



ST. JAMES' CHURCH, BIRSTWITH

Agenda of the Meeting for the Election of Churchwardens and the Annual Parochial Church Meeting

Wednesday 15th April 2026 at 7.15pm in St. James' Church

MEETING FOR THE ELECTION OF CHURCHWARDENS

(To be attended and voted on by anyone living in the Parish whose name is on the Register of Local Government Electors)

1. Welcome
2. Opening Prayer
3. Apologies
4. Election of Churchwardens

PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

(To be attended and voted on by anyone on the electoral roll for St. James' Church, Birstwith)

1. **Minutes of the Previous Annual Parochial Church Meeting on 20th March 2025**
 - Matters arising
2. **Annual Report & Financial Statements from the PCC**
 - Financial Reports
 - Churchwarden's Report
 - PCC Report
 - Deanery Synod
3. **Electoral Roll Report**
4. **Elections**
 - Ex-officio PCC Members
Vicar/Churchwardens/Readers/Synod Reps
 - 3 positions available for Deanery Synod for a 1 year term
 - Lay members to the PCC
 - 2 vacancies for a 1 year term
 - 1 vacancies for a 2 year term
5. **Appointment of Sidespeople**

Confirmation of willingness to stand or resignations to the Secretary in advance please.
6. **Any Other Business**

Please inform Sophie Bartlett (PCC Secretary) of any matters you may wish to raise at least 48 hours before the meeting on 07590 273291 or s.lancaster@me.com
7. **Closing Prayers**

1. *Nomination forms for Churchwarden, PCC and Deanery Synod are on the table at the back of church with full details.*
2. *Please advise the Churchwarden or the PCC Secretary if you wish to be added or removed from the list of Sidespeople.*
3. *The first meeting of the newly formed PCC will follow after the APCM.*



ST. JAMES' CHURCH, BIRSTWITH

Part of the Benefice of Hampsthwaite with Felliscliffe and Killinghall



Annual Report & Financial Statements of the Parochial Church Council for 2025

Vicar: Reverend Scott Gardiner (*from 01 September 2025*)

Patron: Mrs Sarah Finn (née Greenwood)

Independent Examiner:
Mr David Bird
Elton Cottage, Birstwith, HG3 2WF

Banks:
National Westminster Bank, 3 Cambridge Crescent, Harrogate, North Yorkshire, HG1 1PE
The Co-operative Bank, PO Box 250, Delf House, Southway, Skelmersdale,
WN8 6WT



St. James' Church, Birstwith

Minutes of the 105th Annual Parochial Church Meeting
Thursday 20th March 2025 at 7.30pm in the St. James' Community Hall

The meeting opened at 7.30pm with 14 parishioners present.

MEETING FOR THE ELECTION OF CHURCHWARDENS

(To be attended and voted on by anyone living in the Parish whose name is on the Register of Local Government Electors)

- 1 Welcome from Sophie Bartlett
- 2 Opening Prayer from Sophie Bartlett
- 3 Apologies: Norman Castle, John Mitchell, Vivienne Heyward, John & Missie Pearson, Sarah Warnes, Ron Layfield, John Lees
- 4 Election of Churchwardens

Sue Baugh stood for election as Churchwarden and was unanimously voted upon with Maurice Worsnop proposing and Susan Layfield as seconder. Sophie thanked Sue for her hard work for the last number of years as her wardenship has spanned covid and a vacancy! Sue gave her one year's notice and will be stepping down at the next APCM.

PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

(To be attended and voted on by anyone on the electoral roll for St. James' Church, Birstwith)

1 Minutes of the Previous Annual Parochial Church Meeting – 18th April 2024

The minutes were accepted as an accurate account of the meeting. Proposed by Maurice Worsnop, seconded by Carol Packer – all in favour. **Matters arising:** none.

2 Annual Report & Financial Statements from the PCC – questions invited.

● **Financial Report:**

- Question about the churchyard. Costs £6,000 per year to maintain the churchyard. David Bird wondering if it's necessary as it's the biggest cost beyond the share. £2,000 on C Robshaw, just under £2,000 on Nurture's Landscaping (was Skelton). Nurture's Landscaping do the new graveyard and East end of the churchyard. The room agreed it was always nice and tidy and well-kept, so they're doing a good job.
- Sue gave huge thanks to Fiona our Treasurer.
- The Finance report was accepted with Debbie Britton proposing and Carol Packer seconding. All in favour.

● **Churchwarden's Report:** Huge thanks to everyone, lots of work done behind the scenes.

● **Deanery Synod:** Referenced Sue MacDonald going on behalf of the Benefice. Any questions to her.

● **PCC Report:** No questions.

3 Electoral Roll

This follows the five year Revision of the Electoral Roll, completed on 10th March 2025. There are now 74 (2024: 82) names on the Electoral Roll. This reflects new entries and the removal of previous names due to moving away or bereavement.

- Carol will delete personal data columns from the spreadsheet and reprint, then bring to church on Sunday to display for 14 days.

4. Elections

- **Ex-officio PCC Members**



Vicar/Priest/Wardens/Readers/Synod Reps
3 positions available for Deanery Synod – no nominations.

