

## **REVIEW OF CHURCH ACTIVITIES IN 2015** **(with updates to 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2016)**

### **BACKGROUND:**

Much of the previous year's deliberations have centred on the fabric of the church building and how we could both maintain this and attract more people to come to church and worship in a way they felt comfortable, both literally and metaphorically! We had reached the crossroads and if we had not gone down the correct road with the total support and commitment both in service (time and talents) as well as in financial terms, then the Parish of St Mary would have withered and decayed and our beautiful Grade II\* listed building, with its 14<sup>th</sup> century chancel and 15<sup>th</sup> century tower, would have had to close.

Foremost in our minds this year has been our Parish Aim and Vision Statement which we agreed early in 2013 and the Diocesan Vision 2026 both of which are outlined below so everybody can see why we have moved forward the way we have.

### **PARISH VISION FOR THE FUTURE** **(approved by our Parochial Church Council in 2013)**

#### **AIM:**

*"to co-operate with the Minister in promoting in the Parish the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelical, social and ecumenical".*

#### **VISION STATEMENT:**

*"a caring and welcoming Christian community seeking to involve all people in God's family".*

#### **A JOURNEY TOWARDS MISSION & EVANGELISM:**

The PCC agreed at their January 2013 meeting that there would be a Parish Day on Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> March 2013 in order that we could review and revise our Mission Action Plan. A good cross section of the congregation met at church and discussed where we were, what we did well and what areas we could do better as well as what our priorities were to be for the future.

From all the information gathered, the Clergy drew a draft mission plan broken down into three distinct areas namely **Outreach: Nurture and Worship** (see below). These were discussed at subsequent PCC meetings and a further Health Churches Day was held for the PCC on 6<sup>th</sup> July 2014. These generally fell in line with the Diocesan Vision for 2026 (see pages E & F) which was approved some months after our Vision for the Future. Details of our Parish Plan are shown below.

#### **OUTREACH**

##### **Develop the use of the church building in line with the Vision statement:**

- Run an Alpha or similar course
- Review signage and update (external and internal)
- Explore possibilities to further develop the Thursday use of the Church building

##### **Social concern ministry:**

- Appoint a lay person to represent St Mary's on the foodbank steering committee
- Ask for suggestions from the congregation for our annual giving to mission/charity (10%)

##### **Explore possibilities for Church Hall facilities:**

- Options and feasibility to be explored by Clergy, Wardens and PCC
- Survey of needs from any new facility to be conducted.

## **NURTURE**

### **Prayer, multi-support and encouragement:**

- Encourage 'spiritual support networks' or 'prayer triplets'
- Provide weekly material for SSNs or PTs and individuals to encourage spiritual thinking and exploration through the week (making use of email, website, social media etc as well as traditional forms of information provision)
- Where opportunities arise, provide space in services for interaction with the congregation.

### **Work with children and young people:**

- Continue to review work with children & young people in line with the Child Friendly Award
- Establish a method for inclusion of children & young people in decision making (e.g. link with the PCC)

### **Pastoral care:**

- Appoint a lay person to co-ordinate the pastoral care system
- Review and update the pastoral care system
- Update contact list to include email addresses and mobile telephone numbers.

## **WORSHIP**

### **Develop a range of services combining the best of tradition with accessibility and innovation:**

- Review monthly pattern of services (including target audience, liturgy, music, preaching/teaching)
- Use family friendly liturgy at all parade services
- Review the pattern and content of Christmas services (including the Christingle service)

### **Develop lay involvement in services:**

- Identify laity to be involved in leading intercessions, run training sessions and produce rotas.
- Review the list of those involved in Bible reading in the services – with the aim of including a wider range of people especially those underrepresented at present.
- Work towards developing a team to lead parade services each month.

In the report of this year's activities reference will be made to those areas which have already been addressed.

What St Mary's did at the beginning of 2013 and July 2014, the Diocese followed later with their vision approved by the Diocesan Synod in January 2015.

**DIOCESAN VISION 2026**  
**(approved by the Diocesan Synod in January 2015)**

**"Healthy Churches Transforming Communities"**

In January 2015 following significant consultation and discussion the Diocesan Synod approved its vision statement which said,

**We desire to make Good News about Jesus Christ more widely known because we believe:-**

- **He is the One who brings “life in all its fullness”**
- **Healthy church communities have a positive and transformative impact on our society**

We will work together to achieve this by:

#### **Making disciples of Jesus Christ**

- Knowing the scriptures better through reading, teaching, preaching and study
- Praying with greater depth and urgency for the Kingdom of God to come
- Giving generously of our time, talents and money to the cause of Christ.

