St Andrew's Epworth

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING 2026



Wednesday 29th April 2026 at 7:00 pm

St. Andrew's Church

St. Andrew's Parish Church – Epworth

Rector – Rev. Paul Wilson Churchwardens – Mrs Penny Birks and Miss Susan Storey

The Annual Parochial Church Meeting will be held in Church on Wednesday 29th April 2026, at 7:00 pm.

AGENDA

Opening Prayers

Vestry Meeting

1. Apologies for absence
2. (p 3) Minutes of the Annual Vestry Meeting held on 23rd April 2025
3. Election of Churchwardens
4. Election of Deputy Churchwardens

Parish Meeting

1. Apologies for absence
2. (p 4) Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting held on 23rd April 2025
3. Matters arising from the Minutes
4. Election of Parochial Church Councillors to serve 2026-2029
5. Election of Deanery Synod Reps 2026-2029
6. Electoral Roll – numbers and changes since the last meeting
7. (p 14) Churchwarden's Report for 2025 – report on the fabric and maintenance.
8. (p 17) Treasurer's Report for 2025 – The financial affairs, presentation of audited accounts, funds and investments. a) Adoption of accounts
9. (p 24) Deanery Synod Report for 2025.
10. (p 26) Safeguarding Report for 2025
11. Appointment of Independent Examiner to the PCC
12. (p 27) Revd Julie Miles – Deanery Enabler Report
13. Notice of the first meeting of the PCC – 29th April following this meeting
14. Archdeacon's Visitation Service – St Andrew's Epworth date tbc
15. Any other urgent business
16. (p 30) Rector's address

Closing Prayers

EPWORTH PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL St Andrew's Parish Church, Epworth

The Minutes **of the Vestry Meeting** held at St Andrew's Church on Thursday 23rd April 2025 at 7.0 pm

Present - Chairman Rev Paul Wilson

Sharon Usztan, Gail Lockey, Melvyn Rose, Pauline Rose, Karen Wilson, Pamela Higginson, David Higginson, Anne Broster, Peter Broster, Pete Knight, Lorraine Knight, Ruth Pridham, Peter Pridham, Jim Oliver, Wendy Kitson, Susan Storey, Penny Birks, Alison Tinsley, Dorothy Smith The

Meeting opened with Prayers

1 **Apologies** for absence received from Rev Jeremy Green, Stephanie Green, Carol Mellers

2 **The Minutes** of the Vestry Meeting held on Thursday 2nd May 2024 were approved.

Proposed by David Higginson, Seconded by Wendy Kitson
Signed by Rev Paul Wilson

3 Election of Churchwardens

Penny Birks…….Proposed Gail Lockey Seconded Jim Oliver

There being no other nominations Penny was elected unanimously for the next 12 months

Both Penny and Sue Storey [not seeking re election] were thanked sincerely for their work during the last year.
Paul expressed particular thanks on behalf of everyone in the Church to Sue Storey who has been a Churchwarden for many years and has given considerable time, both during the week and on Sundays, to much unseen work essential to maintain the life of the church and to making Rev Paul's life easier.

4 Election of Deputy Churchwardens

David Cooper Proposed Melvyn Rose Seconded Penny Birks
There being no other volunteers David was elected unanimously

Both David and Jim Oliver [not seeking re-election] were thanked for their continued commitment and support to the Churchwardens

during the past year with much of their work being unseen. A lot of work involving the Clock/Bells and maintenance.
Jim was also thanked for the considerable number of years that he has volunteered as a Deputy Churchwarden. Again, many hours of essential but unseen work completed on our behalf.

Meeting ended at 7.08 pm

Signed ……..
Date …….

EPWORTH PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL St Andrew's Parish Church
The Minutes of the **Annual Parochial Church Meeting**

held at St Andrew's Church, Epworth on Wednesday 23rd April 2025 at 7. 10 pm

Present Chairman - Rev Paul Wilson

Sharon Usztan, Gail Lockey, Melvyn Rose, Pauline Rose, Karen Wilson, Pamela Higginson, David Higginson, Anne Broster, Peter Broster, Pete Knight, Lorraine Knight, Ruth Pridham, Peter Pridham, Jim Oliver, Wendy Kitson, Susan Storey, Penny Birks, Alison Tinsley, Dorothy Smith

Apologies for Absence Received from Rev Jeremy Green, Stephanie Green, Carol Mellors

1 Minutes

The Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Council Meeting held on Thursday 2nd May 2024, were approved as a true record.
Proposed Pete Knight Seconded Melvyn Rose
Signed by Rev Paul

2 Matters Arising from the Minutes - None

3 Election of Parochial Church Councillors to serve 2024 – 2027

There were 3 vacancies

1 Sharon Usztan Proposed Cynthia Stockdale Seconded Kath Liddell ***

2 Alison Tinsley Proposed Paul Tinsley Seconded Penny Birks

3

These two are duly elected for 3 years 2025 -2028

There is one further vacancy. Further member/s may be coopted at a future PCC Meeting

Melvyn Rose has decided to retire after 40+ years as a member St Andrew's PCC. He was thanked for the considerable work he has done during that time, including fund raising and overseeing of the Church Restoration work. He will continue in his role as Tourism Officer. [He also served as Churchwarden at All Saints' Church, Belton, for many years before moving to Epworth]

5 Electoral Roll

Carol Mellers, Electoral Roll Officer, was unable to be present but had prepared a Report – As required, there had been a full revision of the Electoral Roll. There are now 82 names on the Electoral Roll……. -3 and +12 from last year. Thank you to Carol for the extra work that had been needed this year to complete the register.