- **Lay members to the PCC**

This year there are:

- o 2 vacancies this year for a 3 year term; 3 of the current PCC members were due for renewal and had all agreed to stand again.
 - Maurice Worsnop – proposed by Debbie Britton, seconded by Sue Baugh
 - Norman Castle – proposed by Maurice Worsnop, seconded by Sophie Bartlett
 - Sophie Bartlett – proposed by Debbie Britton, seconded by Sue Baugh
- o 2 vacancies for a 2 year term remain unfilled
- o 1 vacancy for a 1 year term remain unfilled

- No further nominations.

5. Appointment of Sidespeople

Elected en masse. Proposer Maurice Worsnop, seconder Jan Jobling. All in favour. Thanks were passed onto them all.

6. Any Other Business

- Susan Layfield thanked the ladies who clean the church every week, for their unseen work.
- Thanks were passed to Kairen Houseman who cleans the church hall every week and does a great job.
- Jenni Worsnop thanked Sue for stepping in and for many years now for the Churchwarden, but also Maurice and Debbie and the PCC.

Sue Baugh led us in our closing prayers (written by Ven. Paul Hooper), and the grace at 8pm.

Signed:

Date:

Chair: Sue Baugh

For Information - Membership Proposal APCM 2003 & Adopted 2004: It was resolved that:

- Membership of the PCC shall consist of ex officio members as set out in the Church Representation Rules*; nine elected members; and co-opted members.
- The APCM shall elect up to nine members of the laity from those on the Electoral Roll to serve without re-election for a period of up to three years ensuring where possible that one third of the elected members are elected each year.
- The PCC may, as and when required, co-opt up to two members, including the Secretary or Treasurer, who shall serve until the next annual meeting.

* which includes all clergy licensed to the parish; the churchwardens; readers licensed to the parish or working principally in the parish; and members of synods who are on the parish electoral roll.



THE CHURCH OF ST. JAMES', BIRSTWITH

PARISH MISSION STATEMENT

St. James' Church is a welcoming family, worshipping God and extending Christ's work in the world, joyfully serving and caring for all in the village community.

ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2025

St. James' Church is part of the Diocese of Leeds within the Church of England and is part of the United Benefice Hampsthwaite with Felliscliffe and Killinghall. The Parochial Church Council (PCC) is responsible for promoting in the ecclesiastical parish the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. It also assists the Churchwardens in maintaining all church property and is accountable for the administration of the finances of the church. The PCC is a charity excepted from registration with the Charity Commission.

PCC MEMBERSHIP FROM MARCH 2025

(Membership of the PCC is in accordance with the Church Representation Rules. Up to 9 members of the laity are elected to serve for a term of 3 years.)

Vicar of the Benefice:	Reverend Scott Gardiner <i>(from 01 September 2025)</i>
Churchwarden:	Sue Baugh <i>(2021-22, 2023-present)</i>
Representatives on the Deanery Synod:	<i>vacant</i>
Elected Members:	Debbie Britton <i>(2013-16, 16-17, 17-20, 20-23, 2023-26)</i> Norman Castle <i>(2016-19, 19-22, 22-2025, 2025-28)</i> Maurice Worsnop <i>(2004-10, 10-13, 13-16, 16-19, 19-22, 22-25, 2025-28)</i>
Treasurer	Fiona Klimek
Secretary	Sophie Bartlett <i>(2016-19, 19-22, 22-2025, 2025-28)</i>

COMMITTEES

The PCC currently has a Standing Committee and two sub-committees. Copies of PCC Minutes of meetings are kept centrally on file.

Standing Committee *(Chair: Churchwarden until August 2025, then Vicar)*

This is the only committee required by law. It sets the agendas for PCC meetings and has power to transact the business of the PCC between its meetings, subject to any directions given by the Council. It comprises the Vicar, Churchwardens, Treasurer, Secretary & a lay member appointed by the PCC annually.

Fabric Committee *(Chair: Maurice Worsnop)*

This committee attends to matters relating to the fabric of the church, such as the buildings and the churchyard.

Fundraising Committee *(Chair: Churchwarden)*

This committee attends to fundraising matters, organising events and opportunities to raise vital funds for the Church.



REPRESENTATIVES OF THE CHURCH

Birstwith School Foundation Governor: Debbie Britton

Cathedral Ambassador: *vacant*

VICAR'S REPORT

As I offer my first Vicar's Report, I do so with a deep sense of gratitude. Having arrived only in September, I am acutely aware that much of the story of the past year belongs to you, the congregations, volunteers, wardens, and retired clergy who have carried the life of this benefice with faithfulness and resilience. I want to begin by honouring that.

My heartfelt thanks go to all who have sustained worship, pastoral care, administration, and community life through what has been, at times, a challenging season. In particular, I want to express my appreciation for our churchwarden, Sue Baugh, who is stepping down after years of faithful service. Her commitment, steadiness, and love for the church have shaped us in ways that will continue to bear fruit. Thank you, Sue, for all that you have given to St James and to the benefice during your time as churchwarden.