#### **Being witnesses to Jesus Christ**

- Sharing the Gospel of salvation with confidence
- Holding regular enquirers’ course in as many local churches as possible
- Showing God’s love in action through projects that meet a local human need
- Offering thorough and accessible Baptism preparation and follow up
- Planting or renewing 50 new strategic congregations by 2026

#### **Growing leaders for Jesus Christ**

- Supporting and equipping the current leadership for today’s context
- Enabling missionary leadership in every Christian community
- Liberating lay leadership for greater participation
- Creating the varied patterns of Sunday and weekday worship necessary to welcome all kinds of people, especially the newcomer
- Prioritising work among children, young people and schools to raise up a new generation for Christ

## **DETAILED BELOW IS THE REVIEW OF OUR CHURCH ACTIVITIES AND HOW WE ARE WORKING TOWARDS OUR PARISH VISION FOR THE FUTURE AND THE DIOCESAN VISION 2026**

### **RE-FURBISHMENT & RE-ORDERING OF THE CHURCH:**

#### **Summary:**

Our journey to re-order the church started in earnest in 2004 and the first five years’ progress, sometimes one step forward and two back, was detailed in each annual report. We finally moved out of church in September 2009 and all services took place at our Church Hall in Cop Lane some 800 metres from the church building. The re-ordering had been scheduled to take 19 weeks but due to circumstances beyond our control took 21 months so we only returned to Church in June 2011. The ongoing saga was reported in detail in previous annual reports with the last one in 2011 including details of our celebrations on our return.

To enable parishioners and visitors alike to appreciate our heritage, what we went through with our re-ordering and our current work in church and the wider community, four permanent static displays are now constructed, details of which are shown below:-

**1. History Table:**

This display consists of three sections - Church History, Our Church Community & Our Community at large. Many historical documents had been filed away whilst we were out of church. On our return it was felt that they should be readily available on display for parishioners and others who visit when there is "Open Church" every Thursday between 10am and 3pm. Our Vicar's wife, Jacqui had pulled together all our historical records and documents and a table has been set up in the north transept which has caused a lot of interest. This has encouraged other people to bring their own historical documents and we are asking our more "mature" parishioners to identify people in some of the earlier photographs which have come to light. There is also available on sale for £10 a DVD entitled "A moment in Time" which lasts for 29 minutes and outlines in some detail, quite dramatically, what was found under the church floor and what we went through to get under-floor heating. This explains why our original project of 19 weeks took 21 months to complete.

**2. Historical background display boards:**

There are four large display boards detailing with maps and photographs the most important features of the church and churchyard which includes the brief history where appropriate.

**3. Fair Trade Table:**

We have been registered for some time as a Fairtrade Parish so prior to moving out from church, we had a Traidcraft table. On our return, Rachel Tuke volunteered to set this up again having had previous experience in a former parish. A catalogue was used for people to order one off items and this proved popular over the Christmas period. Significant orders were made for Fairtrade Easter eggs and the stall is proving again quite an attraction to parishioners and visitors alike.

**4. Commemoration of World War One Forces Personnel from our Parish:**

One of our Churchwardens, John Kay, has carried out significant research about those people from our Parish who sacrificed their lives during the two Great Wars. 2014 marked the centenary of the outbreak of World War One, and John has managed to obtain details of all those parishioners who lost their lives during World War One and the information has been displayed adjacent to the history table on the south side of the Nave.

On the Sunday nearest their death, a framed certificate of the individuals service record and how, where and when he lost his life is placed with a special candle near the lectern. He is included in the prayers for those who have recently died. The War Grave Commission have kindly agreed to produce a certificate for every person who lost his life during the First World War on their centenary death, so this will be taking place right through to 2018.

It is right that we should place on record our thanks to John for all his efforts which have been much appreciated by parishioners and visitor alike.

**OUR CHURCH FAMILY: (Clergy, Parish Groups & Church Schools.)**

**OUR VICAR – Rev'd Chris Nelson:**

Chris has been our Vicar since January 2001 and is also the Chaplain to Preston North End Football Club.

The ancient Parish Church of Penwortham St Mary needs more than a Vicar to run successfully and since the turn of the century, we have been blessed with a number of Curates - first with Alexandra Logan, then Angela Wynne. Following Angela's four year placement, she moved to Charnock Richard, so our Vicar was left without any other clergy support. It was just as well he stood down as the Area Dean at this time which enabled him to concentrate more on his pastoral and religious duties in the Parish with additional

support from lay people in the Parish. It was early in 2012, that the Vicar informed the Parish that our prayers has been answered because the Diocesan Bishop had decided that we should be blessed with a full time stipendiary Curate from the end of June 2012.

**OUR CURATE – Rev’d Rebecca Crowe:**

On Saturday 30th June 2012 parishioners attended Blackburn Cathedral to witness and support the Revd Rebecca who was ordained a Deacon by the Bishop of Blackburn. She was subsequently priested on Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> June 2013 at Lancaster where she was well supported by parishioners, family and friends as this was a major milestone in her life. She now undertakes the full range of ministerial duties.

