St Francis Church, High Heaton

Annual Report for the Year 2025 and Agenda for the Annual Parochial Church Meeting

26th April 2026

Contents	Page
About St Francis Church	3
Agenda for the Meeting of the Parishioners	4
Agenda for the Annual Parochial Church Meeting	4
Electoral Roll Report	5
The Parochial Church Council	5
The PCC Report	6
Responsible Caring Group	8
Mothers' Union	8
Organist`s Report	9
Eco-Church	9
Baby and Toddler group	10
Tea and Toast	11
Place of Welcome	11
Bereavement Journey	12
Uniformed Organizations	13
Treasurer's Report and Accounts	14
Independent examiner's report	21
Planned Giving	22
Deanery Synod	24
Churchwardens' report – Fabric, Goods & Ornaments	24
Vicar's remarks	25

About St Francis Church

St Francis Church is located in the High Heaton district of Newcastle upon Tyne. It is adjacent to the Coxlodge Waggonway (known locally as the tram track) at the junction of Melville Grove and Cleveland Gardens beside the Freeman Hospital. It is in the Deanery of Newcastle East in the Diocese of Newcastle in the Province of York in the Church of England.

Correspondence address: St Francis Vicarage
66 Cleveland Gardens
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE7 7QH

Website www.stfrancisnewcastle.org.uk

Mission Statement

St. Francis Church exists to reveal Christ through worship and loving service. St. Francis seeks to be a church which encourages openness of heart and mind, helps all to grow in their relationship with God, and supports the building of community.

Incumbent:	The Reverend Robert Lawrance
Honorary Associate Priest:	Canon Richard Bryant
Reader with Permission to Officiate:	Mrs Gloria Bryant
Churchwardens:	Mrs Sue Flood & Mrs Dorothy Frankland
Sacristan:	Mr Derek Charlton
Verger for weddings & funerals	Mr Don Wilson

Notice is hereby given of the
ANNUAL MEETING OF PARISHIONERS to be held on
Sunday 26th April 2026 at 11.15 am in the Church Hall

AGENDA

Prayers
Apologies for Absence
Election of Churchwardens

Notice is hereby given of the ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING OF ST FRANCIS CHURCH to be held following the Meeting of Parishioners on Sunday 26th April 2026 in the Hall

AGENDA

The Electoral Roll
Proceedings of the Parochial Church Council
Parish Reports
Financial Statements
East Deanery Synod Report
Churchwardens' Report on Fabric, Goods and Ornaments
Elections to Parochial Church Council & Deanery Synod
Appointment of Independent Examiner
Vicar's remarks
Open Forum

Any person entitled to attend the annual meeting may ask any question about parochial church matters, or bring about a discussion of any matter of parochial church interest, by moving a general resolution or by moving to give any particular recommendation to the council in relation to its duties

.

Electoral Roll — Dr. Jenny Germain

The total number on the Electoral Roll is 93 comprising 63 women and 30 men, of whom 33 members live outside the parish.

The Parochial Church Council

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) is a charity registered with the Charity Commission No. 1206346

Ex officio members:

Vicar	The Reverend Robert Lawrance *(Chair)*
Churchwardens	Mrs Dorothy Frankland
	Mrs Sue Flood
Deanery Synod	Mrs Jenny Trotter
Representatives	Dr Jenny Germain *(Secretary)*

Elected Members:

2023-2026	Mr Ken Douthwaite *(Lay Chair)*
	Mr David Robson *(Treasurer)*
	Dr Stephen Germain
2024-2027	Mrs Catherine Saeed
2025 – 2028	Mrs Anna Butcher
	Mrs Elizabeth Brown
	Mrs Marion Murray

Structure, governance and management

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church of England Representation Rules. All church attendees are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and stand for election to the PCC.

Standing Committee: The Vicar, Churchwardens, Treasurer, Secretary, and Lay Chair

Working groups in 2023 (non-PCC members can be on these)

Responsible Caring Group:	The Reverend Robert Lawrance Mrs Helen Swann *(Parish Safeguarding Officer)* Mrs Liz Thompson *(Children's Advocate)* Mrs Dorothy Frankland Mrs Elizabeth Brown Mr Ken Douthwaite
DBS administrator:	Dr Jenny Germain
Eco-Church Group:	The Reverend Robert Lawrance Miss Kathleen Burn Miss Joan Park Dr Jenny Germain Mr Brian Smith Dr Steve Germain Mrs Catherine Saaed Mrs Jane Freeman Mrs Mary Douthwaite Mrs Marion Pennie

PCC Report **Dr. Jenny Germain (Secretary)**

The PCC has met eight times in the upstairs meeting room, since the last APCM. Parish Vision Planning has been on each PCC Agenda this year. Before we can expect to obtain grants, we must have a clear vision of our plans for the Church, the Hall, Land and Community Action. Opinions

relating to “what we do well” and “what we should do better” were gathered over two Sundays and the responses reviewed at an Away Day for the PCC held at St Martin`s Church, Byker and led by Dr Nigel Coates. Five people from St Francis have joined a project KYCKYN (Know Your Church, Know Your Neighbourhood) and produced a questionnaire made available to the congregation and the community to fill in. We await results. Meanwhile, our hall remains in great demand with parties booked throughout the year. We have gained some more regular bookings recently and are grateful for the continued support of Zumba-Ali. Our church-run groups like Tea and Toast, Baby and Toddlers and Place of Welcome are thriving and we have hosted another Bereavement Group.

