorpe for the PCC. The boiler is temperamental. St James remains a building with potential, with a question mark over it. The fact that the village has almost tripled in size

in the past five years, and still has a diocesan owned house in it, means that it could have potential as a place for a new church to grow - but there are no plans for this at present.

- *St John's, Stillington*

St Johns has seen no major works this year. It is our largest building, but not currently a flexible one - being filled with very long pews. The size makes it difficult to heat, though the boiler is in passable condition. St Johns provided three members to the PCC including a churchwarden and both of our two Deanery Synod reps.

Being large, St John's is the building with most potential for adaptation. Plans were drawn up in the past for a re-ordering and will be revisited this year as we consider how best make our buildings a sustainable tool to the mission of God's church.

Incumbent's report

2022 felt like a year of getting restarted. We'd got back into the swing of the 'basics' after lockdown, and now it was time to turn our attention outward, and more missional, or long-term.

I'm happy to report - and celebrate, that at time of writing, I have not had a period of sick leave with depression in 20 months. I thank God, and you, for the strength and love that has sustained me over this time. This has made it possible to sustain this sense of looking outward, forward, and more long-term.

In 2022, we tried a lot of new, or new-ish things. We held an Alpha course, an art exhibition, a lent group. We opened wildlife areas in our churchyards. We moved baptism preparation to being a family, daytime affair. We held a summer fair. We (almost) finished the process of closing All Saints - something we had avoided for some time, but which needed doing.

The results were not massive increases in number. But these things were life-giving. They were joyful and nourishing. They were self-sacrificial, they spoke of the love of God, and they were well received by those who came, or participated. There is growth in the life of the church, if not the size of the congregation.

It is easy to be disheartened when we measure 'success' in financial or numerical terms. But when we think on what Jesus told us about God's Kingdom - that like a mustard seed, it starts in tiny things, and grows to

have massive consequences; that it is found in the unseen work of the humble giver; that it is evident in self-sacrifice, not in glorious achievement - then we can know that we need not be ashamed, afraid or downcast. For the Kingdom of heaven is here.

I encourage you - keep on keeping on. Do not be afraid, for God is with us, when we trust in and serve God. Treasure the small things. Love one another. And so the Kingdom of God will grow.

Structure, governance and management

The Parochial Church Council is a corporate body established by the Church of England. The PCC operates under the Parochial Church Council Powers Measure. The PCC is a Registered Charity.

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. The Stockton Country Parish aims to appoint to the PCC, all churchwardens and one additional member of each individual church congregation, to ensure a minimum of two representatives per church. This has not been achieved this year. There have been no representatives from Thorpe Thewles. All those who attend our services, are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and stand for election to the PCC.

The PCC members are responsible for making decisions on all matters of general concern, and importance to the parish, including deciding on how the funds of the PCC are to be spent.

PCC has met 10 times, with additional sub-meetings for events, finance and special projects. These groups are not able to pass any resolutions, but they can make recommendations to the PCC which may or may not be accepted as is deemed appropriate.

Deanery Synod

Two members of the PCC (Alan Parker and Alison Borer) sit on the deanery synod. This provides the PCC with an important link between the parish and the wider structures of the church. Due to lockdown restrictions, there have been no meetings and therefore there is nothing to report.

Administrative information

The Stockton Country Parish is part of the Stockton Deanery and Diocese of Durham. The correspondence address is:

The Church Office
St John's Church
Stillington
Stockton-on-Tees
TS21 1JD

Registered charity number EW57869

PCC members for the year 2022 until the date this report was approved are:

Incumbent

Rev Claire Gibbs (Chair, since May 28th 2017)

Wardens

- Alan Parker (Churchwarden, St John the Divine, Deanery Synod)
- Eric Smalley (Churchwarden, St Cuthbert, Parish Safeguarding Officer)

Elected members

- Alison Borer (Deanery Synod)
- Anne Smalley
- Neville Briscoe
- Christine Briscoe
- Paul Sung
- Anne Tingle
- Mary Burrell

Non-Elected members

- None

The post of Treasurer is vacant and the role fulfilled by Joyce Hewitt, Finance Officer.

Approved by the PCC on May 17th 2023

Accounts: Financial Statements for the year ended 31/12/2022

1. Receipts and payments accounts

	No te	Unrestricted Funds	Unrestricted Designated Funds	Restricted Funds	TOTAL 2022	TOTAL 2021
		£	£	£	£	£
RECEIPTS						
Voluntary receipts:						
Planned giving		17,228	-	-	17,228	16,372
Collections at services		5,751	-	-	5,751	4,176
Other giving / voluntary receipts	5a	486	-	3000	3,486	2,322
Gift aid and GASDS recovered		3,618	-	-	3,618	4,426
		27,083	-	3000	30,083	27,296
Activities for generating funds	5b	5,984		1483	7,467	8,721
Investment Income	5c	791	-	-	791	511
Church Activities	5d	38,363	-	-	38,363	35,967
TOTAL RECEIPTS		72,221	0	4,483	76,704	72,495
PAYMENTS						
Church Activities:						
Parish share		41,000			41,000	40,000
Clergy & staffing costs		17,909			17,909	16,206
Church running expenses	5e	30,950			30,950	33,545
Fabric costs		1778			1,778	1050
Mission giving and donations	5f	75			75	-