It was proposed that these figures be accepted Proposed Sue Storey Seconded Karen Wilson

Carol had indicated that she would like to step down from this role. Gail Lockey volunteered to take responsibility in future.

6 Churchwardens' Report 2024

The Churchwardens Report last year mentioned the Quinquennial Report done by the Architect in June 2023. When it was received the PCC requested that it should include a full inspection of the tower roof. This has been done by the Architect and Gary Rawlinson of Heritage Conservation and Restoration the report summary was presented to the PCC.

A brand new water supply pipework was completed early 2024. It was laid from the bottom of the Avenue and into Church on the south side between the porch and the base of the tower. We were advised by several water supply

experts that the state of the very old pipework was not good. Whilst work was to be done making a separate supply and stop tap to the old Church School site, it made good sense to replace all the pipework. Therefore, reducing the possibility of having to trace any costly leaks down the avenue. We now also have good working stop taps in both the toilet and kitchen areas.

The heating boiler is now working OK after several visits from Byfield Heating and with Peter Broster's hard work and determination in getting to the root of the cause. Our thanks to him for this and all his trips up into the boiler area to keep the heating working, so we had heat for services and concerts, whilst these problems were put right.

The Church clock continues to be faulty despite regular servicing and interim visits, when required, from the clockmakers. David Cooper is keeping the PCC aware of what repair work is suggested. The current problem is a motor is cutting out, causing the hour strike to be wrong. This has been turned off temporarily, until a repair can be made, allowing the quarter strikes to still be heard. The motor would need to a rewind and reset the amounts quoted by our clockmakers for a rewind is £2,500 + vat or £1850 +vat for full replacement. Currently David is looking into getting other quotes for this work to be done by other Church clockmakers. Thanks again go to him for keeping the clock going and been the right time for what proves to still be a very important part of our local community. We also have David to thank for the recent repair to the side of the pulpit steps.

The hazard marked areas of flooring in the toilet and kitchen areas are due to rotting floorboards the work to replace these has been requested and is due to be done shortly. [Now completed]

We have had the Altar Flower stand, and the Paschal candle stand repaired by Graham Wager (a member of Althorpe Church's congregation).

The usual annual checks of Lightening conductor, PAT testing, Fire Alarm and Extinguishers have all been done.

Gavin Amys continued to do the Open Churchyard (the two most modern areas) grass cutting during the year, with favourable comments made on the upkeep. Quotes have been requested for the current year. After correspondence with the Town Council regarding the Closed Churchyard (that nearest the Church) the grass cutting improved and work began to tidy the growth around the boundary walls.

This concludes the maintenance part of my report. From this you will all see it has been a very busy year regarding the expense and amount of work been done. Which leads onto the next message I wish to pass on again this and

every year. That without both generous financial and voluntary help the Church would suffer greatly. So, a big thank you to all the those concerned who have helped with the day to day running of the Church, with all the concerts, events and coffee mornings, the decoration and flower arranging weekly and seasonal, to those who clean the Church. Another person who requires a special mention is Dave Birks for the support he gives to Penny and for the regular sweeping and blowing of leaves, etc., from the paths before anyone arrives at Church. The list continues, please forgive me if I have missed anyone. This year we have gratefully received very good financial help from the artwork of Anne Broster's cards, Gail Lockey's cards and carved crosses and Karen Wilson's poetry books.

One of the big parts of our Church fund raising is from the importance of the Heritage which we have within our Church. For our Church to continue to be open to welcome the visitors we receive every year, we need to grow our group of volunteers. Stewards are required for the afternoon opening sessions or for when the tour groups are booked in to visit and have talks. We were lucky last year to be able to open most afternoons within the April to October period and to accommodate the times for other visitors. I want to thank Melvyn Rose and Jim Oliver for giving the talks and to all the stewards last year. Please help if you can for what is an interesting and rewarding job it is really surprising the reasons and the various places that people come from to visit Epworth.

There are two other people I want to thank for their hard work again this year. The first is Penny Birks for all her hard UNSEEN and time-consuming work for the Church. Finally, but most importantly of course Revd. Paul Wilson for his work which has made us all want to continue to support and be a part of God's wider Church community.

Finally, there are no additions to the Church Terrier this year.

All were in favour of accepting this Report Proposed Anne Broster Seconded David Higginson

7 Treasurer's Report for APCM 2025

The financial accounts for 2024 have been independently checked by Rod Stormes (Belton) dated 12th March 2025.