I am also deeply grateful for the warm welcome my family and I have received. You have helped us settle quickly, not only into the rhythms of ministry but into the life of our villages. Your kindness has made this new beginning feel like home.

Beginning ministry in the autumn was a gift. It allowed me to grow in understanding and to prepare for my first Christmas with you. Christmas, a season of light, hope, and holy disruption felt like a fitting moment to be settling in and beginning to look ahead. I recognise that I have stepped into a benefice that has known change, uncertainty, and transition, and yet continues to show remarkable resilience. Change is never easy; it asks something of us. And as much as I am learning the context into which I now minister, I see you learning to adapt to new ways of being together as well.

What has struck me most in these first months is the openness of our communities. People have been willing to speak honestly about concerns, hopes, and the realities of parish life. They have also been generous in offering new ideas, fresh energy, and a desire to see our churches flourish. This openness is a gift, and one that needs to be cherished. It is key to us growing in confidence, in faithfulness, and in numbers.

And this openness is mirrored in the welcome I have found across the benefice, places where hospitality is instinctive, where relationships matter, and where faith is lived quietly but sincerely. There are so many opportunities for growth here: in worship, in discipleship, in our presence within the villages, and in the confidence with which we share who we are.

I sense a longing for calmness and peace after a demanding period. My hope is that my ministry among you will help create that steadiness, not by avoiding change, but by approaching it gently, prayerfully, and together. Part of this is what I would call raising the spiritual temperature: nurturing a deeper attentiveness to God, encouraging prayer, strengthening worship, and helping us recognise the ways God is already at work among us.

Even in these early months, we have begun to take steps toward a clearer benefice identity. We have started work on a new-look website, refreshed our benefice logo, and begun shaping a more unified



public presence. These are not cosmetic changes; they are signs of a community beginning to see itself as connected, interdependent, and called to a shared mission.

We are also planning a Vision Day, which will give us space to listen to one another, to God, and to the needs of our villages. My hope is that this will help us build confidence in who we are becoming, one benefice with a shared heart, lived out in four distinct places, each with its own gifts and character.

As we look ahead, strengthening worship and music, deepening pastoral care, and nurturing discipleship will be important parts of our journey. So too will be the quieter work of rebuilding trust, renewing relationships, and creating a sense of belonging. As I write this, we prepare to say farewell to Scott Phillips, our Director of Music. Ending well is an important part of how we grow, and we give thanks to Scott for all that he has offered during his time with us. We wish him and Dan every blessing as they begin their new chapter in Suffolk.

In the coming year, my commitment is simple: to walk with you, to listen deeply, and to serve faithfully. I will continue learning the story of each parish, getting to know the people and places that make this benefice unique. I will work with you to shape worship that is rooted, joyful, and accessible. I will support the ministries already flourishing here and encourage new ones where the Spirit leads. I will do all I can to help us grow in unity, confidence, and hope.

Thank you for the trust you have already shown me. Thank you for your patience as I learn names, customs, and histories. Thank you for the warmth with which you have welcomed me into your lives.

It is a privilege to serve among you. May God grant us wisdom, gentleness, and courage as we continue this journey together.

SAFEGUARDING REPORT

The PCC of St. James' Church follows the instruction with its duty under section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016. Safeguarding is a standing agenda item at each PCC meeting. The PCC also follows the House of Bishops' Safeguarding Policy (2017) for children, young people and adults. As such, information is displayed in church regarding child and adult safeguarding issues, including contact details for help and advice.

Safeguarding is everyone's business, but the incumbent and PCC take overall responsibility. This is a legal liability. The Safeguarding Officer is a volunteer to support the above people. Everyone needs to be vigilant in this important aspect of church life.

Who to contact:

- Visit the Diocesan Safeguarding website: <https://www.leeds.anglican.org/safeguarding.php>
- See posters inside the church on the notice board and the larger hall toilet.

These are, in ascending order:

1. The Parish Safeguarding Officer; we currently have no appointed person and are seeking to fill this as a Benefice Safeguarding Officer. Until that appointment is made, responsibility rests with the incumbent.
2. The Incumbent;
3. The Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor, if the above are unavailable;
4. Social Services - obtain advice first unless an emergency;



5. Police - obtain advice first unless it is an emergency.

Ongoing work is keeping DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checks and training requirements up to date.

REV SCOTT GARDINER
VICAR

CHURCH ATTENDANCE

Average attendance on a Sunday was 27 adults and 8 children (2025: 32 adults and 8 children).

CHURCHWARDEN'S REPORT

Well, 2025 was certainly a good year for Birstwith and the Benefice – we have a new Vicar, Rev Scott Gardiner. How lovely it was to welcome Scott, Donna and Theo into the Benefice.

May I start my report now by thanking all the retired Clergy, Ven. Paul Hooper, Canon Tony Shepherd, Rev David Kirby and Rev John Carr for presiding over our Sunday morning and 4.0'Clock Services during the Interregnum.

Thanks also go to the retired Lay Readers David Leonard and Janet Newell, together with Ken Winter-Briggs, for keeping the 6.30pm Evensong Services - organised by Maurice Worsnop -running so smoothly.