Our Parish Walk last year took us to Druridge Bay for a picnic and then on to the Hauxley Nature Reserve along the coast. On our return we drove to Amble for Fish and Chips despite the torrential rain, which started when we were there.

In August we were alarmed to learn of a data breach at Interdev, the software provider for APCS, from whom we obtained our DBS disclosures. This was dealt with promptly by the Diocese and fortunately we had no problems. We now get our disclosures from Thirtyone:eight.

We were delighted to be awarded our Gold Eco Award in 2025 and celebrated this achievement at our Harvest Festival service which was attended by Bishop Helen-Ann who presented the Gold Award Certificate. This coincided with Fair Trade fortnight and we were able to use the event to obtain signatures on the Fairtrade petition, “Brew it Fair”. All the normal Christmas services were well attended especially the Christmas Eve Crib and Carol Service, which was as impromptu (I mean well-rehearsed) as ever!

The Responsible Caring Group and the Eco-group report to the PCC at every meeting and to keep parishioners informed of the business of the PCC a summary of PCC minutes is published in the newsletter after each meeting.

Responsible Caring Group (RCG) **Mrs Helen Swann**
Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO)

The RCG meets three times a year and maintains an oversight of the church's safeguarding policies, procedures and implementation. It also ensures that all church events are fully risk assessed, and that methodology is put place to reduce risk of harm to anyone taking part in church activities. The Diocese supplies us with the tools to manage this via the Parish Dashboard and Training Hub. Our average dashboard score is above 90% and thanks go to all church leaders and PCC members for ensuring their safeguarding training is kept up to date which significantly impacts on this score. The group also oversees arrangements for the DBS checks for those working with young people or vulnerable adults. The external organisation used to manage these checks experienced a data breach this year, a rapid response was made in line with guidance and direction from the Diocese and any impact kept to a minimum – thanks go out to all involved for their dedication and efficiency with regards to this, in particular Jenny Germain, DBS administrator. A new provider has now been appointed by the Diocese.

Mothers' Union **Mrs. Elaine Anderson (Branch Leader)**

The Mothers' Union is especially concerned with all that strengthens and preserves marriage and Christian family life. We generally meet in the church hall on the third Thursday of each month, and start meetings with a short service which is usually followed by a talk or other activity, we then finish with tea and biscuits and a chance to catch up. In the last year we have welcomed a variety of speakers and hosted a successful afternoon tea, coffee morning and our annual dinner. We also enjoyed a French themed evening and a quiz night. We launched our Cookery Book in memory of June Falcus which has proved to be very popular. With the help of donations from the parish we were able to put together 36 gift bags for the Women's refuges.

Organist's report **Mr. Forbes Doig**

The majority of musical contributions to worship continue to be led by or are accompanied by the organ. (The instrument now over 40 years old remains fit for purpose after receiving some attention from Brian last December). On other occasions, positive musical input to worship is provided by the music group. The choir manages to reform on occasions. We provided a rendition of *Canticle of the Sun* at a service dedicated to the memory of St Francis. We performed three choir items at the Christmas Carol service and received many compliments from members of the congregation for our efforts. Jenny, Sarah and Robert take on of the role of cantor when a Responsorial Psalm is part of the worship. I am very grateful to all who contribute to the music, and am now into my 17th year of holding my position in the church.

Eco-Church **Mrs. Mary Douthwaite**

The main highlight of 2025 was achieving the **A-Rocha Gold Award**! This is the culmination of many years of work, but is not seen as the end, more an important step in the on-going process of prioritising the climate and the Creation in everything we do. St Francis was only the 100th church in England & Wales to gain this award, and the first this far north! Congratulations to all concerned!

Continuing eco-projects:

*Weekly green tips

*Grass cutting & regular "garden work days" for maintenance of the church grounds

*Links with local environment groups, including attendance at the COP rally in Newcastle in November with our own stand at the assembly after the march

*Prayers for the environment at every service, with a specific environmental focus at the Green Eucharist and Harvest Festival services. Harvest coincided with our Fairtrade event for Fairtrade Fortnight and was attended by the Bishop. The sanctuary was decorated each time, and Harvest gifts were donated to local foodbanks.

*recycling of paper, stamps and blister packs is on-going.

* Earth hour was remembered with a special candle-lit service.

*Bird feeders in the Sanctuary Garden and the RSPB Great Garden Bird Watch

*Community Litter Picking – now well established as a monthly event and growing steadily, having attracted members of the community. It improves our immediate environment and helps to raise awareness of this important issue

* Bees were not a feature of 2025 but we are expecting more bees in 2026

Thanks to gardeners, grass-cutters, bird-feeder maintainers, litter-pickers and everyone who has contributed to eco activities of the church and made environmentally friendly changes in their lives this year. New ideas and members are always welcome!