The accounts had been presented to the PCC meeting held on 19th March 2025 and were accepted.

Income

Cash collections have increased: Planned Giving has increased also: Donations of £2500 (Gift Aided) has been received towards the cost of the new water supply.

There have been several events held this year which has seen an increase of £3,000 raised on last year. Mainly due to coffee mornings, Spring Fayre and the Xmas Fayre. The Christmas Fayre was held in Church in 2024 which was remarkably successful in both income and involvement with the community. Fees relate to Weddings and Funerals.

Total Income 2024: £67647: 2023: £61327.

Expenditure

Covenanted Giving £30,000 was paid in full. Utilities: Gas, Electric, Water payments slightly down due to a cheaper tariff being obtained for the Electricity.

Maintenance: This covers the following: Roof Alarm, Organ, Clock, Lighting, Heating repairs and boiler maintenance, Fire Extinguishers, Roof repairs due to a leak spotted when the gutters were cleaned, Grass cutting and Insurance.

Sundries: A new water supply was fitted costing £7434 payable by standing order over 12 months. Altar items include Wine, candles, wafers.

Donations include Air Ambulance, Christian Aid, Children's Society.

At the end of last year an Energy survey was done on behalf of the Diocese and it was found that we had been incorrectly charged for Climate Change Levy which resulted in an overpayment of £3500 to Crown Gas. This has been rectified and the bills amended accordingly.

Total Expenditure 2024: £63344 2023: £59575

All agreed to accept this Report Proposed Melvyn Rose Seconded Pete Knight

Total Expenditure 2024: £63344: 2023: £59576.

Isle of Axholme Deanery Synod Annual Report 2024

Rural Dean: Revd. Paul Wilson
Deanery Lay Chair: Rod Stormes
Deanery Secretary: Vacant (Interim Minute Secretary: Mrs Sylvia Stormes)

Overview

The Isle of Axholme Deanery Synod met three times in 2024, addressing key issues related to mission, ministry, finance, and structural changes within the deanery and diocese. The meetings facilitated discussions on the future of clergy staffing, safeguarding, church growth, and the proposed deanery restructuring.

Key Highlights Ministry & Mission Updates

- Children, Youth & Families Enabler: The bid for a part-time (10 hours per week) post was discussed throughout the year. While progress was slow, a potential candidate expressed interest.
- Additional 0.5 Stipendiary Post: Following discussions with the Diocese, it was confirmed that Isle LMP's current covenant giving allows for 2.3 stipendiary posts. The Deanery aims to increase this to 2.5, and to continue the process for realising a 0.5 stipendiary post with oversight of Discipleship, Vocations and Growth across the Isle churches.
- Church Schools: Several Foundation Governor vacancies were filled, particularly within the Belton-Wroot Federation and Trentside Federation, which is merging with Infinity Academy.
- Deanery Training: A successful lay worship training course, led by Revd Hugh Jones, was well received. However, further training for ALM and Reader ministry remains a priority.

Safeguarding & Compliance

- A key presentation from the Diocesan Safeguarding Team outlined crucial safeguarding responsibilities, including:
- Ensuring visible safeguarding posters in churches.
- Proper reporting of concerns.
- Using the safeguarding dashboard for compliance.
- Addressing potential risks of financial abuse, particularly among the elderly.

Finance & Governance

- Deanery Synod funds remained stable at £62.45.
- Discussions continued on the possibility of creating a Deanery Mission Fund from Deanery Service collections.
- A casual vacancy for a Diocesan Synod representative remained unfilled.

- Ongoing need for a permanent Deanery Synod Secretary, with no volunteers stepping forward during 2024.

Structural Changes & Future Planning

- Proposed Deanery Merger: The Diocese is consulting on merging the Isle of Axholme, Manlake, and Yarborough Deaneries into one North Lincolnshire Deanery. Concerns raised include:
- Increased clergy workload.
- Larger meetings potentially reducing engagement.
- Travel challenges for members attending meetings.
- Possible introduction of a ‘Partnership Dean & Assistant Archdeacon's’ role across the larger single deanery and the workload for that individual alongside parochial responsibilities.
- Consultation ongoing, with the Bishop seeking feedback from parishes.

Good News Stories

- Despite challenges, God’s work is evident across the Deanery:
- Food Share Project expanded to include baby equipment and furniture storage.
- Haxey Choir has grown in numbers.
- Time to Pray Meetings at Belton have been well received.
- Sunday at All Saints Early Service has seen increased attendance.
- Churches such as Crowle and Althorpe secured funding for maintenance and upgrades.

Looking Ahead

- Recruitment: A continued focus on filling key vacancies, including the 0.5 stipendiary post and Deanery Secretary role.
- Deanery Restructure: Engaging with the Diocese to ensure local concerns are considered in the proposed deanery amalgamation.
- Mission & Growth: Strengthening lay training, developing youth ministry, and ensuring financial sustainability for clergy posts.

Conclusion

The Isle of Axholme Deanery continues to navigate significant change while maintaining its mission and ministry. With ongoing discussions on staffing, governance, and restructuring, the coming year will be pivotal in shaping the future of the Deanery’s ministry and outreach.