Rebecca has been extremely active in the Parish getting to know parishioners across the full age range. She has been invited to parishioners’ homes as well as hosting “get togethers” at her own home. Rebecca has been able to visit the sick and those who are housebound as well as being involved with the younger end with many activities both in the church and at the church hall. She has put into use her many skills which she brought with her as diverse as cookery, parish administration and IT. In 2013 she organized and ran our first Alpha course and for seven weeks at the beginning of 2015 she led “Frontline” which was a follow up for the Alpha Course we had run the previous year. Further information about “Frontline” is shown under “Spiritual Development” on page K.

As part of her training and development, Rebecca has been seconded to the Diocese for two days each week to help in preparing to roll out “Vision 2026” throughout the Diocese.

As she was approaching the end of her four year placement with us in June 2016, she started to look around to see where God would call her in her continued ministry. On Easter Day (Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> March, 2016) it was announced that Rev’d Rebecca would become the Team Vicar to the Warrington East Team looking after Birchwood and Woolston in the Diocese of Liverpool. We will be very sorry to see her go particularly as she will be leaving our Diocese. This seems to be the trend with full time Curates at St Mary’s. As at 3<sup>rd</sup> April, no date has been fixed but the Parish will turn out in strength to see her installed as the new Team Vicar.

**DEVELOPMENT OF OUR CHILDREN’S MINISTRY:**

**1. Designated Family Corner (Welcoming new young parents and their children):**

It was the unanimous view of the Vicar and PCC that when we came back to Church from an enforced 19 months at the Church Hall whilst the church was being re-ordered, the Family Corner would continue to be in a prominent position at the front of the nave. The right hand side when looking east facing the altar was the natural place as the stained glassed windows all alluded to children. The provision of a large carpet and soft toys and appropriate church orientated reading books continues to attract new families with small children. This is one of our missions to encourage children and young parents to play an active part in church life and to some extent we have been successful with some parents / grandparents being involved on the refreshment rota, the churchyard maintenance team and the Children’s Committee. We continue to hope that in the near future some of them may volunteer to come onto the Parochial Church Council (PCC) so there is a voice(s) from the younger parishioners in the parish.

**2. Faith And Belonging (FAB):**

The Curate was instrumental in finding ways to involve younger parents with children from babes in arms up to secondary school age and Faith And Belonging (FAB) was born in September 2014. This has taken place during the Sunday afternoon of the fourth Sunday of each month ever since. The aim of FAB continues to provide a flexible act of worship specifically aimed at families, who due to other

commitments or style of service would not normally worship with us on a Sunday morning. Each act of worship includes crafts, games, activities, a talk or story, a song and café time. Since FAB started we regularly have 40 – 50 adults and children attending each month for two hours on a Sunday afternoon.

A small leadership team has been formed, the majority of whom were not involved in other leadership or organizational roles in the parish before becoming involved in FAB. People continue to get to know each other better and a sense of community continues to grow both amongst the leaders and those attending. The Diocesan Bishop, the Rt Revd. Jullian Henderson accepted an invitation to come and see the work of FAB when he had attended to confirm 10 children and 4 adults in May 2015. Both the Bishop and his wife Heather returned in November and involved themselves in the activities. The afternoon was completed when the Bishop had a glass of Penwortham Wine which had been brought over by a visiting parishioner from the Australian town of Penwortham earlier in the year!!

### **3. Sparks (formerly known as Junior Church):**

In 2015, the Children's Ministry Committee recommended to the PCC that Junior Church should be renamed "Sparks" and made available to children every Sunday and to lower the age at which children could attend to three years of age. The PCC accepted the proposal but said there would be a review of the arrangements over the summer of 2016.

Leaders of Sparks continue to undertake the responsibility for the construction of the Easter Garden and the Christmas Crib each year which are assembled in the south porch. There is also a child friendly 'touchy feely' Christmas crib near the Family Corner which has really been appreciated by all.

### **4. Joint Children's Activities:**

The children again staged a Nativity Play in the middle of December involving all ages which was enthusiastically received. The older children narrated the Christmas story and the younger ones performed the story in full costume and simple words.

The very successful "Christingle" service was again held during the afternoon of Christmas Eve when 178 children and 226 adults occupied every part of church. Christingles were assembled by the children who then stood close to the outside walls of the church, and after having their Christingles lit, the church lights were turned off which created a magical moment for everybody present. This continues to be one of our major successes each year and the adults say that for the children this is the ideal start for their Christmas celebrations.

During the afternoon on Palm Sunday 2015 (20<sup>th</sup> March), there was a joint Sparks/FAB activity based on an Easter theme. The nave was cleared of all chairs and six gazebos were assembled with an activity at each one showing the journey from Palm Sunday to Easter Day.

Pictures of these children's activities are taken and photographs are put up on the display board in church throughout the year as well as on our church website and Facebook pages which gives an insight into the activities of the young members of St Mary's.