Baby and Toddler Group **Mrs. Liz Thompson**

The group continues to run each Thursday from 1.30 pm to 3pm during school term time. Volunteers set up the hall from 12.30 pm to provide a range of activities for babies and toddlers. These include a designated baby area, small world play, construction toys, large wheeled toys and craft activities. Snacks are provided for children and carers. The group continues to be well attended on the whole, providing social and developmental opportunities for all. A register of children and carers is kept each week alongside an activity log. Risk assessments are reviewed

regularly and support is provided from N.A.P.I. who oversee playgroups in the Newcastle area. More recently, we have seen the numbers of volunteers for the group reduce from an initial number of 7 to 4. Attempts have been made to recruit more volunteers but as yet we have received no positive feedback. This could potentially be a problem for the future of the group despite it being very popular and well received.

Tea and Toast **Mrs Liz Thompson**

The group continues to run during school term times each Monday from 3pm to 4.30pm. Attendees are mainly from Jesmond Park Academy, although recently more young people have attended from St. Mary's RC School. There has also been an increase in the number of girls making use of the facilities on offer. We welcome year groups 7 to 13 on the whole and attendance can vary over the year depending on weather or after school activities such as clubs or revision classes. Attendance over the last few weeks has been in the region of 50 young people, resulting in requests for additional volunteers. We continue to offer tea, hot chocolate, toast, waffles and occasional treats leftover from Parish events. All are gratefully received by the young people! Table tennis, badminton and table top games are provided and put to good use. Background music sets the scene. When the weather allows, the field is a favourite with the young people who seem to thrive and appreciate the relaxed atmosphere of the provision. The opportunity for the Parish to engage with young people seems to be positive and volunteers find the young people appreciative and friendly. An activity sheet and register is recorded and signed each week.

Places of Welcome **Mrs Helen Swann**

The group continues to provide a highly valued service to the community offering a place to engage with others and increase social wellbeing. This year we have made a few changes to the group which includes the introduction of a warm up activity and singing our own ‘signature song’.

These developments have all come from members of the group and appear to be enjoyed by all. Our guests enjoy contributing to the group whether in the form of home bakes or providing us with a talk or quiz and we have hosted some interesting external speakers on subjects ranging from the role of social prescriber to the introduction of the new food recycling service. We have also enjoyed several very talented musical performances. The group is supported by a strong and steady team of regular volunteers who show commitment and compassion to the crucial role that they play, which enhances the experience for existing members and helps newer members feel welcomed and included, sincere thanks go out to all involved.

The Bereavement Journey **Mrs Marion Pennie**

The Bereavement Journey Course has been running at St Francis twice a year since October 2022 averaging 6 participants at any one time. It is a structured 7 session course using films and discussion, alongside a participant's manual, to support adults through their grief and is suitable for people of any faith or none. Designed for anyone who has experienced bereavement, it covers recent and past losses and anticipatory grief. The main material is non-faith-based making it accessible to everyone. The course provides an opportunity to talk freely whether grieving a recent death or wanting to explore a previous bereavement that may be unresolved. The course allows for bereaved adults to do their own grief work while being supported by facilitators Helen Swann and Marion Pennie. It is hoped to run a further course in September 2026 based at Heaton Baptist Church, as a Heaton Churches Together initiative. Through promoting the course to a wider church and community audience it is hoped that through closer working and co-operation more people will get the opportunity to attend to their journey of bereavement.

Uniformed Organisations

81st Rainbows and Brownies Annual Report Leaders Helen Thompson and Lauren Howells

The Rainbows and Brownies continue to be healthy units with good waiting lists. The girls are enjoying the programme, earning plenty of badges and overall having lots of fun.

81st St Francis Guides Annual Review 2025 Leader Carole Falcus

It has been another busy year for this Guide Unit and we are receiving new Guides from the Brownie Unit throughout the year, which helps to keep the unit growing. Attending Guides gives the girls the chance to meet new friends within the Unit and also to make new friends from around the county when attending a variety of events and camp. The Leaders have worked hard and we have completed a wide range of activities - Badges, skill builders, cooking, crafting & games. It has been hilarious at times trying out new things. The achievement of the Guides has been outstanding and we have handed out lots of badges as they progress through the programme.

Guides love a party so we've had Summer & Christmas Movie nights with Pizza and Chips!! They attended the Panto at the Tyne Theatre thoroughly enjoying Cinderella.

We have celebrated a range of festivals and events with crafts and themed activities. The Guides had a Crazy Golf night in Gosforth Park enjoying takeout McDonalds on the grass too.

We think it has been a really great year for the Guides. Thanks to all the people who make these things possible, especially the support of St. Francis Church.

This has been a difficult year and all the leaders, especially **Jayne** worked tirelessly to ensure the Guides had such a great year – Thank you!!

Treasurer's Report and Accounts **Dr. David Robson**

St Francis High Heaton PCC has continued to benefit from very generous and continued support from its congregants and members throughout 2025, such that Planned Giving was only slightly less than 2024. If all voluntary giving and gift aid is included, it totals just under £49,000, a very modest fall from 2024. I feel this goes a long way towards meeting one of our 2024 goals of increasing the financial day-to-day sustainability of the PCC and working towards balancing our budget. The average number of contributors to planned giving dropped by 2% during 2025, but John Telfer, to whom the PCC is very grateful for his continued management of Planned Giving on its behalf, reports there have been new contributors joining Planned Giving in the last quarter of 2025, and our existing donors have increased their giving. The PCC appreciates all these generous gifts, especially where the donor has linked their giving to the consumer price index. Problems with the Planned Giving website coincided with our Stewardship Campaign in the autumn of 2025, and may have slowed uptake initially, but donors may be assured the site is working normally and is an excellent method of making a regular and index-linked donation for those wishing to support our Mission (https://www.parishgiving.org.uk/).