We give thanks for God's guidance and pray for wisdom in the year ahead.

The Report was accepted Proposed Sue Storey Seconded David Higginson

Safeguarding Report for 2024 for APCM 2025

Safeguarding Review

We encourage vigilance and transparency to help create a culture that encourages

Safeguarding concerns or incidents to be raised and reported to the Parish Safeguarding Officer. we aim to provide support to safeguard victims.

We have adopted the Safer Church Policy which is displayed on the noticeboard in the South Porch.

We can report that there have been no incidents during 2024 and since the last PCC meeting in March 2025.

DBS

We continue to monitor DBS certificates that are due for renewal every 3 years to ensure applicable volunteers have a valid DBS clearance.

Training

All current PCC members have undertaken the appropriate training required. Any recently elected members to the PCC will be required to do the training also,

Volunteers

All new and existing volunteers engaged in church activities involving children, young people and the elderly will be required to do appropriate safeguarding training. Also

new and existing volunteers need to undertake the Basic Awareness training module. This will be arranged by the PSO.

Every PCC meeting has a standing agenda item on Safeguarding which enables regular discussion when needed on any relevant issues.

Penny Birks Parish Safeguarding Officer April 2025 It was agreed to adopt this Report Proposed Gail Lockey Seconded Sharon Usztan

10 Appointment of Independent Examiner

Rod Stormes Proposed Melvyn Rose Seconded Anne Broster

11 First Meeting of new PCC will follow this Meeting

12 Archdeacon's Visitation Service for Induction of Churchwardens Date to be arranged

13 AOB – None **14 Rector's Address 2025**

Meeting ended with saying the Grace together

7.37 pm

Signed …….. Date……

Churchwardens Report 2025

It has been a privilege to serve as your Churchwarden and Focal Minister over the past year. Thank you for your trust and support.

Our regular pattern of services which now includes Morning Prayer on the first Sunday of the month has continued with encouraging attendance at Sunday worship and special services. I am extremely grateful for the dedication of our clergy, organist Karl, the choir and all who contribute to the beauty and reverence of our worship. We have seen growth in our fellowship through events, such as, coffee mornings, which have strengthened relationships with the church family, outreach to the local community, food bank support, school visits, group visits, charity events which include Karen's afternoon teas and Marathons, continues to be an important part of our mission. We had another successful Open Gardens event which brought in many people from other towns and villages.

Group visits, especially the ones from the USA, are increasing each year. In 2025 we had a large group visit the Church (10 coaches in one day from a

cruise ship in Liverpool). Our team of guides and volunteers are kept busy with these visits, and each group is so appreciative that we have opened the church for them. Some have visited before and are amazed at the changes we have made.

Lastly, I want to thank the PCC members, sidespersons, readers, the new team of vergers, bell ringers, flower arrangers, cleaners, volunteers to enable the church to be open for visitors.

Thank you to Rev Paul for guiding us, praying for us, and giving us your love and support.

Fabric and Maintenance

The past year has seen ongoing commitment to the upkeep of the church fabric. Routine inspections have been carried out ensuring the building remains safe, watertight, and welcoming for all members of the congregation and visitors alike.

Various repairs and maintenance have been carried out such as: -

Heating

The church heating system has had a few repairs, when necessary, adjustments were made to improve efficiency and comfort especially during the colder months. The annual service was undertaken and a certificate issued. Thank you to Peter Broster for looking after the heating for us. I know Peter has shown one or two how to set up the heating each week, but it would be helpful if there is anyone else who could assist him.

Lighting

For several years we have had problems with the lights in the chancel and nave and last year we were advised by Cockin Electrical that the ones we use were no longer available and that new fittings with LED bulbs would be required. Permission was eventually granted under the Archdeacon's certificate and the work was completed.

Church Clock

As reported before we have been having problems with the clock and we approached Time Assured for them to check it out. The result was that we needed a new motor and they provided a quote. We had not been happy with this company and David Cooper who has spent a lot of time trying to fix the clock in order to save money approached The Cumbria Clock Co, who visited the church to look at the problem of one time hour didn't strike and then

latterly the quarters were not striking. Another quote was provided by The Cumbria Clock Co which was cheaper than Time Assured. Both quotes were discussed at PCC meetings, and it was decided to go with the second quote and ask them to provide a service contract also. Our contract with Time Assured has been cancelled. The two motors have been removed for testing and repair and we await their report. Thank you to David for the time he has taken consulting with the two companies and the hours he has put in trying to sort it all out.

Handrail

The handrail on the right-hand side of the chancel steps has become a health and safety issue. Lee Clay of Clay Fabrications, Misterton, who installed the handrails originally, was contacted and he pointed out that due to the underfloor heating pipes it would not be possible to drill deeper into the stone. A drawing and photograph of a suggestion to secure the rail to the priest's desk was sent to the Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC) as a faculty would be required. This was turned down by the DAC as being "a crude fixture" and we asked Lee for a further suggestion and a further two drawings have now been sent. The DAC preferred the second of the two and we have been invited to apply for a faculty and await the normal process.