Above all my grateful thanks go out to everyone who has supported St. James' Church throughout the Interregnum in so many ways, such as my fellow PCC Members, which includes our wonderful PCC Secretary, Sophie Bartlett, who also co-ordinates the Sunday Club. All those on the Key Rota deserve heartfelt thanks for turning out twice daily in all kinds of weather to ensure the Church is open daily for private prayer. Thanks too should be extended to all on the Flower Rota who decorate the Church so beautifully throughout the year and on special occasions such as Easter, Harvest and Christmas. Thanks also go to all on the Church Brass and Silver Cleaning rota who keep both the brass and silver so beautiful and shining. To those who keep the Hall and Church so lovely and clean all through the year and to John Dawson, our diligent Hall Booking Clerk, they too are definitely included in the list of grateful thanks as are both our very busy Treasurer, Fiona Klimek, who keeps us on an even keel, monetary wise and of course our Verger, Maurice Worsnop.

Sunday morning Services are very special to us all and huge thanks must go to all who have agreed to Read Lessons, say the Prayers, be Chalice Assistants and Sidespeople, and also those who have helped in so many other ways like setting up the Altar, "Shepherding" people down for communion and all on the Coffee Rota so ably arranged by Susan Layfield. What a long list but without people like all of you St. James' Church would not exist.

Now as the year draws to its end it is nice to reflect a little over what has taken place. After the start of a heavy snow fall at the beginning of January 2025 we were so lucky that the arranged Service with Bishop Anna presiding was able to take place in Birstwith Church at the end of the month. The April Benefice Palm Sunday Service and Easter Day Service in Birstwith Church were both taken by Ven. Paul Hooper and enjoyed by all. As was the Show Sunday Service held in the Marquee on the Show Field and for which, once again, grateful thanks for the use of the Marquee must go to the BHS Committee.



Concerts by The Arcadian Strings, The Nidderdale Community Orchestra and Vocalis held throughout the year have all helped to raise money for much needed Church funds, as have the Oboe and Piano concert given by Gill Hart and the Organ Recital by Scott Phillips.

In November a Coffee Morning also raised a little money for Church Funds but the Christmas Fayre in December raised a magnificent amount and for this we should all be grateful and many thanks extended to everyone involved. In case I miss anyone out I will not mention any names but they know who they are and to them I say again Many Grateful Thanks!!

As both the Church boiler and the Organ decided to break down during the year these much needed funds were put to good use together with a very welcome gift to the Church which was also used towards the cost of the Organ repair.

After re-advertising the position of Benefice Vicar, it was lovely to have two applicants and we were able to hold an Induction Service in Birstwith Church on 23rd July for our chosen candidate - Rev. Scott, who had accepted our offer to become the new Benefice Vicar.

Both Schools, Birstwith C of E and Belmont Grosvenor have held Services in the Church during Easter, Harvest and Christmas so it was nice that Rev Scott was able to preside over some of the School Services at the end of the year.

Scott was also able to take our Harvest Service, arrange a new Advent Carol Service and Crib Service and a slightly different pattern of Christmas Services, with the Christmas Day Service being held in Hampsthwaite Church. As usual the Crib Service was held in Birstwith Church and once again it was a huge success but unfortunately the donkey was unable to come, being lame, but two sheep and a huge dog were fantastic replacements!

The Nine Lessons and Carols Service, beautifully arranged by Scott Phillips took place on the 14th December with the usual refreshments of mulled wine and mince pies following the Service. However, with great sadness we found out in November that Scott Phillips would be leaving the Benefice after the 2026 Easter Service to take up a post in Suffolk. We will miss him as our Organist greatly but, of course, wish him all the best in his new position.

I have found working closely with my fellow Benefice Churchwardens and others in the Benefice during the Interregnum period has been a very busy but interesting and rewarding time. However, I finish this Report with the reminder that at last year's APCM I said that I would not stand again as Churchwarden for Birstwith Church as I feel that after 5 years of Churchwarden's work it is time to hand over the baton to someone younger. It is now time for me to spend more time with my very supportive husband and perhaps find time to relax a little more and see a bit more of the world. I have enjoyed my time as Churchwarden and I thank everyone who has supported me in any way. I now pass on the baton.

**SUE BAUGH
CHURCHWARDEN**

PCC REPORT

The PCC is responsible for the upkeep and finances of St. James' and we met 7 times during 2025, excluding the number of meetings we had regarding the vacancy along with our counterparts within the



Benefice. You can find the list of PCC members on page 5 and I would like to extend my thanks to them all for their dedication, flexibility and patience again this year.

We must all send our heartfelt thanks to our Churchwarden, Sue Baugh, for all her hard work this year keeping everything ticking along, ably supported by the Churchwarden's Assistants, her Bill, and so many other people who don't necessarily have official titles for their roles but to whom we are so grateful. I know they have been such a huge support to Sue during her tenure as Churchwarden over the years.

I also want to send sincere thanks to our team of retired Clergy, most notably Ven. Paul Hooper and Rev. David Kirby, who kept us going throughout our vacancy, which spanned most of 2025. We are so grateful to you all for stepping in so often when we need you, helping to cover all of our services so brilliantly.