We were able to increase our income from grants to £2,750 in 2025 (2024: £1.6k) but improving this remains a work-in-progress, and meeting the application cycle for the disparate grants is difficult. A small sub-group has advised the PCC on this matter, for whose wisdom the PCC is very grateful. Hall income fell by about 5% (£0.8k) with the loss of a regular tenant, but car park fees increased by 6% (£0.1k). In addition, events increased by more than 50% (£2.7k) compared to 2024, for in 2024 there was much specialist fundraising for the Development Fund. The PCC greatly appreciates the effort and time our volunteers give to our regular fundraising events, which also are important landmarks in the social life of our church. In 2025, these generated just under £8k for

our general finances. Comparing unrestricted income (i.e. excluding restricted and designated funds) there was a rise in 2025 (£88.2k) compared to 2024 (£85.0k), a 3% increase.

Looking at payments made in 2025, these remained above receipts, and the PCC made an operating deficit which was funded from our reserves. There was a deficit of £(3.8)k in the unrestricted funds (2024: £(8.1)k). However, payments from unrestricted funds were lower by £2.5k in 2025 compared to 2024. Certain payments, such as Church Running costs, have increased because we paid a three-yearly subscription to Churchdesk in 2025, and there were increased costs for copying, music licensing and telephone services; but energy costs were reduced as we moved to new fixed tariffs on the advice of Stephen Germain. They still remain expensive and the cost of heating the church and hall is around £5-8 per hour. We spent less on maintenance of the church and hall, and it was largely expended on electrical lighting and fire safety matters. The PCC would have liked to see more spending on the fabric of the building, including decoration following the work to the church windows, but concerns about our finances made us cautious about additional costs. The PCC is eager to spend more on the fabric of the building at Church, including decoration following the work to the church windows, but is mindful of the cost and impact to the financial position.

A substantial goal of the PCC to make efforts to balance its budget was made in the last quarter of 2025 by cutting its final Parish Share payment made to the Diocese. This was a very difficult decision, but the Parish Share offer for 2025 exceeded all of the voluntary unrestricted income of the PCC, and it remains our largest outgoing payment.

The PCC, as the holder of a Gold Eco-Award, offsets its carbon emissions with the organisation Climate Stewards, and in 2025 this amounted to £70.

In October 2025, the PCC asked local estate agents, Jack Harrison, to revalue St Francis House for the purpose of our accounts, and they estimated the current book value to be around £335, 000 (the previous valuation was £300, 000). This largely explains the increase in net worth

of the PCC in 2025. The ratio of unrestricted cash reserves to total payments remains low at about 16%.

During 2025, the PCC changed bank account to the Co-operative Bank, which aligned better with the PCC's Eco-Mission. The PCC transferred £20,000 within designated cash funds, from the current account to a Co-operative Savings Account, to generate a modest income from interest. The account was chosen to be rapid-access in the event of an unexpected call on funds. The PCC has maintained its CCLA investment fund. Within designated funds, there remains £930 in the Development Fund (this was the fund used for the window refurbishment project which was signed off by our architect during 2025). A small retention against the work was advised by the architect, but since the contractor has now declared bankruptcy, it is possible these funds may be available for other development purposes at a later date.

The challenge for 2026 is to maintain a balanced budget whilst protecting the PCC's reserves. The PCC has declared its flexibility with Parish Share payments, to help achieve that balance, but we anticipate we will face some costs when we start to respond to the recommendations of our last Quinquennial Report.

The PCC is very grateful to the reviewer of its accounts, Rachel Lawson, for her time freely given.