Organ

Following the routine tuning of the organ it was pointed out that several repairs, some of which we were aware of, were required including areas of treated woodworm, the pedal box and some of the pedals and one or two of the stops.
The quote of £5124 was given and fund raising began. A big thank you goes to the generosity of many people (who are too many to name in this report, but you know who you are), and the funds were raised to enable the work to commence in January/February 2026. We will then have an organ that is in good working order for several years.

There have been other repairs and maintenance such as:-

Dishwasher leak, lightning conductor, and portable appliance testing.

Flooring in the kitchen and toilet area has been repaired and painted over. The railings at the top of the avenue have been power washed and painted. Thank you to Peter Knight for both items.

Thank you to David Cooper for repairing the pulpit steps which were beginning to crumble.

Gavin Amys continues to do a very thorough job in grass cutting and many compliments are received on the neatness and tidiness of the Burial Ground. The closed churchyard is maintained by the Town Council who only cut the grass. The maintenance of the paths, avenue, weeding, and leaf gathering is the responsibility of the Church.

Looking ahead there will be further maintenance projects including investigating the crumbling masonry in several areas. Our next Quinquennial report will be due either late 2027 or early 2028.

If anyone notices any issues or wishes to be involved in the work of the church, please do not hesitate to get in touch. Together we can continue to preserve our church for future generations.

The Terrier

This is a legally required record of all land and movable items belonging to the church.
There were no additions or deletions in 2025.

Penny Birks, Churchwarden & Focal Minister

Treasurer's Report for 2025 for APCM 2026

I am pleased to present the financial report for 2025. The accounts have been independently examined and checked by Rod Stormes on the 28th February 2026.

Income

This was made up as follows:

Planned Giving and donations – £23119.

Fundraising events - £12808 – notably from Coffee Mornings, Christmas Fayre receipts from concerts.

Feed in tariff – solar panels on roof – £3239 – (2024 & 2025)

Cash Collections – There has been a significant increase in these especially on a Sunday, baptisms and one or two funerals. This has helped boost the claim for Gift Aid from HMRC of £8060 compared to £6552 in 2024.

Expenditure

Total expenditure 2025 £69718 (2024 - £63344) The

main costs were:

Covenanted Giving £30000 (this will increase to £32160 in 2026)

Utilities: Gas, Electric and Water. Due to an energy audit it was noticed that Crown Gas were charging a climate change levy in error resulting in a refund of approx. £3000.

Maintenance

This includes routine maintenance on the roof alarm, clock, organ, grass cutting, heating repairs and service, lightning conductor.
In 2025 the lighting in the chancel and nave was replaced with LED lights which meant a new fitting and a faculty was applied for and granted under the Archdeacon's certificate.

Fees: wedding fees (diocese) Organist and Vergers.

Bank Charges

We are no longer charged the £5 monthly fee but are charged for cash paid in, no of credits and cheques.

The closing balance at the end of the year was £27431.

Other funds held with the CCLA Management Fund

PCC Account £33170 and Restoration A/C £9159.

Independent Examiner's Certificate
for the PCC Accounts

Report to the trustees of: ST ANDREWS, EPWORTH **Parochial Church Council**

On accounts for the year 31 DECEMBER 2025 ended: Charity Number N/A

Set out on pages AS PER ACCOUNT SHEETS, BANK STATEMENTS PLUS SUPPORTING PAPERWORK

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 (the Charities Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act,
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities 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 general 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 from the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently 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.

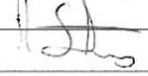
Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in, any material respect.

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records

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

** Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.*

Signed:  **Date:** 28 February 2026

Name: Rodney STORMES

Relevant professional qualification(s) or body (if any): ACIB, Cert ICM

Address: 1 Meadowbank
Belton,
Doncaster DN9 1NW

St Andrew's PCC - Epworth

Receipts and Payments - year ended 31st December 2025

PAYMENTS

Covenanted Giving			30000
Clergy Expenses			1008
Organist	800		
Donated to Orgar	800		1600
Fees re Funerals, Weddings			1182
Utilities			5954
Maintenance			10701
Insurance			4689
Donations			2980
Wine, Wafers, Candles			284
Sundries			
Sunday Sheets		273	
Copyright Licence		254	
Xmas Cards ECT		151	
Yorks Water		1859	
Restorations Acc Tfrs		8350	
Bank Charges		209	
Church Repair Society		30	
Sundry items		88	
Renewal SIM Card		106	
			11320
TOTAL			**69718**

Receipts/Payments	9817
Balance 1st January 2025	17614
Balance 31st December 2	27431

St Andrew's PCC - Epworth

Receipts and Payments Account - Year Ended 31st December 2025

RECEIPTS

Planned Giving		
By S/O	14830	
By Envelope	2749	17579
Collections		7713
Donations		5540
Fees		7055
Rents		1521
WB/Wroot		600
Investment Income		60
Events		12808
Sundries		
Legacy	6000	
Feed in tariff	3239	
HMRC	8060	
Epworth Charities	89	
Sum Up Donations	708	
Card Sales/Shop	413	
Donations re Organ	2250	
Transfer MMA	5900	26659
Total		**79535**