We must as ever express our sincerest thanks to Maurice Worsnop, our Verger and Chair of the Fabric Committee, and all those on the Fabric Committee, for the work they do in maintaining the grounds and buildings. I would also like to extend my personal thanks to Fiona Klimek, our wonderful Treasurer whose expertise is so keenly felt! My thanks too to Gill Clarke, our Parish Administrator, who works so hard for us all.

In last year's report I touched upon our growing Sunday Club and once again we find ourselves in a great position with an average of 8 children (and their grown ups) attending each session. It has been run collaboratively by the parents, with someone taking the lead each time. Against a backdrop of Sunday morning sports clubs/matches, birthday parties, trips and a national trend of declining church attendance, it is amazing to see such a vibrant and active Sunday Club. We thank the parents for collectively taking on the co-ordination of this. To build on its success we also have our lovely, informal 4pm service on the 4th Sunday of the month in the hall (now called *Together in Worship*). It started as a Children's Service but is now more multigenerational. Each month it attracts people from the village who don't otherwise come to church and it's definitely meeting a need there.

Music continues to flourish and thrive within our Parish. We send enormous thanks to Scott Phillips, our Benefice Director of Music, who has developed both our Junior and Adult choirs in number, confidence and complexity of repertoire! As a choir member myself and mother to someone in Junior Choir I know first-hand how quickly he makes people feel at ease with new material, and how enjoyable choir practices are but with great results shown at our many services, particularly Benefice services. Scott is leaving us at Easter and he will be sorely missed, but leaves us with a great legacy for the next person to build upon.

We as a PCC continue to pray that people within our congregation may be called to join the PCC or any of our volunteer roles or groups to help with the important work, both for the St. James' of today but also for the St. James' of the future so that our children and grandchildren can enjoy this church, its people and its spirit in the way we have.

SOPHIE BARTLETT
PCC SECRETARY

FABRIC, GOODS AND ORNAMENTS

Although being advised that it might be some time to receive, we are still awaiting the official report from the Records Office at Northallerton of all the old documents taken there last May by the Diocesan Archivist to be archived. We have, however, her written report re the documents taken, which is placed in the Church's locked safe.



During 2025 we received a gift of £250 by means of a legacy from George Andrew Peel plus donations of £1,500 from the Troy family and £500 from monies left in the Will of John Shannon that he wished St. James' Church to put to good use. This money was then, with his daughter's approval – Mrs Eileen Pearson - put towards paying for the cost of repairs to the organ which had just broken down and could not be played. The PCC are most grateful for all these gifts and extend their thanks to the families involved.

The Headstone were all checked on 27th January 2025 by the Churchwarden, the Verger and a Stonemason from Stephenson's Memorials Works, Harrogate. Several were found to be in need of repair, mostly because of the recent inclement weather. Due to the many repairs needed the Stonemasons are slowly working through these repairs as and when they are able to do so.

Notices in the Parish Magazine and that posted on the Church's glass porch door informed people that work would be carried out to repair the Headstones and that donations towards this cost would be gratefully received. By the end of 2025 two families had paid for the cost of repairs to their family's Headstones.

**SUE BAUGH
CHURCHWARDEN**

ELECTORAL ROLL

Following the Annual Revision to the Church Electoral Roll completed on 26th March 2026 the number of people listed was 72 (2025: 74). This reflects the removal of previous names due to moving away or bereavement.

As in previous years the Electoral Roll forms were placed in church for new applicants to complete as yet none were filled in. A copy of the updated Electoral Roll is placed in the vestry safe should anyone request to see it.

**CAROL PACKER
ELECTORAL ROLL OFFICER**

DIRECTOR OF MUSIC REPORT

The past year has been a significant one in the life of the benefice, marked by a period of change as well as an encouraging and forward-looking outlook for the future of church music across our parishes. Music continues to play a central and valued role in the worshipping life of our churches, supporting the liturgy, enriching services, and helping to foster a shared sense of identity across the benefice.

Over the course of the year the musical life of the benefice has continued to develop in a number of important ways. Both the junior and adult choirs have shown steady progress, not only in musical ability but also in confidence, cohesion, and understanding of their role within worship. Regular rehearsals have enabled both groups to continue refining their sound and approach to liturgical music.

The junior choir has continued to be a particularly encouraging aspect of the benefice's musical life. Their enthusiasm and commitment remain a great strength, and it has been a pleasure to see their musical and liturgical awareness grow over the past year. Increasingly, the junior choir has been involved in larger joint benefice services, enabling the combined choirs to perform a more diverse array of music



in 3-parts. A particular highlight was their contribution to the licensing service of Rev. Scott, which was attended by +Anna. The junior choristers played a significant role in the music for that service, demonstrating both confidence and maturity. Opportunities such as this are invaluable in helping young singers understand the importance of music within the Church's worship and the role they play in supporting it.

Alongside this, the junior choir has continued to develop its understanding of liturgical music more broadly. Through rehearsals and participation in services, choristers are learning how music interacts with the structure of the liturgy, the seasons of the Church year, and the wider theological themes of worship. This educational aspect of the choir's work remains an important part of ensuring the long-term sustainability of the benefice's musical tradition.

