



St John the Baptist Burscough

Minutes of Annual Parish Meeting (APM) & Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) Sunday 27 April 2025 in Church

Annual Parish Meeting

The meeting commenced at 11:10am.

It was confirmed that all the necessary paperwork had been made available and people were encouraged to look at the Annual Reports, which give a picture of the life of the Church.

1) Election of Churchwardens (2 People)

Churchwardens

Anybody who is on the Electoral Roll or who lives in the Parish is entitled to vote at this meeting.

Elliott Ireton gave introduction to the meeting of parishioners.

Election of Churchwardens is dealt with in this part of the meeting.

Elliott Ireton gave thanks and gratitude for the hard work of the two wardens over the past few years, specifically through the period of interregnum, and then also from Elliott's licensing onwards.

Wardens are elected annually, and Jeannie Holman is stepping down this year, she is not standing for re-election.

A huge thank you to Jeannie for her work over the past 3 years.

Steven Baxter has made himself available for re-election.

We have 2 vacancies and 2 nominees: -

Stephen Baxter (proposed by Jen Short and seconded by Christine Donnelly).
Caroline McCaul (proposed by Steven Baxter and seconded by Neil Short).

All were in favour of the above nominations.

Elliott Ireton announced Steven Baxter and Caroline McCaul as duly elected and expressed thanks to them both for their willingness to serve.

Deputy Wardens

The Deputy Wardens, which is not a legal position within the Church of England, help with the practical running of Church services – this is mainly carried out on Sundays and special events. Appointment is primarily on a consensus basis and there is no term of office.

The Deputy Wardens were thanked for their help running services and we are immensely grateful for all their help and support throughout the year.

All were in favour of the following Deputy Wardens: -

Jan Adams
Stuart Gray
Lynne Gray
John McCall
Liz Hale
Pat Tomlinson
Diane Edwards
Nick Guest
Stuart Ashcroft

Anybody interested in being a Churchwarden or Deputy Warden should contact Steven Baxter or Caroline McCaul.

Elliott Ireton concluded the first part of the meeting with a blessing at 11:17am.

Annual Parochial Church Meeting

The meeting commenced at 11:40am.

1) Welcome

Elliott Ireton warmly welcomed everyone to the APCM.

Anybody can comment at this meeting but only those on the Electoral Roll are entitled to vote.

2) Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Katie Street, Pat Tomlinson, Sylvia Rankin and Gerre Thomas.

3) Minutes of the APM and APCM (24th March 2024)

It was proposed by Diane Edwards and seconded by John McCall that the minutes be confirmed to be a true record. All were in favour.

4) Matters Arising

All matters are covered as agenda items or are covered in reports.

5) Reports and Feedback

There are several statutory reports that have previously been made available.

a) Change in Membership of the Electoral Roll

Every 6 years we are required to create a new Electoral Roll and 2025 is one of those years. This means that no names have been carried across from previous rolls and all names have applied for inclusion this year. Therefore, the total number of people currently listed for St John the Baptist, Burscough is 223.

Going forward we will educate and ensure people are included on the Electoral Roll where appropriate.

b) Parochial Church Council (PCC)

See separate PCC report.

It was proposed by Sam Taylor and seconded by David Orritt that the PCC report be received. All were in favour.

c) Finance

Pete Short presented his Treasurers report and thanked everyone who contributes to the life of the Church and the Finance Team.

Our budget for 2024 was set towards the end of 2023 and was a deficit of £26,110, which seeks to include all underlying income and expenditure as well as one-off expenditure known at the time of setting the budget. The principles which we apply in setting our budget is to be realistic in our assumptions over ongoing levels of congregational giving, and slightly prudent on expenditure where there is estimation uncertainty.

Results for the year

Through God's faithfulness, and the continuing generosity of our congregation, our actual result for the year is a surplus of £35,626. This includes donations towards the Harvest appeal 2024 which were not fully spent by the end of the year, therefore creating a surplus position. We are committed to spending those monies over the next year or two.

The surplus can be analysed into the following categories: -

St John's Church general fund	£14,042 surplus
St Andrews Mission Crabtree	£422 deficit
St John's Church Hall	£1,871 deficit
Mission and Ministry designated fund	£7,473 surplus (transferred in from St John's general fund)

Subtotal

Overall result on unrestricted funds £19,222 surplus

Love Where You Live – restricted fund	£8,056 surplus (set up following Harvest 2024 appeal)
Mission and Outreach – restricted fund	<u>£8,348</u> surplus (set up following Harvest 2024 appeal)
Total	<u>£35,626</u> surplus

We must recognise that this is not quite a true reflection of our underlying income and expenditure as we currently enjoy income rather than expenditure from our Curate's property at Warpers Moss, should we require this property for our new Curate then we would reduce our

ongoing position by approximately £17,000 per year. Had that been the case for this year, then the PCC's result for the year would have broadly been a break-even position, which is where we aim to be each year.