### **OTHER MISSION & OUTREACH INITIATIVES:**

#### **YOUunity:**

In June 2015, YOUunity was launched. It was the brainwave of Hazel Henebury and with the assistance of Susan Greenhalgh and Jacqui Nelson they have put on an activity nearly every month. It seeks to bring together members of St Mary's and their friends and families and build a wider community at St Mary's. It covers diverse events from walks in the park, to visits such as a garden centre or a waste disposal centre

from listening to different types of music to poetry and prose as well as get-togethers in the church hall to enjoy different types of food. Some 75 parishioners and friends of all ages attended the Guild Hall for the Christmas Children's Pantomime!

People can go to as many or as few as they wish – there is no commitment so people can dip in or out as they wish. The events go ahead regardless of the numbers that turn up which have varied between 13 and 75 and attracted people with a variety of interests. This is proving to be very successful and is creating more of a community spirit.

YOUunity is now well established and has a core of ardent followers but there is no room for complacency and further increase in numbers is the aim for the next year, the programme for which is in preparation and will be distributed after the "1<sup>st</sup> Birthday" event in July 2016.

### **Church Schools:**

Outreach in this direction continues to make progress at both of our Church of England Primary Schools of Howick and Cop Lane. As part of our on-going commitment to our Church Schools, we continue to purchase sufficient bibles to enable each child in year three, at both Howick and Cop Lane Schools. They are presented with their own copy to use for the remaining four years at their primary school and then to take with them when they move onto secondary education. This continues to be very much appreciated by pupils, their parents and staff alike.

**Cop Lane** school's presentations took place at their school with Foundation (church) Governors, the Vicar and Curate attending along with family and friends of those children receiving a Bible. **Howick School** decided that the whole school would attend church on a Friday afternoon in December for their version of a "Festival of Nine Lessons with Carols" during which the bibles were presented. The church was packed with children, parents and other relatives plus a churchwarden/ school Governor and some parishioners. The ability to be flexible in the layout of the church proved to be most successful with nothing but positive comments being expressed. The children were very happy to sit on the warm under-heated floor!! This is now an annual event at church.

Cop Lane school also attended church during advent for their celebration of Christmas and once again the church was packed. They thoroughly enjoyed the new lay out and extra space to be able to perform.

The Curate leads collective worship periodically at each of our two church primary schools and frequently visits each school in respect of the religious education syllabus. Leaders of other religious faiths also go into the schools as does one of the Churchwardens from time to time.

Both our Church schools have been inspected by Ofsted. In December 2012 Howick was inspected and was classed as "good with outstanding features". At Cop Lane the inspection took place in March 2013 and received an "outstanding" grade. Both schools are extremely proud of their assessments and in each case they have improved on their last Inspection. The Parochial Church Council congratulated each school at the time.

As both schools are Church of England Primary Schools, each is also subject to a Statutory Inspection of Anglican & Methodist Schools (SIAMS) by the Diocese.

At Cop Lane School the one day inspection took place in November 2012 and the school was again classed as "outstanding". Howick received a pastoral visit in late 2014 from Peter Hullah, the then Acting Director of Education for the Blackburn Diocese, who stated that he was most impressed by the spirituality of the school and the Christian ethos which was apparent right across the school including

both staff and children alike. He stated that he was sure that the school would receive a glowing report when they were formally inspected by the diocese. Not surprisingly their SIAMS inspection took place on 25<sup>th</sup> February and the school was assessed as “Outstanding” with no areas for improvement. Again the PCC congratulated the staff, governors and pupils on their achievement.

On a lighter note, both schools continue to use our redundant church hand-bells which have been enjoyed by children, parents, staff and governors!

### **SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT:**

#### **Confirmations:**

Following pre confirmation training of some 10 young people and four adults, each was confirmed by the Diocesan Bishop of Blackburn the Rt. Revd. Julian Henderson, at our 10.15am service on Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> May 2015 when over 160 people were in attendance. Everybody was inspired and both the Bishop and his wife thoroughly enjoyed the occasion.

#### **Frontline:**

In response to the Diocesan Vision (detailed in previous pages of this report), we undertook a six week programme entitled “frontline” based on material produced by the London Institute of Contemporary Christianity. The aim of the Frontline material was to encourage regular church members and attenders to think how and what they do in church on a Sunday impact upon their life in the various contexts they find themselves in throughout the week (eg work, home, family, caring responsibilities, clubs, friendships, social groups etc). During the six week series, the sermons were based on the Frontline material and three small groups totalling 25 – 30, also met to explore the themes in more depth.

Alongside this, also in response to the Diocesan Vision, we trialled non-eucharistic services during a two month period at the 10.15am service. The reasoning for this was to allow for different types of services and creativity to be explored and enable a more inclusive atmosphere for those attending as visitors or non-communicants.

Feedback has been gained from this series and was generally positive. People found that the tweaks made to the sermons and services helpful on the whole and were encouraged in their faith. This feedback has been integrated into our continuing development of Parish Vision and Mission Action Planning by the PCC.