Registered Charity 1206346

Financial Statements for the Year 2025 (up to 31/12/25)			2025 Unrestricted	2025 Restricted	2025 Designated	2025 TOTAL	2024 TOTAL
RECEIPTS							
Voluntary Income	Planned giving		36,797			36,797	36,831
	Open plate		717			717	965
	Gift aid		9,636			9,636	9,127
	Legacies received		0				0
	Development	*9*	0		1,823	1,823	22,887
	Other voluntary income		1,793			1,793	2,376
	Grants		2,750			2,750	1,550
	Restricted funds	*10*	0	5,929		5,929	4,337
Total Voluntary Income			**51,694**	**5,929**	**1,823**	**59,445**	**78,073**
Generation of Funds	Hall lettings		13,891			13,891	14,671
	Car park		2,376			2,376	2,240
	Curate's House						828
	Events		7,781			7,781	5,100
Total Generation of Funds			**24,048**			**24,048**	**22,839**
Other Income	Fees for weddings and funerals		816			816	520
	Interest				673	673	753
	St Francis House	*2*	11,685			11,685	11,400
Total Other Income			**12,501**	**0**	**673**	**13,174**	**12,673**
TOTAL RECEIPTS			**88,243**	**5,929**	**2,496**	**96,668**	**113,584**
PAYMENTS							
Charitable Activities	Parish share		(55,828)			(55,828)	(56,392)
	Clergy expenses		(80)			(80)	(77)
	Vicarage house		(3,898)			(3,898)	(3,239)
	Church - running costs		(10,193)			(10,193)	(6,867)
	Church - heating and lighting		(3,689)			(3,689)	(5,045)
	Church maintenance		(510)			(510)	(891)
	Upkeep of services		(1,057)			(1,057)	(1,020)
	Upkeep of grounds		(172)			(172)	(1,084)
	Hall - running costs		(5,021)			(5,021)	(4,646)
	Hall - heating and lighting		(3,689)			(3,689)	(5,045)
	Hall maintenance		(1,996)			(1,996)	(1,271)
	Organist and choir		(2,738)			(2,738)	(2,877)
	Stationary, postage and sundries		(245)			(245)	(187)
	Development	*9*			(6,642)	(6,642)	(52,951)
	Legacies received		0			0	0
	Repayment of Fees		(234)			(234)	0
	Tax Repayment		(1,248)			(1,248)	0
	Other		(1,482)	0	0	(1,482)	0
Total Charitable Activities			**(90,598)**	**0**	**(6,642)**	**(97,240)**	**(141,592)**
Other Paym't	St Francis House	*2*	(648)			(648)	(5,288)
	Restricted funds	*11*		(5,487)		(5,487)	(7,186)
	Cost of Fundraising Events		(763)			(763)	(550)
Total of Other Payments			**(1,411)**	**(5,487)**	**0**	**(6,898)**	**(13,024)**
TOTAL PAYMENTS			**(92,009)**	(5,487)	(6,642)	(104,137)	(154,616)
Surplus / (Deficit)			***(3,765)***	***442***	***(4,146)***	***(7,469)***	*(41,032)*
(2024 Surplus/(Deficit) for comparison)			*(8,118)*	*(2,849)*	*(30,065)*	*(41,032)*	

Statement of Assets and Liabilities

£		2025				2024
Funds	Notes	Unrestricted	Restricted	Designated	TOTAL	TOTAL
Cash Funds						
Bank current account		14,600	5,804	3,869	24,273	52,278
Bank deposit account	*10*			20,000	20,000	
England Deposit Fund				15,547	15,547	14,877
Total cash funds		**14,600**	**5,804**	**39,416**	**59,820**	67,155
Other Monetary Assets						
Gift aid recoverable					-	
Investment Assets						
St Francis House	*2*	335,000			335,000	300,000
TOTAL ASSETS		**349,600**	**5,804**	**39,416**	**394,820**	367,155
Liabilities						
Other liabilities	*5*		(600)		(600)	(465)
NET ASSETS/(LIABILITIES)		**349,600**	**5,204**	**39,416**	**394,220**	366,690

Notes

1 The financial statements of St Francis Parochial Church Council ('the PCC') have been prepared in accordance with Church Accounting Regulations 2006 using the Receipts and Payments basis.

2 **Investment assets** include St Francis House, 18 Cotswold Gardens, Newcastle Upon Tyne, NE7 7AE which is accounted for at market value. This was revalued at £335,000 on 14/10/25 (31 December 2025: £300,000).

3 The **designated fund** primarily relates to legacy donations received over 15 years ago. The income is designated for ongoing upkeep of the property of the Church.

4 In accordance with The PCC Accountability Guidance, paragraphs 2.9 and 4.3, a donation that has been specifically requested to be donated to other charities is not included in the PCC's annual Receipts and Payments Account. The cash collected has been reflected as a restricted asset, with a corresponding liability in the Statement of Assets and Liabilities.

5 **Collections for organisations and other restricted funds** have been reflected in the Receipts and Payments Accounts on the basis that these funds are under the control of the PCC. Either the PCC has earmarked these funds for specific charities (referred to as 'collections for organisations'), or the donor(s) request(s) the funds to be used for particular activities (referred to as 'other restricted activities').

6 **Special collections** are funds in which there is no discretion for the PCC to do anything other than send the money directly to the specified charity. A corresponding liability has been reflected in the Statement of Assets and Liabilities. The income and expenditure has not been reflected in the Receipts and Payments Account in accordance with 'The PCC Accountability Guidance', para 2.9 & 4.3.

7 Some 'Special Collection' funds are collections made at funerals for named individuals (who have been anonymised in these accounts). Where payments from such funds have been made, they are shown for the benefitting charities (although no payments occurred in 2025).

8 **Soup Lunches** relates to monies raised by luncheon activities fully donated to charities.

9 **Development**: The PCC will from time to time allocate within its Designated fund certain sums for development of the chuch and the hall including receipts from fundraising, generous donations, and previous legacies. In 2024, the PCC allocated part of these monies to replace the worn church windows with an improved specification. The sums raised were known colloquially 'The Windows Fund'. The majority of the work was carried out in 2024 and the project completed in 2025. The funding of replacement of the windows and associated works is detailed below because it constitutes a very large proportion of PCC spending. Any remaining surplus is included within designated funds and will be used for the ongoing upkeep of the property of the Church or further development work.