Income

Our income from regular planned congregational giving has been ahead of budget during 2024, following teaching in both January and October 2024. Once again, we thank our Church members for their generous, prayerful and sacrificial giving which is the primary way we fund our work here at St John's.

The uptake and ongoing usage of our weekly envelopes has continued to decline during 2024. In view of this the PCC decided to bring the weekly envelope scheme to an end, with the simple alternative to use the readily available white envelopes which are in the back of each pew. A huge thank you to those who have been giving faithfully through these weekly envelopes.

Our loose plate offertory has recently seen a 50% increase partly the result of the contactless giving terminal we have purchased and installed in the West End of St John's to provide quick and secure method of making card donations.

The Parish Giving Scheme (PGS) is generally the best way for regular givers to make monthly donations. This is the main source of income for the Church and continues to grow. For anyone not yet using the PGS, please do talk to us, this simple mechanism saves our finance team significant time and effort.

Donations and legacies are difficult to predict – legacies are always used to fund expansionary things for Church, rather than funding day to day operating expenses.

Income from weddings and funerals is decreasing.

Our vacant curate's property has been leased out for most of the year, providing a monthly income in the region of £900 which is a welcome boost to finances. It is expected that the new curate will live in his own property.

This year our Harvest Appeal was focused on three areas: -

- The local Foodbank.
- Love Where you Live – hardship fund.
- Creating a Local Mission and Ministry fund.

The total appeal raised £25,044, meaning that each of the three received £8,348. The money for the Foodbank just passes through the Church, so does not form part of our income or expenditure, but the monies for Love Where you Live and Mission and Ministry fund have been processed through new restricted reserves set up in the year.

Expenditure

We have been fortunate this year that there has been little unforeseen expenditure required on any of our buildings. Church maintenance has been the lowest level of spend for 5-6 years.

We were notified that our Parish Share for 2024 would be broadly consistent with 2023, which is approximately £7,000 less than we had expected initially. The PCC has decided to hold the additional £7,000 in designated reserves with a view to increasing our Mission and Ministry accordingly.

We are in the very fortunate position to hold a fixed energy contract for St John's and the Church Hall, and we also brought St Andrew's Crabtree into that arrangement this year. Although these contracts were renewed in September 2023, we are currently paying a unit price which is below the cap price, and active management of the new heating system in St John's has resulted in some significant reductions in total gas usage in the main Church building.

Reserves Policy

The Trustees believe that St John's relies on God's provision for the financial resources needed to fund its work. Consequently, the policy of the PCC is not to build up reserves beyond the operation needs of the Charity, and wherever possible to expand income received during the course of each financial year on its purposes. However, in order to ensure that the Church has sufficient working capital to meet its obligations to its employees and creditors the Trustees aim to hold sufficient "free" reserves".

"Free reserves" is defined as total unrestricted funds, less long-term assets which are expected to be settled over a period of greater than one year.

"Free reserves" as at 31 December 2024 stand at £79,717.

During the year, the PCC has reconsidered its reserves policy and have concluded that we wish to cover at least six months net expenditure in reserve, after taking into account regular monthly donation income given by Standing Order and PGS. We have also decided to exclude amounts paid over to the Burscough Outreach Trust (BOT) in respect of salaries paid to their employees as the Trust has itself a six-month reserves policy to cover those expenses.

As at 31 December 2024, that calculation works as follows: -

6 months of total budgeted expenditure for 2025	£138,071
Less salary contributions to BOT for same 6-month period	(£23,000)
Less Budgeted Standing Order and PGS for same 6-month period	(£91,000)
Total	<u>£24,071</u>

Therefore, as our free reserves of £79,717 are in excess of 6 months net expenditure, we are acting in compliance with our reserves policy.

The Trustees will continue to be mindful of this free reserves target in making financial decisions and allocating resources as we move forward into 2025 and beyond.

Money Given Away

PCC is committed to giving away at least 10% of its regular income. Accordingly, grants have been made to Methodist Food Bank, Mission Aviation Fellowship, Tearfund and Queenscourt Hospice as our annual Church tithing. Up until now we have done this towards the end of each calendar year, however in response to the biblical principal of 'giving of our first fruits' we have agreed to give away our tithing as a PCC much earlier each year. For 2025 we plan to give away the first two thirds in the first quarter of the year.