### **VOLUNTEERS:**

The Church Regulations require that any “*substantial voluntary help*” must be recorded in their Annual Report. There is a small group of active parishioners who give of their services in running the Church Hall, financial management, general maintenance and administration. The Parish is very fortunate to have such people who are prepared to continue to give so much of their time and talents for the benefit of the Parish. Our Vicar continues to say this publically on all occasions. We are required by the Regulations to state if any member of the PCC has received any payment for their services during the course of the year. We report that Emma Jenkins, David and Rachel Tuke are members of the bell-ringing team and their fees are in accordance with those approved by the PCC and Bill Henebury, one of our Churchwardens, is also our Organist and is paid in accordance with the approved rates.

We do not have an appointed vergers but when there is a large funeral anticipated, the Vicar asks if someone could act as a vergers. David Thornton and Bill Henebury (Churchwardens) and Iain Jenkins

perform these duties from time to time but only infrequently and are paid the approved fee. This is not really defined as “**substantial voluntary help**” because only a small fee is paid but with the other substantial voluntary work each undertakes, it was felt this should be recorded in this report.

### **SOCIAL & FUNDRAISING:**

We continue to hold a variety of events, some of which are purely for social interaction, whilst others are to make money – all of which is ploughed back for the benefit of the Parish.

**Our ‘Farmers’ Market’** continues to be held on the first Saturday of every month at the Church Hall and we will celebrate our 14<sup>th</sup> anniversary on the first Saturday of May this year (2016). Due to our continuing publicity and despite hard economic times, it remains successful with many people from the community (and further a-field) coming on a regular basis. Again a small group of volunteers remove all the chairs and then set up the tables on the Friday and put the main hall back to normal on the Saturday after the Market for another let later in the day. It is a worthwhile venture as we receive around £300 in rent every month which goes into the church coffers. We continue to be granted permission each year to hold our Market by Preston City Council which holds a Charter under legislation going back to the 17<sup>th</sup> century. This requires all Markets to be approved if they are less than six and two thirds of a mile from the centre of Preston which we are!!

In May 2015, the Parish took part in the annual Arts & Music Festival held in Penwortham. This being the fourth year was called “**Penwortham Live 15**” organized through South Ribble Borough Council. There were 20 venues throughout Penwortham with the Church hosting events both on the Friday and Saturday afternoons and evenings. There were positive comments received from both the performers and audience alike about the ambiance of the church, the flexibility of use (eg Regency style dancing) and the superb acoustics for music and song. In addition the centre of operations for the festival was based at the Church Hall. The whole Festival engendered a very positive Penwortham community spirit and for the Parish, it was the first time that some residents in the area had visited the church.

Such was the success of “*Penwortham Live 15*”, that a similar Festival will be taking place at the end of May 2016 which will be fully reported on in next year’s annual report.

We continued to hold our **hunger lunches at the Church Hall during Lent & Advent**. Around 30 people attended each relevant Tuesday and made a donation of at least £2.50 per person. The profits were donated to charities approved by the PCC. In 2015 we donated from the Lent lunches £274.48 to Help our Local Heroes Foundation from Euxton and the Advent lunches resulted in the sum of £216.92 being donated to Derian House - the Children’s Hospice at Chorley. Such was the success of these lunches that those who attended asked if they could continue during the summer. The organizing team agreed and the PCC approved. Therefore on the first Tuesday from June to November a two course social lunch was put on with over 30 people attending. A sum of £343.90 was donated to Galloway Society for the Blind based in Penwortham. Many were waiting for the doors to open at 12noon and even when they finished eating they stayed to chat!!

**Knitted teddies** and material bags for them are still in full production with well over 250 being produced this year. Since 2002 when there was the tsunami, parishioners have knitted in excess of 7093 teddies! Some 80 “shoeboxes” and 100 teddies were shipped out before Christmas by International Aid for children in the third world who are less fortunate than ourselves.

In May the Parish collected over £2051 (£1950 in 2014) from the house to house collections for **Christian Aid**. The church is a Fairtrade Parish which is another way of supporting those in the third world.

The Parish Policy has been for a number of years to donate **10% of collections to Charities and Missions**. This is based on the previous year's giving. Having paid for Bibles for Year 3 pupils at both of our Church Primary Schools in the Parish and leaving £216 to support international emergencies or national appeals, we had £3000 to disperse in 2015. We asked parishioners to nominate charities and the reasons why they should benefit. The PCC set up a small working group to come up with recommendations.

The PCC agreed to donate £1,000 to the Church Urban Fund (Tackling Poverty Together). An additional £500 was donated to the Salvation Army Foodbank; £500 to Our Local Heroes Foundation in recognition of the help injured soldiers gave to re-instating headstones in our graveyard; £400 to the Church Pastoral Aid Society and £750 to the Bishops Harvest Appeal - Fighting Hunger Together which was a Joint Christian Aid / Tearfund initiative. Smaller amounts were donated to other causes all of which had been approved by the PCC (including £125 to the Churches Together in Penwortham and £50 to the Royal British Legion for Poppy Wreaths).