ST ANDREW'S RESTORATION APPEAL
YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2025

Accounts held at HSBC

UNRESTRICTED FUNDS		RESTRICTED FUNDS	
LEGACY RECEIVED	6000	BELLS	1640
		ORGAN	3720
	6000		5360

BALANCE 1ST January 2025	574
Add	6000
Add	5360
BALANCE 31ST December 2025	11934

FUNDS HELD WITH Church of England Deposit Fund

BALANCE 31ST DECEMBER 2025	9159.2

ST ANDREW'S PCC - EPWORTH

MONEY MANAGER ACCOUNT - 31ST DECEMBER 2 2025

UNRESTRICTED FUNDS

Receipts	6770
Interest	27
Not Gift aided	240
Total	7037
Payments	
Transfer to Charitable Acc	5900
Total	5900
Receipts/Payments	1137
Balance 1st January 2025	Nil
Balance 31st December 2025	1137

Funds held with CCLA Investment Management

1400.26 shares @ £22.1983	31083.39
94 shares @ £22.1983	2086.64
Total	33170.03

The Deanery Synod met three times during 2025 (February, May and October), continuing to focus on mission, lay ministry development, safeguarding, and future sustainability of rural churches.

Leadership and Organisation

- Liz Jenman was appointed as Deanery Lay Secretary.
- The Isle of Axholme Deanery will remain as a separate deanery while continuing within the North Lincolnshire Mission Partnership.
- Revd Julie Miles was appointed as Assistant Curate (Deanery Enabler) working across the deanery, supporting lay ministry, discipleship, and parish development.

Mission and Ministry

- Work continues on a bid for a Deanery Partnership Children's, Youth and Families Enabler.
- Lay training and ministry development have begun, including the *To Love and Serve the Lord* course with good participation.
- New initiatives are emerging across parishes, including family worship, prayer gatherings, discipleship resources, and increased engagement with schools.
- A presentation on rural mission encouraged creative approaches such as community events, open churches, and new outreach activities.

Safeguarding

- Safeguarding was emphasised as a shared responsibility for all churches.
- Most parish groups are now up to date with training and compliance.

Finance

- Deanery Synod funds remain modest (£62.45).
- PCCs agreed to support the funding uplift for the additional 0.5 clergy post across the deanery.

Encouraging Signs

- Growth in attendance in some churches, including younger adults and families.
- Successful community initiatives such as family services, prayer gatherings, pilgrimage walks, and outreach projects.
- Recognition of local community service, including the Isle of Axholme Foodshare project.
- Increased collaboration and shared learning across parishes.

Future Priorities

- Lay ministry development and discipleship.
- Parish sustainability and rural ministry models.
- Environmental mission and Net Zero 2030.
- Continued work with children, youth and families.

Overall, the Deanery continues to work together in strengthening ministry, encouraging lay leadership, and exploring new opportunities for mission in rural communities.

Safeguarding Report for 2025 for APCM 2026

Policies and Practice

The care and protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults involved in Church activities is the responsibility of the whole Church.

St Andrew's continues to operate under the Safeguarding policy "Promoting a safer Church" as set out by the Church of England. This is reviewed annually and a copy can be found on the noticeboard in the south porch.

Safeguarding is a standard item on the agenda at every Parochial Church Council (PCC) meeting. We continue to use the national safeguarding tool called the Dashboard which automatically generates an action plan to assist the Parish Safeguarding Officer and the PCC in maintaining and improving safeguarding practices. **Safer recruitment and Training**

All current PCC members have undertaken the training required for their role and any recently elected members will be required to do so. As the PSO I have also undertaken all the training required including leadership training. I continue to monitor any DBS checks that are due for renewal which is every 3 years.

Safeguarding concerns and incidents

There have been no safeguarding concerns raised during 2025. However, we need to maintain a culture of care, vigilance, and accountability, to ensure the protection and well-being of everyone in our communities.

Report for APCM's 2026 Assistant Curate (Deanery Enabler)

It's now over a year since I joined everyone on the Isle of Axholme as a part time Assistant Curate (Deanery Enabler).
Part of my role is to support Paul and Mark with worship and occasional offices. Following on from a wonderful service of welcome at St. Nicholas Church Haxey I spent the first couple of months shadowing Paul and Mark across all the churches on the Isle getting to meet you all and becoming familiar with the different ways you worship. The first time I presided at the Eucharist was on Easter Day at St. Oswald's, Althorpe. Since then I have presided regularly at each of our churches and I have taken a number of baptisms.

The other part of my role is to support our parishes in mission, growing disciples and helping people to discern their own vocation and what God might be calling them to do. Much of the work I have begun has been in response to the needs identified by our parishes and I have started to do this is a variety of ways.