Looking ahead to 2025

An update on our financial position in Autumn 2024 indicated that we were facing a deficit for 2025 of £32,000. However, the generosity of our congregation and the faithfulness of God has led to some significant changes to both our income and our forecast expenditure for next year: -

- Changes in the giving of our Church has meant that the deficit position has been covered by increases in regular giving.
- We have been notified that instead of an increase in Parish Share, we are going to receive a decrease for 2025.
- It is expected that the new Curate will elect to live in their own property, and as such we hope to retain our current rental income.

Peter Dorling was thanked for his help and support throughout the year.

The Finance Team were thanked for all their great work which include the following responsibilities: -

- Counting Cash.
- Banking.
- Paying suppliers and staff.
- Managing invoices for Church and Church Hall rentals.
- Funeral and wedding fees.
- Preparing reports for PCC, APCM and the Charities Commission.
- Managing the gift aid claims for St John's and Crabtree Mission.
- Ad-hoc matters that come up along the way.

Pete Short was thanked for all his hard work and support throughout the year. Elliott Ireton asked that his personal thanks be recorded for Pete's help and people's general commitment.

It was confirmed that as the 2024 Accounts had previously been approved by the PCC it is only required for the APCM to receive them.

Examiner

Our Independent Examiners Report was done by Father Alan Clements, and we would like to formally thank him for his care and attention in respect of our annual report and financial statements, his fee for this work is £200. It is proposed that we reappoint Father Alan Clements – see note below.

d) Churchwardens

See separate report.

Throughout the year, many of our PCC and congregation, have spent numerous hours digging deeper into Fit For Mission (FFM) and attended many meetings on the subject. This has been very difficult and involved much hard work. Functioning “as if” we were in FFM has at times been perplexing as definitive information has been difficult to discern. Having begun the process with great heart and enthusiasm, the actual benefits to St John's and other Churches, of being in a Larger Single Parish (LSP) proved to be elusive. Finally, and with regret the PCC voted to withdraw. However, this leaves us with a deep desire to be missional in other ways.

Jeannie Holman “the proper warden” is stepping down this year after 3 years of change and interregnum at St John's. Jeannie was thanked for everything she has done – even being called out on various occasions in the middle of the night to sort out the Church alarm. Jeannie is a woman of many talents and has a true servant-hearted faith that inspires all. No more could have been asked of Jeannie and hopefully there will now be time to put her feet up and have a well-earned rest. There was a presentation of flowers and wine in recognition of her service as a warden.

We now look forward to so many missional opportunities ahead. Paul Davies our new curate starts with us in July and brings with him a wealth of experience in Street Chaplaincy and mission in schools.

It was proposed by Rob Simpson and seconded by Sue Murphy that the Churchwardens report be formally received. All were in favour.

Churchwardens are legal offices of the Church, and it is great to see how they have worked together throughout the year.

e) Deanery Synod

See separate report.

After the vote in November 2023, roughly half of the Deanery continued to explore FFM whilst the remaining Parishes continued as before. By the end of 2024 St John's PCC, having committed considerable time, resource and prayer began to sense that the LSP may not be the right future for this Parish. Therefore, in March 2025 the PCC decided that we would be stronger not in the LSP and voted to move forward in a different direction but remain committed to working with other Churches. The Church should be very proud of how it has dealt with its FFM journey.

Various Churches are in the process of looking for a new priest/minister. In another exciting move a new role of missional priest to work in Skelmersdale has been agreed.

So, there has been, and continues to be, considerable change across the Deanery.

Next year we will look to build on all that has been learnt through the FFM process as we work together across the Deanery.

Mark Taylor has given an incredible amount of time to all matters concerning the Deanery Synod so a huge amount of thanks for all he has and continues to do.

It was proposed by Jeannie Holman and seconded by Steven Baxter that the Deanery Synod Report be formally received. All were in favour.

f) Ministry in the Parish – Youth, Children's, and Pastoral

See separate reports.

St John's is an amazing Church which champions young people who are part of the foundation of the Church. We are blessed to be part of one big family and a Church that cares for one another. Our approach is very much Jesus centred.

Children are so excited with Church that this has resulted in parents and other children coming along as well. We continue to look at how we do faith as a family.

Tracey Fitzsimmons said that Joanna Marshall is "amazing" and an "outstanding youth worker who has been able to build up a relationship with Burscough Priory which has resulted in the start of a Youth Alpha Course. Joanna is a constant in young people's lives.

The good year in the life of our Children and Families Ministry has been helped by our fabulous range of volunteers, who are the most valuable resource we have, and who help to support our children, schools and families in their journey of faith. Massive thank you to all the helpers.

The work of the Staff Team is very much valued and people who care about the life of the Church.

There was prayer for Tracey and all the Staff Team.