The adult choir has also continued to build upon the foundations laid in previous years. The choir has shown increased confidence in tackling a broader range of repertoire, including both familiar liturgical settings and new material introduced over the past year. As a result, the choir's sound continues to evolve and strengthen, allowing greater flexibility in the musical resources available for services across the benefice.

Introducing new music and developing the musical life of the benefice has not been without its challenges. Changes in repertoire and the introduction of new ideas within services can naturally require time for adjustment. However, these developments are intended to enrich the worshipping life of the churches and ensure that the musical tradition of the benefice continues to grow and remain vibrant. In a year which has seen wider changes within the benefice, it is important that music continues to support the life of our churches while also allowing space for thoughtful development. I would therefore encourage the congregations to approach this period with hope and openness, recognising that musical growth often involves both continuity and the introduction of new ideas.

It is also worth noting that the musical life of the benefice has begun to attract interest from the wider diocese. The work being undertaken with both the junior and adult choirs, together with the development of music across the benefice, has led to other churches and benefices taking an interest in what is being achieved here. It is encouraging to know that the work of our musicians and singers is being recognised beyond our own parishes and that the benefice is increasingly seen as an example of how a thriving musical tradition can be sustained within parish church life. This recognition is a considerable achievement and reflects the dedication of all those involved.

Looking ahead, the coming year will mark an important transition. I will be stepping down from my role as Director of Music at Easter 2026 in order to move on to pastures new. It has been a great privilege to serve the benefice in this capacity, and I am deeply grateful for the support, encouragement, and commitment shown by choristers, clergy, PCC members, and congregations throughout my time here. My hope is that the work undertaken over recent years - particularly the strengthening of both the junior and adult choirs, the development of musical standards, and the encouragement of younger



musicians - will leave a lasting and positive legacy. With continued support, there is every reason to believe that the musical life of the benefice will continue to flourish under the guidance of my successor.

Finally, I would like to express my sincere thanks to all members of the choirs for their dedication and enthusiasm, to Scott for his ongoing support of the musical life of the churches, and to the congregations for their encouragement and appreciation of the role that music plays in worship. The continued vitality of church music within the benefice is very much a shared achievement, and I look forward to seeing it continue to develop in the years ahead.

**SCOTT PHILLIPS
DIRECTOR OF MUSIC**

BIRSTWITH CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

School Christian Vision: 'make full use of the gift God gave you'. 2 Timothy 1:6

Birstwith School, through Christian values and ethos, aims to provide a warm and inclusive environment where everyone is cherished and where all flourish.

Currently there are 61 pupils at the school with 3 full time teachers and 4 part time teaching assistants. Mrs Lyman remains as Executive Head shared equally with Markington Primary School. Mrs Willis (currently on maternity leave) is Assistant Head working 2.5 days. The maternity leave is partially covered by Miss Newton, class 3 teacher.

There is a happy and inclusive atmosphere in school helping all the children to thrive. All classes follow a rich, lively and challenging curriculum. Different year groups have enjoyed visits to other schools for sporting, music and dancing events. Class 3 have been on a residential trip and the whole school enjoyed pantomimes in Harrogate and at Belmont Grosvenor school.

Collective Worship is held daily, led by the staff, pupils and Rev Scott on a regular basis.

Joint meetings with children, staff and governors at Markington School are proving an increasingly valuable part of school life.

Government grants have enabled wrap around care to include a breakfast club and after school club, which are much appreciated by families.

Over the last year real estate improvements comprise a new fire alarm system and the replacement of peripheral fencing. New equipment for the outside play area has been funded by the PTA.

The Governing body meets twice each term and consists of representatives from staff, Local Authority, parents and St James' Church.

The staff, children and governors are very grateful for the prayers and support by the congregation of St James' Church.

**DEBBIE BRITTON
FOUNDATION GOVERNOR**



DEANERY SYNOD

Three meetings were held in 2025.

21st January 2025: St John's Church, Vicarage Lane, Knaresborough, HG5 9AE

Speaker: Dr Stewart Davies, Chair of Sustainable Development Partnership for the City of Bradford Metropolitan District. Chair of OPRL Ltd. Non-executive board member at the Environment Agency. Licensed Lay Minister at St Peter's Church, Harrogate.

26th March 2025: All Saints' Church, Kirkby Overblow, Harrogate, HG3 1HH

Speaker: The Revd Canon Sean Robertshaw, Diocesan Director of Vocations

6th November 2025: St Oswald's Church. Church Lane, Collingham, Wetherby, LS22 5AU

Speakers: Gayle Bryon, Encouraging Lay Ministries Co-ordinator and Dr Stewart Davies, Licensed Lay Minister, St Peter's Church, Harrogate

If anyone would like further information regarding any of the above meetings, please get in touch with one of the parish reps – see below. Information, including minutes and meeting dates, is available at harrogatedeanery.org. Deanery Synod meetings are open meetings and anyone is welcome to attend.