Development Work in 2024 (£)			Sub-Total	**Totals**
Monies Received	*Donations*	18,396		
	Events	1,910		
	Gift Aid	2,581	22,887	
Previous Legacies	*2022*	10,000		
	2023	25,813	35,813	**58,700**
Payments	*Building Works*	(49,976)		
	Fees	(2,601)		
	Blinds	(374)	(52,951)	**(52,951)**
Balance at 31/12/2024				**5,749**
Development Work in 2025 (£)				
Monies received	*donation*	571		
	fund-raising	1,121		
Total Monies Received	*gift aid*	130	1,823	**1,823**
Payments	*building works*	(6,432)		
	fees	(210)		**(6,642)**
Balance on 31/12/25				**930**

10 **Transfer to Deposit Account**. The PCC agreed to transfer £20000 from the current banking account to a quick-access deposit account in October 2025 to receive income from interest payments. The deposit account is treated as a designated fund. No interest has been received in this accounting period.

11 **Summary of Restricted Funds.** (Inactive restricted funds with zero balance are not shown.)

£	Note	1 January 2025	Receipts	(Payments)	31 December 2025
Collections for organisations					
Soup lunches	*5,8*	669	1,949	(2,521)	97
Christmas Appeal 2024	*5*	542	50	(592)	0
Christmas Appeal 2025	*5*	-	705	-	705
Ethiopian Medical Project	5	-	695	(695)	-
Ghanaian Childrens Trust	5	-	587	(587)	-
Sub-total		***1,210***	***3,986***	***(4,394)***	***803***
Other restricted funds	*5*				
Youth work		1,486	-	(117)	1,369
Toddler Group		323	442	-	765
Community		672	-	-	672
Garden fund		586	-	(238)	348
Choir Account		454	-	(59)	395
Place of Welcome Fund		-	1,500	(679)	821
Altar Cloth Donation		31	-	-	31
Sub-total		***3,552***	***1,942***	***(1,093)***	***4,402***
Special collections	*4,6*				
West End Food Bank		50	400	(450)	-
Board of Finance - share		247	685	(685)	247
Christian Aid		160	1,318	(1,478)	-
Summary of funeral collections for named individuals	*7*	7	345	-	352
Sub-total		***465***	***2,748***	***(2,613)***	***599***
TOTAL		**5,227**	**8,676**	**(8,100)**	**5,804**

Independent examiner's report to the Trustees of St Francis Parochial Church Council

I report on the accounts of the church for the year ended 31 December 2025.

Responsibilities and basis of report

The church's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The church's trustees consider that an audit is not required under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 201 1 (the 201 1 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to

- Examine the accounts (under section 145 of the 2011 Act);
- To follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners (under section 145(5)(b) of the 201 1 Act); and
- To state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of Independent Examiner's statement

My examination was carried out in accordance with the generation Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations for you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent Examiner's statement

- In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

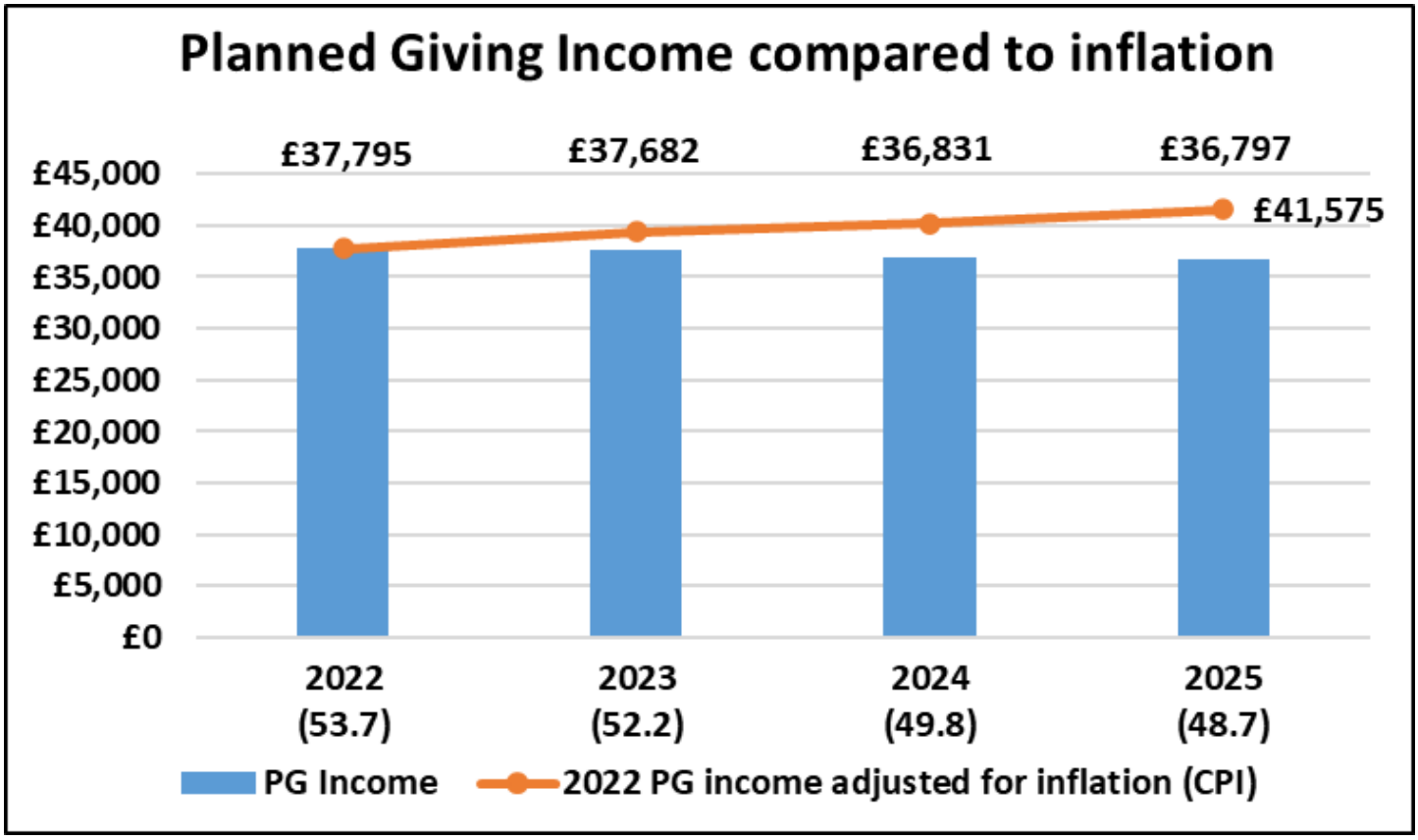
- Which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:
- To keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 201 1 Act; and
- To prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 201 1 Act have not been met; or
- To which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Name: Rachel Lawson Signature: R Lawson

