

St Michael & All Angels  
Houghton-le-Spring

# ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING 2023

Sunday 26th March  
11.15 am





**St Michael & All Angels Parish Church, Houghton-le-Spring**  
**Meeting of Parishioners and Annual Parochial Church Meeting**  
**Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> March 2023**

**AGENDA**

**MEETING OF PARISHIONERS:**

1. **Prayers**
2. **Apologies** for Absence
3. **Minutes** of meeting held on Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> May 2022
4. **Election** of Church Wardens

**ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING:**

1. **Minutes** of Meeting held on Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> May 2022 and matters arising.
2. **Notification** of any other items of business
3. **Electoral Roll Report and Parish Statistics**
4. **Rector's Report**
5. **Presentation of Annual Report for 2023**
  - Annual Accounts, Treasurer's Reports, Independent Examiner's Report
  - Church Wardens' Reports and Fabric Reports
  - Deanery Synod Report
  - PCC Secretary's Report
  - Safeguarding Report
  - Reports from the Church Affiliated Organisations
6. **Elections** Assistant Church Wardens; Parochial Church Council Members; Deanery Synod Members
7. **Appointments** Electoral Roll Officer; Gift Aid Officer; Sidespersons; Independent Examiner of Church Accounts; PCC Representation for Readers and Pastoral Assistants
8. **'Looking forward'** by the Rector
9. **Any other business**

*There will be an initial meeting of the PCC immediately after the APCM, to appoint Church Officers (Secretary, Treasurer, Vice Chair, Safeguarding Officer) and agree date of next PCC.*

## **Minutes of the 98th Annual Meeting of Parishioners**

### **ST. MICHAEL & ALL ANGELS PARISH CHURCH, HOUGHTON-LE-SPRING**

**Sunday 15th May 2022**

In attendance

Priest-in-Charge Reverend John Barron, Curate John D'Silva and Parishioners, either physically present in Church or present virtually on Zoom/dial-in.

1. The Rector welcomed everyone – those in Church, those on Zoom - to the meeting. He commented that the Annual Report had been made available on-line, and that some hard copies were available in Church. Additional hard copies could be obtained from the Parish Administrator.
2. The Rector opened the meeting in prayer.
3. Apologies for absence were received from Reverend Margaret Lee, Jean Henderson, Thelma Steele, George Peebles and Angela Slater.
4. The Minutes of the meeting held on Sunday 16th May 2021, having been circulated, were taken as read. They were confirmed and signed.
5. **Election of Church Wardens**

The Rector gave thanks to the Church Wardens and the Standing Committee for their work over the past year.

The Rector had received two nominations for the office of Church Warden: Rita Turnbull and Alastair Bradley. Both Rita and Alastair were elected unanimously to serve as Church Wardens until the 2023 APCM. They were thanked and congratulated.

**This concluded the meeting of Parishioners**

## Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2022

23 parishioners attended. Those present had had access to a copy of the 2022 Annual Report (covering 2021-22), either on-line or in hard copy. The Rector guided them through the Report as follows.

1. **The Minutes** of the previous APCM, held on 16<sup>th</sup> May 2021, having been circulated, were taken as read. They were unanimously accepted and were signed as a true record. There were no matters arising.
2. **Other items of business** – the Bishop’s Visitation for the swearing in of our Church Wardens will take place on 26<sup>th</sup> June 2022.
3. **Electoral Roll and Parish Statistics**
  - a) **Electoral Roll** – the current number on the Electoral Roll is 123. 20 people had joined the Electoral Roll since last year, but 14 have left or, sadly, are deceased. Typically, the Electoral Roll grows as the year progresses.
  - b) **Parish Statistics** – the Rector highlighted some of the key statistics. There has been a small increase (from 124 to 132) in the size of our worshipping community. Parish statistics continue to reflect the impact of the pandemic. Alongside those who worship in Church, others access our on-line worship, even as Covid restrictions have been lifted.

### 4. Rector’s Report

The Rector delivered his Report, found on pages 7-11 of the 2022 Annual Report. There were no questions. The Report was accepted unanimously.

### 5. Presentation of Annual Report for 2021

#### a) Annual Accounts, Treasurer’s Reports, Independent Examiner’s Reports

- The Rector observed that these important reports are the statutory element of the Annual Report.
- The papers were presented by Treasurer SB. There were no questions for the Treasurer.
- The Accounts were accepted unanimously, as were the Treasurer’s reports and the Independent Examiner’s report (proposed MF, seconded RT).

The Rector then referred the meeting to the following reports:

#### b) Church Wardens’ Reports and Fabric Report

#### c) Deanery Synod report

#### d) PCC Secretary’s report

#### e) Safeguarding Report

There were no questions regarding the above reports.