**KEITH DALE AND NICHOLAS SHEPHERD
DEANERY SYNOD REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE BENEFICE**



Approved by the PCC on 10th March 2026

ST. JAMES' CHURCH, BIRSTWITH

Part of the Benefice of Hampsthwaite with Felliscliffe and Killinghall



**Financial Statements
for the year ended December 2025**



FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2025

Financial Review

Income increased by 22% during the year against the comparable figures to £42,248 (2024 - £34,656). The biggest difference is Gift Aid recovered, in 2025 it was £7,697 (2024 - £248). This is a timing difference, the 2024 gift aid of £3,767 was received in 2025. However, overall donations have generally decreased, Church cash collections are down by 16% (£911) and standing orders, envelope scheme and Parish giving scheme together are down by 19% (£838). Expenditure increased by 5% to £55,116 (2024 - £52,625). The difference is mostly due to reducing parish share but increased capital expenditure. Outstanding parish share as at 31 December 2025 was £58,019 (2024 - £50,884).

This all resulted in the net expenditure of £15,874 (2024 – £21,426). However, with the movement from the investments to cash in 2025 of £5,000 (2024 – £25,139) the end result was a net expenditure balance of £10,874 in 2025, whilst 2024 remained at a net income balance of £3,713.

The value of investments increased in 2025 by £7,648 (2024 – increased by £8,608). This resulted in a negative movement of funds in 2025 of £2,213 (2024 – negative movement of £5,905).

Thank you so much to everybody who contributed to the Church, whether it be financial donations or their time and skills.

FIONA KLIMEK
TREASURER

Funds

The Church's funds consist of unrestricted, restricted and endowed amounts as shown in the Statement of Assets and Liabilities.

Unrestricted funds may be used at the discretion of the PCC in furtherance of the Church's objects. Restricted funds may only be used in accordance with the donors' wishes. Further information below and in Note 4 of the accounts. Endowed funds are invested and unable to be spent. The investment income is spent on the restricted fund as per the donors' wishes. Further information below in Note 4 of the accounts.

The Endowed Churchyard fund is an endowed and from the Marshall legacy left to pay for work associated with the fabric of the Church and the Churchyard via interest raised. Interest from this account is paid into the Restricted Churchyard fund and used to pay for the upkeep of the Church Fabric and Churchyard during the course of the year.

The Endowed Music Fund is part of the Hayden Legacy and is an endowed fund. Interest from this account is paid into the Restricted Music Fund and used for the upkeep of music in the Church during the course of the year.

The Churchyard Appeal Fund is a restricted legacy left to pay for work associated with the extension to the current burial area of the churchyard.

The Bell Fund is restricted money to pay for the repairs on the Church bells.

The 100 Club fund is money raised by the 100 club and a donation is made to the Church each year which is unrestricted.



The Green Heating fund is restricted money raised from the Tom Wright Legacy to help fund a green replacement heating system.

The Restricted Donations fund is money collected by the Church that was re-distributed to other charities.

The Designed Fabric Fund is a designated fund created with the proceeds from the closure of the Barings Growth and Income Fund. A decision made by Barings themselves.

Reserves policy

It is the policy of the Church that unrestricted funds which have not been designated for a specific use should be maintained at a level equivalent to the current needs of the Church.

The Church held cash reserves at the year end equating to 1 month expenditure. However, cash can be transferred from the unlisted investments when required. The PCC members consider that reserves at this level will ensure that, in the event of a significant drop in funding, they will be able to continue the Church's current activities while consideration is given to ways in which additional funds may be raised.

STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES

The Members of the PCC are responsible for preparing the Annual Report and the Financial Statements in accordance with applicable law and regulations.

Law applicable to charities in England & Wales requires the PCC to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the Church's financial activities during the year and of its financial position at the end of the year. In preparing these financial statements, the PCC are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK accounting standards and statements of recommended practice have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Church will continue in operation.

The PCC Members are responsible for keeping accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy the financial position of the Church and which enable them to ascertain the financial position of the Church and which enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with applicable law, regulations and Measures. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Church and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Approved by the PCC on 10th March 2026 and signed on their behalf by:

Sophie Bartlett
PCC Secretary



INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF ST JAMES' CHURCH, BIRSTWITH

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of St. James' Church, Birstwith for the year ended 31 December 2025.

This report is made solely to the Charity's Trustees, as a body, in accordance with Section 154 of the Charities Act 2011. My independent examination work has been undertaken so that I might state to the Charity's Trustees those matters I am required to state to them in an Independent Examiner's Report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, I do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the Charity and the Charity's Trustees as a body, for my independent examination work, for this report, or for the opinions I have formed.