### **ECUMENICAL MATTERS:**

All eight churches in Penwortham form the Ecumenical Group – two are Church of England (St. Leonard's and ourselves), two are Methodist, two are Roman Catholic, one is the United Reform Church and the eighth is the King's Church (Free Methodists) which meets at Penwortham Girls High School. They produced both a **Christmas and Easter card** detailing all the services being held over the Christian Festivals and each church. Each Parish has a responsibility for delivering to houses in named roads so all are covered in Penwortham.

**The procession of witness on Good Friday** in 2015 took place with parishioners from all the Churches Together in Penwortham taking part. Following complaints that the walk between two churches had been too long, the Ecumenical Group decided that a shorter walk around the roads of the church which would be hosting that year would start in 2015. Our church was the first to benefit from this change and some 80 people processed around the roads in Higher Penwortham for 35 minutes starting and finishing at our church. There then followed a very moving service in church after which light refreshments were served. The Good Friday walk in April 2016 started and finished at St Leonards Church with a 45minute walk around the housing estate of Kingsfold with a short service in St Leonards afterwards.

All the churches were involved in **Penwortham Gala** in June 2015 – with the joint ecumenical service held on the Sunday on Hurst Grange Park and this replaced our 10.15am Communion Service at church on that day. Similar plans for 2016 have been arranged but as this weekend has been designated nationally for celebrations of the **Queen's official 90th birthday**, plans are afoot to have a large "street style" children's party in Hurst Grange Park at 3pm on Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> May.

We as a Parish are organizing a celebration at our church starting at 8pm on Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> April 2016 which is the **Queen's actual 90<sup>th</sup> birthday**. It is being widely circulated and is an invitation for any resident in Penwortham to come and join us. Light refreshments will be served on arrival and there will be a Royal Quiz during which our bellringers will perform. At 9pm we will light our beacon at the top of the Tower after which we will toast the health of the queen with some bubbly and nibbles.

Just before Christmas, we took part in **Penwortham Sings Christmas** with all the other churches in Penwortham. BBC Radio Lancashire broadcasted a live transmission visiting various venues throughout Lancashire where people had gathered. Some 90 people of the local churches gathered at Penwortham Golf Club with everyone staying on to have light refreshments and taking part in a quiz after the broadcast had finished.

**PARISH FINANCES:**

The Statement of Financial Practice (SOFP) 2005 and the subsequent changes to the Church Accounting Practices dictate how our accounts have to be prepared.

David Tuke is our treasurer, who has financial skills and he has prepared the accounts using specifically designed computer software for church accounting procedures and we have been able to show a true comparison with activity in 2013 and 2014.

The accounts, balance sheet and notes to the accounts forming part of the annual report are shown on pages 1 -10 and will be explained by our treasurer at our Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) to be held on Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> April 2016 around 11.30am after the 10.15am service in Church.

We are very fortunate that Susan Walsh had kindly agreed to be our independent examiner once again and we have been given a clean bill of health (her certificate is on page 11 of the Accounts Section).

**CHILD / VULNERABLE ADULT PROTECTION & SAFE FROM HARM POLICY:**

Clair Bernstein is our Safeguarding Co-ordinator and an updated version of the Policies and Appendices have been signed by the Vicar and David Thornton the Churchwarden after it had been re-affirmed by the PCC in June 2015. These continue to be displayed in the Church and the Church Hall. We are committed still to provide a safe environment for all children and vulnerable adults. The forms in the appendices continue to be valid. There is also no change needed to the Vulnerable Adult Policy.

The Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) has become much more rigorous mainly for the Churches Child Protection Advisory Service (CCPAS) as they have had to comply with the latest changes to the Data Protection Policy. This will give greater security to our applicants moving forward as the information provided is highly sensitive.

We are no longer able to action DBS checks for school governors acting on behalf of the church. These must be done by the relevant school. However, all current checks will be covered but all renewals must follow the above procedure.

There hasn't been any need for additional training this year but further training will be undertaken as and when needed.

**CHURCH PROPERTY AND LAND:**

**Church Land Boundary:**

Our church land extends both sides of Church Avenue from the Lych Gate as far as Squires Road and then down the bridle path to Liverpool Road. The boundary then runs down the hill on Liverpool Road skirting around the back of the War Memorial returning to the roadside at the bottom of the hill and then alongside the pavement edge of the slip road onto the Penwortham by pass as far as Holme Road. The whole of this area makes up Church Wood. The church land then extends down along Holme Road to the end of the old Victorian graveyard and then up the dry beck between the graveyard and the houses on Castle Walk from Holme Road to the end of Hollinhurst Road incorporating the perimeter of the new graveyard and Crow Wood finishing up on Church Avenue close to the Lych Gate.

**Maintenance of Churchyard Grounds and Land:**

As our churchyards is legally classed as “closed” (confirmed in 2000), the local authority, which in our case is South Ribble Borough Council, has a legal responsibility for the maintenance and safety of all people wishing to visit graves for whatever reason. This includes cutting the grass and ensuring trees and hedges are maintained from a health and safety point of view.