Date: 10 February 2026
Relevant professional qualification or body: ICAE
Address: 30 Cotswold Gardens, Newcastle upon Tyne

Planned Giving Report **Mr John Telfer**

Our total Planned Giving income in 2025 was £36,797. This compares to £36,831 in 2023, a fall of less than 0.1%. However, the average monthly gift per member increased by £1.34 to £62.97 which is the highest ever amount. Nevertheless, neither the annual total nor the per capita amount has kept pace with inflation, and it was for this reason we held a mini-Stewardship Campaign in November. The end result was that two new members joined the Planned Giving Scheme, and ten existing members increased their monthly contributions. This will bring in an extra £2,000 in 2026. In addition, 33 of the members who pay by Direct Debit automatically increase their giving in line with inflation every year, and this will yield a further £1,000 in 2026.
The chart below shows that the annual income has stayed roughly the same over the last four years but has fallen in real terms by almost £5,000. However, as indicated above, there are encouraging signs are that we will reverse this trend in 2026.



We lost three members during the year, two of whom were long standing members who died. We also recruited three new members, so the total number remained at 50. The average number of contributors throughout each year is shown in brackets in the chart.

Most of our members are able to gift-aid their contributions, and in 2025 we received £8,561 from HMRC, which brings the total raised by our Planned Givers to £45,358. (Note that we also earned gift-aid from other donations and it is the total amount received that is shown in the treasurer's accounts.)

2025 was historically significant because after 67 years it was the last year that any members of the Planned Giving Scheme sent their contributions in cash using weekly or monthly envelopes. All members now pay using various forms of electronic banking. Planned Giving envelopes were introduced in 1958 when the Wells Organisation were invited to the parish to introduce the completely new concept of 'Planned Giving'. The congregation were asked to sign a pledge stating how much they would contribute each week. Initially 292 families signed

a pledge, and a further 60 took envelopes without pledging. In the first 12 months, £4,403 was contributed, equivalent to £111,000 in today's money! This was a four-fold increase in the annual income at that time.

Newcastle East Deanery Synod **The Reverend Robert Lawrance**

The deanery synod met three times in 2025 and we hosted the Deanery Ascension Day service at St Francis which also marked the launch of a Deanery Mission Week that included a church crawl around the deanery which was well-received and enjoyed by those who participated! Our contribution was our June community litter-pick. The synod acts as a forum for information so receives reports from Diocesan Synod and General Synod and each parish shares its news and seeks to encourage collaboration wherever possible. In 2025 Ben Jarvis the vicar of St Bartholomew's also became Priest in charge of St Mary Magdalene Longbenton and Mark Oliver was appointed part-time community missioner at Longbenton, a post funded by Oxford diocese. A similar post has been created at St Michael Byker where a new £4.5m scheme called The Lighthouse Project opened in 2025 to provide a youth and community space in the heart of Byker that will support quality youth and community engagement. In May the synod met with Canon Ric Whaite the Diocesan Director of Mission & Ministry to encourage us in New Worshipping Communities and in July we met with Bishop Helen-Ann to celebrate what is happening in our various parishes.

Church Wardens' Report - Fabric, Goods & Ornaments

Mrs Dorothy Frankland and Mrs Sue Flood

The year 2025 was a busy year for St. Francis' church with many ongoing projects. The installation of new windows in 2024 has led to further discussions regarding the internal decoration of our church building amongst other things. A development fund has been created to enable us to go forward with this. An unexpected cost arose late last year with

the breakdown of the hall water boiler which required replacement. A Burco boiler was purchased and installed in February this year (2026).
In 2025 regular attention was given to the fabric of the church/hall buildings. This included: -

- Gas boilers serviced
- Hall heaters serviced and repaired where needed
- P.A.T testing of all portable electrical equipment
- Fire extinguishers serviced and CO_2 extinguisher replaced
- New power switch to hall water boiler
- Automatic light fitted to church entrance