Responsibilities and basis of report

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

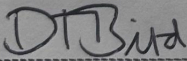
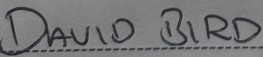
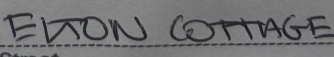
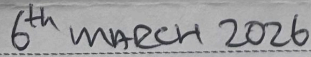
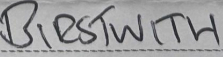
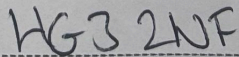
I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

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

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the Trust as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

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

 Signed	 Relevant professional qualification or membership of professional bodies (if any)
 Print name	 Street
 Date	 Town
	 Postcode



ST JAMES' CHURCH, BIRSTWITH						
RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS						
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2025						
		Unrestricted	Restricted	Endowed		
		Funds	Funds	Funds	2025	2024
		£	£	£	£	£
Receipts						
Offerings and Donations		26,889	885	-	27,774	19,141
Activities for generating funds		929	-	-	929	1,725
Income from investments		966	747	1,932	3,645	4,132
Church activities		3,539	-	-	3,539	3,471
Trading activities		5,519	-	-	5,519	4,979
Other income		-	842	-	842	1,208
		37,842	2,474	1,932	42,248	34,656
Payments						
Cost of generating funds		3	-	-	3	356
Direct charitable expenses						
	Church activities	22,901	200	-	23,101	31,561
	Church expenses	14,817	1,151	-	15,968	13,666
	Major capital expenditure	12,319	2,085	-	14,404	7,002
	Other expenditure	1,640	-	-	1,640	40
		51,680	3,436	-	55,116	52,625
Net (Expenditure) / Income before retained Investments		(13,838)	(962)	1,932	(12,868)	(17,969)
Income retained in Investments		(327)	(2,679)	-	(3,006)	(3,457)
Net (Expenditure) / Income		(14,165)	(3,641)	1,932	(15,874)	(21,426)
Transfers between funds		1,200	732	(1,932)	-	-
Transfers (to)/from Investments		5,000	-	-	5,000	25,139
Cash funds this period end		(7,965)	(2,909)	-	(10,874)	3,713
Cash funds b/fwd		20,849	(7,975)	-	12,874	9,161
Cash funds c/fwd		12,884	(10,884)	-	2,000	12,874



ST JAMES' CHURCH, BIRSTWITH							
STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES							
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2025							
			Unrestricted	Restricted	Endowed		
			Funds	Funds	Funds	2025	
			£	£	£	£	
						2024	
						£	
Cash funds							
Bank and cash balances			12,884	(10,884)	-	2,000	12,874
			12,884	(10,884)	-	2,000	12,874
		2024	20,849	(7,975)	-		
Other monetary assets							
Gift Aid to reclaim			1,343	-	-	1,343	3,767
			1,343	-	-	1,343	3,767
		2024	3,767	-	-		
Investment assets							
Unlisted investments			87,466	52,209	66,739	206,414	200,760
			87,466	52,209	66,739	206,414	200,760
		2024	81,317	49,925	69,518		
Current liabilities							
Outstanding Historic share			40,146	-	-	40,146	40,145
Outstanding share current year			17,873	-	-	17,873	10,739
Accruals			5,350			5,350	1,090
			63,368	-	-	63,368	51,974
		2024	51,974	-	-		



FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2025							
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS							
1	Basis of accounts						
	The PCC Members have taken advantage of section 144 (2) of the Charities Act 2011 and have prepared accounts on a receipts and payments basis. Cash-based accounts are not prepared on an accruals basis and therefore the Charities SORP does not apply to their preparation.						
2	PCC Member remuneration and expenses						
	No remuneration was received by the PCC Members in the year (2024 - £nil). £256 in reimbursed expenses was paid in respect of PCC Members (2024 - £308) and £750 was paid in respect of verger fees (2024 - £400).						
3	Related Party Transactions						
	There were no related party transactions in the year (2024 – None).						
4	Creditors						
	Share contributions	Requested	Paid	Outstanding			
	Year 2020	25,816	(15,059)	10,757			
	Year 2021	20,816	(4,000)	16,816			
	Year 2022	24,573	(12,000)	12,573			
	Year 2023	24,408	(24,408)	-			
	Year 2024	23,477	(23,477)	-	Paid in January 2025		
	Year 2025	23,873	(6,000)	17,873			
		142,963	(84,944)	58,019			
5	Funds						
		Balance				Balance	
		1/1/2025	Income	Expenditure	Transfers	Revaluation	31/12/2025
	Endowed Churchyard	49,227	1,368	-	(1,368)	(1,968)	47,259
	Endowed Music	20,291	564	-	(564)	(811)	19,480
		69,518	1,932	-	(1,932)	(2,779)	66,739
	Restricted Churchyard	0	591	(1,959)	1,368	-	-
	Restricted Music	2,368	656	(1,151)	564	-	2,437
	Restricted Churchyard Appeal	35,576	-	-	-	(395)	35,181
	Restricted Bell	1,159	-	-	-	-	1,159
	Restricted 100 Club	2,346	842	-	(1,200)	-	1,988
	Restricted Green Heating	500	-	-	-	-	500
	Restricted Donations	-	385	(326)	-	-	59
		41,950	2,474	(3,436)	732	(395)	41,324
	Designated Fabric	17,544	639	(10,021)	-	(920)	7,242
	Designated Choir	180	80	-	-	-	260
	Unrestricted Undesignated	84,442	37,123	(41,659)	1,200	11,742	92,848
		102,166	37,842	(51,680)	1,200	10,822	100,350