Many headstones had to be laid down because they failed the safety “push test”. The older Victorian Graveyard on the north side of church had to be closed because some of the very heavy headstones were too heavy to lie down manually. We are awaiting the attendance of South Ribble Borough Council to make the headstones safe before this graveyard can be opened again. In the interim if someone needs to gain access contact has to be made with the Vicar and the person is accompanied by a church official.

Since 2004, regulations governing the installation of headstones have been in force. All the headstones which had to be laid down did NOT comply with these regulations and could only be re-instated if they met the requirements. The expense of doing this has to be met by the next of kin. Some have been re-instated properly by approved monumental masons but many of headstones still remain laid down because no next of kin have come forward.

The grassed area and all the gardens from the lychgate to the south and west entrance of the church have been maintained to a higher standard. This is the area that everybody attending church for whatever reason sees on their arrival. Numerous compliments about the general condition of this part of the church grounds have been received from regular churchgoers as well as from those who only attend for baptisms, weddings and funerals.

All the unoccupied cremated remains plots along the new memorial wall have been allocated. In 2004 the diocese authorized us to prepare the ground adjacent to the rest of the wall for the burial of loose ashes in the soil in plots. This land had a number of large tree stumps which had first to be removed but the soil has now been grass seeded and we have a small contract with a local company to enhance this grassed area as well as the other grassed area in front of the Church. This land is now being used as planned.

**Castle Hill – Scheduled Ancient Monument:**

Within the actual churchyard we have Castle Hill, a scheduled ancient monument, which is the site of a former Norman Motte and Bailey Castle. It had become overgrown over the years, and it had been the Church’s wish to clear the vegetation and trees to restore Castle Hill to its former glory. Being a scheduled ancient monument, we had discussions with English Heritage resulting in one of their field workers meeting the Churchwardens and Vicar on site in December 2007. Prior to her visit we had cleared some of the vegetation and self seeded saplings so English Heritage were extremely pleased with the progress we had made. They wholeheartedly supported us in our desire to restore the ancient monument which would mean cutting down the rest of the trees on the mound and removing the rest of the saplings and vegetation.

Even though Castle Hill is within the Tree Preservation Area, restoring the ancient monument to its former glory takes precedence. For the last few years and now into 2016, Bill Henebury, James & Jamie Barton continue to use their skills with chain saws to clear Castle Hill and the vegetation which has grown on this ancient monument and the scrub land between the bottom of the new graveyard and Crow Wood as well as in the dell linking the western and northern graveyards. With the help of the churchyard gardening team, under the direction of Iain Jenkins, the whole area has now been cleared. Well done to all of you and thanks! All we now have to do is to ensure we keep the area clear.

## **The Church Building itself:**

### **1. Quinquennial (every 5 Years) Inspection**

Every five years a full report (quinquennial report) on the condition and fabric of the church has to be carried out by a diocesan approved qualified architect. In September, 2012 our Architect, Stephen Fish, carried out a full quinquennial inspection but the written report was not received until June 2013.

The report was presented to the July 2013 meeting of the PCC. Most of the repairs/ maintenance were identified as being required to be carried out within two years and these have now been completed. As some of this was able to be done by ourselves it reduced the costs by about a half so the total cost amounted to some £2,000.

### **2. Phase 2 of the Church Re-ordering – removal of 1959 organ:**

Our church organ was installed in 1959 and for many years the console has been sunk into the ground under the arch linking the chancel with the nave. Seven years ago the console ceased to work and the parish purchased a second hand stand-alone “organ” as a short term measure. The diocesan organ adviser agreed that we could replace it with a new digital organ in due course.

Our organist and churchwarden Bill Henebury used his contacts and the internet resulting in a company from Italy offering to take down and remove the console and all the pipes and equipment situated on the balcony above the West porch entrance, without charge. It was their intention to use the parts as spares for organs in churches in Italy. We therefore applied and was granted a faculty for its removal and for a week in July the company painstakingly took down (with the help of Bill and his neighbour Herb) everything from the balcony, meticulously packing everything up and taking it away in one large lorry and trailer. Not only must we thank Bill and his neighbour Herb, but also Bill’s wife Hazel who put up the two Italian organ engineers feeding and watering them for four days.

When everything has been removed, the beautiful west window and the bell-ringing chamber could be seen from the nave and this caused a “wow” factor from parishioners.

Within weeks of this, the second-hand stand-alone organ, which we had been using for the last seven years, started to “play up” (excuse the pun) and it would pack up without any warning. We knew that this day would come so we were forced to take positive action quickly. Again Bill Henebury went into action and a representative from Allen Organs, who are well respected in the industry, visited church and discussions took place with the Vicar and churchwardens resulting in a recommendation being made to the PCC for the purchase of a new digital organ. Approval was given and a faculty application was made and subsequently approved. A deposit was paid and on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2016 the new organ arrived and was installed. Bill is very pleased and the parish now has a superb instrument which will last for many years.