		91,712	0	0	91,712	90,801
Cost of Generating funds		950	-	-	950	1,000
TOTAL PAYMENTS		92,662	0	0	92,662	91,801
EXCESS OF RECEIPTS OVER PAYMENTS		-20,441	0	4,483	-15,958	-19,306
Transfers between funds	4			-	-	1,673
NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS:		-20,441	0	4,483	-15,959	-20,979
Cash & Bank balances at 1st January		124,434	26,596	43,366	194,396	213,702
Cash & Bank balances at 31st December		103,993	26,596	47,849	178,437	192,723

2. Assets and liabilities

		Unrestricted Funds	Unrestricted Designated Funds	Restricted Funds	Restricted Endowment Funds	Total 2022	Total 2021
		£	£	£	£	£	£
Cash funds							
Current A/C		1,402.59				1,402.59	1,673.00
Wynyard Current A/C		21,218.79				21,218.79	25,544.93
Savings A/C		83,058.38	26,596.10	46,161.49		155,815.97	167,178.37
		105,679.76	26,596.10	46,161.49		178,437.35	194,396.30
Investment assets							
Great Stainton CCLA a/c			13,048.09			13,048.09	13,048.09
Redmarshall Trust Funds (Cash)					16,365.39	16,365.39	15,585.28
Redmarshall Trust Funds (Shares)					19,159.40	19,159.40	21,702.86
Investment fund shares at market value	3	0.00	13,048.09	0.00	35,524.79	48,572.88	50,336.23
TOTAL ASSETS		105,679.76	39,644.19	46,161.49	35,524.79	227,010.23	244,732.53

Liabilities at 31/12/2022: Within the unrestricted funds balance is the sum of £4500, which relates to deposits for weddings to be held in the

future.

3. Notes to financial statements

1	The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations 2006 using the Receipts and Payments basis.					
2	There are no fixed assets held by the Parish.					
3	During the year the PCC employed a Parish Administrator and a Wynyard Chapel Administrator who were paid under HMRC PAYE rules. No PCC members received any remuneration during the year.					
4	The movement in designated and restricted funds during the year:					
		Bal B/fwd	Receipts	Payments	Transfers	Bal c/fwd
	Restricted					
	Bishopton Roof Fund	29,397.82				29,397.82
	Alice Tindall Legacy - Bishopton	3,000.00	3,000.00			6,000.00
	Grindon CCLA / Coffee Morning Fund	4,594.41				4,594.41
	HMR Cooper Legacy	6,273.57		180.09		6,093.48
	Lord Crewes Charity	100.00		24.22		75.78
		43,365.80	3,000.00	204.31	0.00	46,161.49

	Designated					
	Langton Chapel, Redmarshall	26,595.10				26,595.10
	Great Stainton CCLA	13,048.09				13,048.09
		39,643.19	0.00	0.00	0.00	39,643.19
	The Bishopton Roof Fund represents the balance of grants received specifically for the repair and maintenance of the church roof at Bishopton.					

c	Investment Income								
	Bank and CBF Deposit Fund interest		791	-		791	510		11
			791	-	-	791	510		
d	Church Activities								
	Parish magazine income - sales		35			35	10		5b
	Fees for weddings and funerals		10,814			10814	10,530		tot receipts for occ offices + tot amounts recd on behalf of others
	Wynyard wedding fees		25,737			25737	23,637		total Wyn inc fig
	Monies for churchyard upkeep				600	600	1,350		in 9 grants fig
	Church hall lettings - local community use		172			172	466		14
			36,758	0	600	37358	35,993		
Paym ents									
e	Church running expenses								
	Costs of services		9,428			9,428	12850		
	Printing and stationery					0			
	Church building running expenses		21,522			21,522	20,696		

	Church repairs and maintenance		1,778			1,778	1,050		
			32,728	0	0	32,728	34,596		
f	Mission giving and donations								
	Donations		75			75			
			75	0	0	75	0		

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT

TO THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE STOCKTON COUNTRY PARISH

This report on the Accounts of the PCC for the year ended 31 December 2022, is in respect of an examination carried out in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations 2006 ("the Regulations") and s145 of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

Respective responsibilities of the PCC and the Examiner

As members of the PCC you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts; you consider that the audit requirement of the Regulations and s144(2) of the Act do not apply. It is my responsibility to issue this report on those accounts in accordance with the terms of the Regulations.

Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission under s145(5)(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 presented with those records. It also includes considering any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seeking explanations from the 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:

- (i) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements
 - to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the Act; and
 - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and to comply with the requirements of the Act and the Regulations

have not been met; or

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

Jane Neal, FMAAT, 4 Oaktree Grove, Stockton on Tees
8 February 2023