Memory Lane Café

Margaret Haggart gave moving thoughts and reflections regarding the start of Memory Lane Café, its progress to date and what it means to her.

Thanks to Dave Emmett for his Pastoral role as we pray for the growth of his ordained ministry.

g) Crabtree Mission

See report from Hannah Disley.

Thank you to the ministry team at Crabtree and for their support of John and Dot Cooper following Tom's passing.

h) Burscough Outreach Trust

The Burscough Outreach Trust is a Charity which was set up in 2001 for 3 main reasons: -

- To employ individuals to carry out specific areas of Ministry.
- To allow members of St John's Church to target their giving towards specific projects and Ministries if they wished.
- To apply for grant funding that may not be available without a separate registered Charity.

The aims of the Trust are: Christian education through working with children and young people in schools and other groups; and pastoral support whenever and wherever it is needed. The Trust is a separate organisation from St John's as it is a Charity in its own right, but it is very much linked with Church as the Vicar and the two Church Wardens make up three of the five trustees. Kerry Patton is the secretary and Mark Aspinall the treasurer.

The Trust is funded by regular donations from individuals within St John's, and by grants from other organisations and Charities.

Throughout 2024 the Outreach Trust has continued to support the work of St John's through our employees Joanna Marshall, Tracey Fitzsimmons, and Dave Emmett. They co-ordinate all the work with children, families and young people and provide pastoral support to anyone who needs it.

There is a fund available to help families who otherwise could not afford trips etc and Uganda trips have also been supported.

The activity of the Trust is not always well publicised, but it is an important part of ministry and ministry we provide here at St John's and in the community.

Thanks to Kerry for all that she does in the life of the Church.

h) Vicar's Reflections

See separate report.

It has been a joy and privilege to respond to God's call and return to this wonderful Church as a family. We are so excited to be joining with you in God's mission here.

FFM has been heavily featured in previous reports. There has been much prayer as we have explored FFM for the past 12-18 months and in the PCC decision not to continue with the FFM journey. We are looking for new opportunities as we continue to work with other Churches and look ahead to what God is saying.

In our 2024 Harvest appeal we were seeking to offer help, hope and hospitality with an emphasis to "love where we live". This has enabled us to support the Food Bank at Burscough Methodist, begin to help families in need and launch a new coffee morning in the Church Hall. The incredible generosity of our Church has provided an excellent launchpad for new mission and ministry. The new coffee morning has enabled us to build a stronger connection with the local community and provides new avenues to explore as we seek to share the story of Jesus.

We need to "step out of the boat" and actually reach out to the people of Burscough and having "confidence" in the Gospel is important. It is not easy to be a Christian and whilst some people are opposed there are others who are just waiting to be told.

In this exciting new season may we faithfully anticipate God's power at work amongst us and remain prayerfully attentive to the voice of Jesus calling us to exercise boldness and faith as we follow him.

We are called to live like Jesus is King and so let us pray for the gift of faith to do so, to extend hospitality to others to share our story of hope and to help people hearing Jesus knocking on the door.

Thank you to everyone for their continued commitment to the life of the Church.

6) Election of PCC Members

For those coming off PCC this time – Stuart Ashcroft, Jeannie Holman, Max Lyon, Pete Short, and Prudence Magee, thank you for your faithful service and helpful contributions at our meetings.

Geoffrey Ratcliffe was an invited attendee to PCC on behalf of Crabtree, due to a residential move, he ceased that role during the year. Thanks, and appreciation to him for faithful representation for all matters concerning Crabtree Mission.

There were the following nominations for PCC: -

Lucy Parkinson-Baxter (proposed by Stephen Magee and seconded by Andrew Caunce).
Nigel Greenhalgh (proposed by Sandra McCall and seconded by John McCall).
Tom Fletcher (proposed by Joanna Marshall and seconded by Pete Short).

Each candidate gave a brief explanation as to the reason why they wished to stand.

In addition, Pete Short has been nominated as Deanery Synod representative (proposed by Peter Dorling and seconded by Steven Baxter).

All were in favour of the above appointments.

7) Appointment of Sides-People/Welcome Team

It was agreed that the current Team of volunteers should continue in their current role – no formal appointment necessary.

8) Appointment of Independent Examiner

It was proposed by Pete Short and seconded by Peter Dorling that Father Alan Clements be appointed in respect of the accounting year ended 31 December 2025. All were in favour.

9) Any Other Business

There was no other business.

10) PCC Meeting

The date of the next PCC meeting is Wednesday 30th April 2025 – 7:30pm in the Church Hall.

11) Closing Prayer

Neil Short closed the meeting in prayer.

The meeting closed at 13:25.