### **3. Bellringers:**

The Bell-ringers, under the leadership of their Bell Captain Rachel Tuke, continue to be an integral part of Church life in the Parish. They practice most Thursday evenings and ring every Sunday just prior to the 10.15am service. Parishioners attending the 10.15am Sunday service can now both see and hear the bell-ringers in action before the service.

In addition, when requested, they also ring at weddings and from time to time host bell-ringers from other churches all over the country who then make a donation for being given the privilege to ring at our ancient church.

**The Church Hall and land surrounding it.**

There is a breakdown of the Church Hall income and expenditure on page 10 in the accounts. The bottom line is that there has been a significant operating surplus with people using the hall and the adjacent land over many years but in 2015 this operating surplus of £17,172 was lower due to fewer lets. £19,536 was added to the church income in 2014 compared with £20,465 in 2013: £18,710 in 2012 and £23,022 in 2011.

The only wages are for a cleaner as everybody else connected with the running of the Hall acts in a voluntary capacity. In addition to this some £5,800 was accrued due to the rents paid for parking spaces at the church hall and this has been added to the church income.

The Church Hall is described as a ‘temporary structure’ as it is a wooden building. As such, applications from charities to improve / enhance the facilities are not available. In effect it is a community centre, owned by the Parish with some 90% use being made by outside organizations/ charities.

The building was constructed in the late 1960’s and was opened in 1969 by the then Bishop of Blackburn. It was given a shelf life of 30 years so we are now 16 years past that date! Over the last few years it has become increasingly difficult to maintain the building and is well and truly “past its’ sell-by date”.

Over the last two years, the PCC has been wrestling with various options open to us. Discussions have taken place with both the Diocese and the local authority. At the PCC meeting on 17th February 2016 three options were put to the PCC – two were rejected unanimously and the third one accepted by everybody present with one abstention.

This led the way for us to go public so at 12noon on Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> February, 2016 the Vicar and all three Churchwardens announced to a gathering of all hall lets at the church hall an exciting project for our church which would be to provide new facilities in the form of additional rooms in the north west corner of church.

To finance this, we would surrender the lease of the land in Cop Lane where the current church hall stands. This would involve the demolition of the church hall and the sale of the land would generate the necessary funds for this exciting new project. The land on which the church hall stands and all the surrounding land is owned by the Diocese. It was leased to the Parish in 1947 and there are some 33 years left on the lease.

This was the first part of a press release which was read out by the Vicar to the gathering of all hall lets which had been embargoed until after that meeting. The Vicar went on to say that he wished to thank the Blackburn Diocese for their enlightened support in helping us reach this stage. He added that at this vitally important time for the Church of England in Lancashire and, as we begin our ten year journey to Vision 2026 (see previous pages), it was heartening to know this project would release funding not only for the church here in Penwortham but also for the ministry of the church in Lancashire as a whole.

The hall lets were informed that the closure of the church hall would not be before the 1st September 2016 ie six months hence and the actual subsequent date to vacate would depend upon the property developer who bought the land. The Vicar recognized the need for a number of groups running regular services to the community of Penwortham from the current site on Cop Lane to re-locate and we were all aware of the difficulties that our tenants would have to work through during the period of closure and redevelopment. He concluded by saying that he hoped that many would be able to relocate and share with us the exciting new facilities including the potential offered by the additional space in our recently

re-ordered church building. The plans for the new development were then shown to all the hall lets and a copy of the full press release was handed out to every group before they left. In the press release he stated that initial dialogue had already taken place with them and that we would assist them in any way we could.

Later that day the press release was put on our website and copies sent to other interested parties including the press. The following day after the 10.15am service at church, the congregation were able to hear from the Vicar and Churchwardens first-hand what had been decided and again the plans were available for inspection and explanations given.

This made the front page of the Lancashire Evening Post on the following Wednesday and a very fair report was produced with quotes from the Vicar and some of the hall lets. The editorial was also positive.

Now that the initial shock has subsided, it is pleasing to note that one month on many of the hall lets have found an alternative venue to meet and we will continue to help those who have not yet been successful.

A further meeting has already taken place with the Planning Officer from South Ribble Borough Council who was already aware of the plans which had been drawn up as one option some months earlier before any decision was made. She has been very helpful and given us further advice on what we can and can't do and how we should submit in due course a formal planning application.

#### **THE FUTURE:**

Any ongoing issues which have run into 2016 up to 3rd April have already been documented in the relevant sections.

At the beginning of this review, our journey towards mission and evangelism was detailed under three separate headings of **Outreach, Nurture and Worship**. We have also incorporated the Diocese Vision 2026. It can be seen that we have made significant moves forward but there is still much more to be done. **Journeying together** is a standing item at each of our PCC meetings so we will continue to move forward and all developments will be reported in next year's review of activities which will form part of our Annual Report.

This report was approved by the Parochial Church Council (PCC) at their meeting on Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> April, 2016

Revd Chris Nelson  
Vicar & Chair of the PCC

David Thornton  
Churchwarden & Vice Chair of the PCC