Thy Kingdom Come – a time of prayer between Ascension and Pentecost. In 2025 prayer resources were shared with all our churches. St. Oswald's Crowle had an open church and quiet afternoon followed by Celtic Evening Prayer. *It would be good if all our churches in the Deanery could be involved with this time of prayer in a practical way in 2026 (14th -24th May).*

To Love and Serve the Lord

To Love and Serve the Lord is a 16 session course exploring the Christian faith from an Anglican perspective and can be part of discernment process trying to discover what God might be calling you to do. It is especially for those interested in becoming Authorised Lay Ministers (ALM) and the foundation unit is followed by one of two additional units (7 sessions each) on leading public worship or pastoral care to support becoming an ALM.

This year 12 people, 11 from the Isle of Axholme and 1 from Manlake Deanery, have undertaken the foundation unit. They have enjoyed the learning and the fellowship and they have gained a lot from it. The programme is one of development and discernment as to what God might be calling them to do. The foundation module will be completed in early May with 3 people, who have already undertaken the worship module, becoming ALMs.

Those who have discerned for a ministry of public worship or pastoral care, will need to complete one of the additional modules. It is anticipated that one of these additional modules will be offered in Summer 2026.
It is anticipated that the foundation module for to Love and Serve the Lord will be offered again in the Autumn of 2026.

Unfortunately because of my accident the following ventures were put on hold but the groundwork has been done and it is hoped that as I return to work we will pick these up as parishes and as a deanery in 2026.

Seeking God: Seeking growth.

A programme about intentionally aiming to grow numbers, deepen discipleship and engage more with our communities.

3 stages –

1. examine who we are, what we already do and what resources/talents we already have
2. explore what God might be calling us to do
3. Put a plan into place to achieve this.

A relaunch of this programme accompanied by a package of resources will be given to each parish in the coming weeks to enable them to participate in this.

50 idea's for mission

Looking at producing a leaflet of 50 ideas for mission in the Deanery. To be available as we reach stage 2 of Seeking God: Seeking Growth.

Discipleship programmes I have been looking into discipleship programmes such as Emmaus. Alpha, Start. There will be a meeting before the summer for parishes who might be interested in participating in or offering one of these programmes.

Working with schools – We already have connections with our church schools in the deanery. I have met with some of the primary schools that we don't already have a connection with. I hope to continue to develop this is 2026. **Growing Faith** is a Church of England initiative looking at the ways we can link school, church and homes. I will explore how we might be able to do this further as parishes.

If you would like to be involved in any of the above, please look out for further details and dates of meetings over the coming weeks or get in touch if you would like more information.

Finally, can I thank you for your support this year and especially for your love and prayers over the past few months as I have recovered from my fall. I cannot tell you how much it has meant to me. I'm excited about being back with you all and working together for God's kingdom.

Rev Julie Miles julie.miles@lincoln.anglican.org 07895384254

The Epworth & Belton Group of Churches Annual Parochial Church Meetings 2026 Rector's Address

Introduction

As we gather for our Annual Parochial Church Meetings this year, it is good to pause for a moment to reflect with gratitude on the year that has passed and to look ahead with hope to the year before us. Our churches across the Epworth and Belton Group continue to stand at the heart of their communities as places of prayer, welcome, and Christian witness.

Over the past year I have been reminded again and again that the strength of the Church does not lie simply in its buildings or its structures, but in its people. The life of our churches is sustained by the generosity, faithfulness, and quiet commitment of so many individuals who give their time and energy in ways that often go unseen.

I therefore want to begin, as always, by offering sincere thanks.

Thank you to our Churchwardens, Treasurers, PCC Secretaries, Safeguarding Officers and PCC members across all six of our churches. These roles carry significant responsibility and require careful attention to governance, safeguarding, and the practical aspects of church life. Your work ensures that our churches remain well-ordered, safe, and able to continue their ministry within our communities.

My thanks also go to those who support the life of worship week by week: those who lead services, do the Bible readings, lead prayers, play the organ or provide music, operate screens or sound systems, arrange flowers, prepare the church buildings, organise rotas, serve refreshments, welcome people at the door, and assist with baptisms, weddings, and funerals. Much of this work happens quietly behind the scenes, yet it is essential to the life and witness of the Church.

I also want to acknowledge with particular gratitude several clergy colleagues whose ministry has supported the life of our churches.

We remain deeply grateful for the faithful ministry of the Revd Canon Derek Brown, who has served regularly at St Mary's West Butterwick and offered valued pastoral support across the group. Derek will soon be moving away

and has now stepped down from leading services with us. His ministry, wisdom, and pastoral care have been a great blessing, particularly to the congregation at West Butterwick, and we thank him sincerely for all he has given over the years. We send him with our prayers and every good wish for the future.

I would also like to express appreciation for the ongoing support of the Revd Jeremy Green, who continues to assist us by providing cover when I am on leave. Jeremy's willingness to help ensures that the rhythm of worship and pastoral care across our parishes can continue smoothly, and we are very thankful for his valued ministry among us.