After years of working on our beautiful church flower arrangements, Joan Grebby has retired from this task (many thanks Joan!). Consequently, we are happy to announce and support the formation of a new Church Flower Group. The aim of the group is to work towards providing sustainable flower arrangements which is in line with guidance provided by the Church of England. This includes sourcing local flowers and creating flower displays that are eco-friendly. We would like to say a big thank you to all the volunteers who assist us in the day-to-day life of our church. Whilst there are too many to name individually, we would like to give special thanks to Brian Smith, Steve Germain and Ken Douthwaite for undertaking ongoing repairs, technical and practical help in the maintenance of the church and hall. We also recognise and thank all the volunteers who give their time to support our church events and outreach sessions, e.g. Tea and Toast, Places of Welcome, Baby & Toddlers, Pastoral Care to name a few. Our thanks also go to Carole Falcus for all time and effort she puts in managing and letting our church hall (this is no mean feat!). Finally, we wish to say a big thank you to Robert for his continuing support and guidance.

Vicar's Remarks **The Reverend Robert Lawrance**

As always I must begin my remarks by saying a huge thank you to everyone who participates in the life of our parish church. The activities

detailed in this report give a flavour of the breadth and ambition of our church-life, but at the same time these pages don't reveal the countless unseen ways in which prayer, worship, relationships, pastoral care and concern are expressed. Our fellowship in Christ puts us into a new form of relationship with each other and I hope that everyone who is associated with St Francis Church is able to experience the worship, community and service which we seek to provide, and that we sustain our values of humility love and joy. We strive to be an inclusive church which welcomes people irrespective of race, gender identity, sexuality, disability, age, learning and cognitive ability or socio-economic group. This means that there is a tension between our received traditions, as expressed in our worship and social activities, and how we create space that enables newcomers to feel engaged and truly welcome. To offer real hospitality means being ready to being changed by the visitors, rather than expecting them to conform to our received practices and ways of working. This necessarily means that a church must be a dynamic group which is constantly paying attention to its context and seeking to accommodate and adjust itself. In some measure, I think we achieve this and in spite of losing many stalwart members in the past few years we have also welcomed new people into our church membership who bring new gifts and insights and which I hope will enable us to develop and grow into the future. The work undertaken by the group which did the Know Your Church Know Your Neighbourhood was focussed on understanding our context and having a good picture of the nature of the community we seek to serve, as well as a realistic understanding of who belongs to our church and what gifts and skills they bring to bear. We have yet to see the outworking of this group's deliberations, but I hope that people will not be shy of sharing their wisdom and helping us to develop the way in which we serve our community. Perhaps God might be calling you to volunteer to help with the Baby & Toddler Group, or take a turn on the soup lunches, or help with worship, perhaps reading the lesson, leading the prayers or serving the altar? Or perhaps God is calling you to do something new here?

In the past year I have been delighted that Helen Swann and Nigel Coates have trained on the revamped diocesan Authorised Lay Ministry course and they have each embarked on developing their respective areas of calling, for Nigel in education and worship and for Helen in pastoral care. Helen has taken on the role of Parish Safeguarding Officer and Nigel led the recent Lent course using material provided by the Society of St Francis, and both are discerning other ways of helping us to move forward as a community of Christian discipleship, where developing spirituality and pastoral care are central concerns. During the course of last year I continued to serve as a Proctor in Convocation (a clerical member of the General Synod), which met in February and July. Governance in the Church of England is both fascinating and endless and I will step down at the end of the current quinquennium this summer. Needless to say the intention had been to give more energy to my work as a parish priest, but in January this year, after a good deal of thought and prayer, I accepted the bishop's invitation to take up again the role of area dean, and I would really value your prayers as I do that. I shared my decision with the PCC before making it public, and assured them that I am determined to ensure that my fulfilment of the role should not be at the expense of the parish, and so I am consciously seeking ways in which to encourage collaboration between the ten parishes of our deanery as part of our development as a parish, aiming to do nothing separately what we can't do better together. In particular I am interested in ecumenism, inter-faith work and promoting Eco-Church. In addition I have continued to serve as a Bishops' Advisor working in the discernment of vocations to ordained ministry in the national church and as Chair of the Diocesan House of Clergy, which means I am a member of the Bishop's Council and a Trustee of the Diocesan Board of Finance. I oversee the diocesan net zero carbon working group and also undertake a ministry of spiritual accompaniment to other Anglican

clergy and pastors in other denominations, supervised by my association with St Anthony's Priory in Durham. I continue to rejoice in my calling as a tertiary in the Society of St Francis and participate as fully as I can in Third Order activities and regular association with Alnmouth Friary. In concluding these remarks, I do encourage everyone reading this to consider finding out more about the life and spirituality of St Francis, whom I believe fundamentally is a saint for our time. His ministry of reconciliation and outreach to the poor, as well as his devotion to the person and figure of Jesus Christ, made him a notable figure in his own day. This year marks 800 years since his death and I am struck that his preaching and teaching have not lost their relevance or vitality. He understood God's salvation to be worked out through all of creation, which shapes our relationship with the environment, with our material wealth and the call to social justice. In some modest measure, I believe out life together at St Francis church honours this spiritual tradition and I hope that it will continue to do so for many years to come. I am your humble servant.