Alongside this, we give thanks for the ministry of our clergy colleague the Revd Julie Miles, who continues to encourage growth in faith, discipleship, and the nurturing of vocations across the Isle churches. Julie's work is helping parishes think carefully about how we support people in their Christian journey and how we recognise and encourage the gifts that God places within our congregations. As many of you will know, this work has been paused for a short time while Julie recovers from a broken hip. We continue to hold her in our prayers and look forward to welcoming her back when she is able to resume her ministry.

And of course, thank you to those who have completed their time in particular roles this year and to those who are willing to step forward and serve in the coming year. The willingness of people to offer their gifts is one of the great strengths of parish life.

Life Across Our Churches

The past year has been one of steady and faithful ministry across the Epworth and Belton Group. Each of our churches has its own identity and history, yet together we form one Christian community across this part of the Isle of Axholme.

The words of *1 Corinthians 12:12* remind us:

"For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ."

Each church contributes something distinctive to the life of the whole. When we support one another, share resources, and work together in mission, we reflect more fully the unity that St Paul speaks about.

Throughout the past year we have seen this cooperation expressed in many ways: through shared services, mutual support between congregations, and the simple encouragement that comes from knowing we are not working alone.

Church Buildings

Our church buildings remain both a blessing and a responsibility. They are places where generations have gathered for worship, prayer, and celebration, and they continue to serve as visible signs of Christian presence within our villages.

At the same time, maintaining historic buildings brings ongoing challenges. Across the group there has been significant work carried out or planned to ensure that our churches remain safe, well maintained, and fit for worship.

I am grateful to our churchwardens and PCCs for the considerable time and effort they devote to overseeing maintenance, organising repairs, applying for grants, and planning for the future care of these buildings. Their commitment ensures that these sacred spaces remain open and welcoming for generations to come.

I am also thankful for the ongoing support of the Friends of St Mary's Church in West Butterwick, for their fundraising events and for being willing to support financially the crucial maintenance and repair work of the church building.

Occasional Offices: Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals

One of the greatest privileges of parish ministry is sharing with people at some of the most significant moments of their lives.

Through baptisms we welcome new life into the family of the Church. Through weddings we celebrate love and commitment. Through funerals we walk with families through grief while proclaiming the hope we have in Christ.

These moments often bring people into church who may not attend regularly, yet they remind us that the Church still holds an important place in the life of our communities. They offer opportunities for pastoral care, conversation, and sharing something of the hope and comfort that the Gospel brings.

Schools and Community Connections

Our relationships with our local schools remain a very encouraging part of our ministry. Services in church, visits to schools, and acts of collective worship in school help to nurture those connections and ensure that the Christian story continues to be shared with younger generations. Even though not necessarily in church on Sundays, our young people, and their parents and grandparents, are hearing the good news of the Gospel.

I remain grateful to school leaders, staff, and governors who support this partnership, and to those within our congregations who help with initiatives such as school worship, Open the Book and other activities that strengthen these links.

Ministry within residential care settings, especially Althorpe Care Home, also continues to be an important part of our shared life, reminding us that the Church's pastoral care extends to every stage of life.

The Wider Church

Across the Church of England and within the Diocese of Lincoln we continue to live through a period of change and reflection. Conversations about how parish ministry will be sustained in the future are being had in many places.

While change can sometimes feel uncertain and unsettling, it also invites us to think creatively about how we live out the mission of the Church in today's context. What remains constant is our calling to worship God, serve our neighbours, and proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ here in our corner of the diocese and the world.

This year the Diocese welcomed a new Archdeacon of Stow & Lyndsey, The Ven Eleanor Robertshaw and a new Bishop of Grimsby, the Rt Revd Jean Burgess, and we look forward to welcoming them to the Isle of Axholme Deanery in due course.

Looking Ahead to 2026-2027

As we look forward to the year ahead, my hope is that our churches continue to grow in three simple but important ways.

First, that we remain places of genuine welcome. Many people carry burdens or uncertainties, and the Church should always be somewhere they feel able to enter and find kindness, peace, and acceptance.

Second, that we continue to nurture faith and discipleship. Encouraging one another in prayer, learning, and service is central to our life as Christians.

Third, that we continue to support one another across our group of parishes. Collaboration will remain an important part of how we sustain ministry in the years ahead.

Above all, our hope rests not in our own efforts but in God's faithfulness.

The words of *Lamentations 3:22–23* remind us:

"The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness."

Each new day and each new year begins with that promise.

Conclusion

It continues to be a great privilege to serve as your Rector and to share in the life of these churches and communities. Ministry is never something carried by one person alone; it is something we share together as the Body of Christ.

I remain deeply grateful for your support, your encouragement, and your prayers.

As we move forward into another year of worship, service, and fellowship, my prayer is that we will continue to trust in God's guidance and remain faithful to the calling placed before us.

Thank you for all that you do in the life of our churches and for the many ways you serve God and your communities.

Revd Paul

The Revd Canon Paul D. Wilson
Rector of the Epworth Group of Churches
Priest-in-Charge of the Belton Group of Churches
Assistant Curate of the Crowle Group of Churches & Haxey Plurality Rural Dean of the Isle of Axholme