#### f) Reports from Church Affiliated organisations

The Rector commented that these reports paint a picture of what happens in the Church community week by week. He thanked those who work so hard to enable the many activities and meetings to flourish.

The Meeting voted to accept Reports a) – f) and the Annual Report in its entirety (proposed Susan Wilde, seconded Sheila Foster).

## 6. Appointments and Elections

- a) In the past, there had been a representative for APA's (Authorised Pastoral Assistants) and Readers, traditionally an Ordained Minister. ?? had expressed willingness to fulfil this role with effect from the 2022 APCM and was duly appointed (proposed John Wilde, seconded Susan Wilde).
- b) There had been one nomination for the role of Assistant Church Warden: Thelma Steele. Thelma was duly elected Assistant Church Warden.
- c) There were four vacancies for the PCC. Four nominations had been received. Kathleen Close was elected for one year (2022-3); Lynne Scott, Simon Hardy and Sue Elsey were elected for three years (2022-25).
- d) Appointments
  - (1) Electoral Roll Officer – Rita Turnbull
  - (2) Gift Aid Officer – Susan Bradley
  - (3) Ministry Team Representative – Reverend Margaret Lee
  - (4) Choral and Music Director – George Peebles
  - (5) Independent Examiner – Peter Brown
  - (6) Sidespersons – see list on page 6 of Annual Report, with the addition of Susan Wilde, John Wilde, Bob Wyle, Joan Finlayson.

## 7. 'Looking Forward' by the Rector

'Another challenging year but we have done so much to flourish as a community and I am so incredibly impressed and so thankful to God for the people of the church here.

In the past I've used the picture of a sailing boat to describe the journey we're on – we've set out on a journey seeking to navigate to God's preferred and promised future for us for the church in these times. We're navigating our boat in the way God is giving us energy to move in, just as the wind powers a sailing boat.

There may be times in the year ahead when we will be changing direction. Sometimes a change of direction can be a dramatic change.

There may be changes to ministry here as we navigate taking on a group ministry in the year ahead and that might feel quite challenging to us.

As we seek to encourage growth in our church as we work out how to support our communities facing increasingly challenging times, all of this might involve change for us.

We do so, though, confident that God is with us: has been in our past, is working in our present and will be in the future.

It continues to be a privilege to be spiritual leader of St Michael and All Angels church here in Houghton-le-Spring and I give thanks to God for the people of this place and all we do to seek to forward God's purposes.'

8. **Any Other Business** – none. The meeting closed with the Grace at 12.08 pm

*Immediately after the meeting, there was a brief meeting of the newly elected PCC, at which the following appointments were made:*

*Treasurer – Sue Bradley*

*Safeguarding Officer – Kevin Bond*

*Secretary – Angela Slater*

*[Vice Chair of the PCC – vacant]*

## Parochial Church Council 2022-23

The PCC has the responsibility of co-operating with the incumbent in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical, as well as the maintenance and upkeep of the ancient building. The PCC meets monthly throughout the year and may hold extraordinary meetings as and when they are required.

Members of the PCC are either ex-officio or elected at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) in accordance with the Church Representation Rules.

The Standing Committee of the PCC is the only committee required by law. It has the power to transact business of the PCC between its meetings, subject to any directions given by the PCC. The Standing Committee consists of the Rector, Church Wardens, Assistant Wardens, Treasurer and Secretary.

During the past year, the following served as members of the PCC:

<b>Incumbent</b>	Reverend John Barron
<b>Church Wardens</b>	Rita Turnbull, Alastair Bradley
<b>Treasurer, Gift Aid Officer</b>	Sue Bradley
<b>Secretary</b>	Angela Slater
<b>Safeguarding Officer</b>	Kevin Bond
<b>Readers' Representative</b>	Sue Elsey
<b>Deanery Synod Representatives</b>	David Hann, Dian Scott, Kevin Bond Term of Office 2020-23
<b>Elected members</b>	Kathleen Close – Term of Office 2022-23 Lynne Scott, Dave Fulton, Simon Hardy, Revd Margaret Lee Term of Office 2022-25
	Sheila Foster, David Turnbull Term of Office 2021-24
	Malcolm Foster, Brian Scott, Clare Taylor Term of Office 2020-23
<b>Co-opted members</b>	George Peebles (Director of Music)

For the first months of the past PCC year, Thelma Steele served as Assistant Church Warden, as she had done in previous years, alongside the countless other ways in which she cheerfully and creatively served the community of St Michael and All Angels. Thelma's death in June was a tremendous sadness for us all, and she will be greatly missed.

### Sidespersons

Joan Beattie  
Elaine Harkness  
Dian Scott  
John Wilde

Sheila Gamble  
Jean Henderson  
David Turnbull  
Susan Wilde

Evelyn Garbutt  
Brian Scott  
Rita Turnbull  
Bob Wile



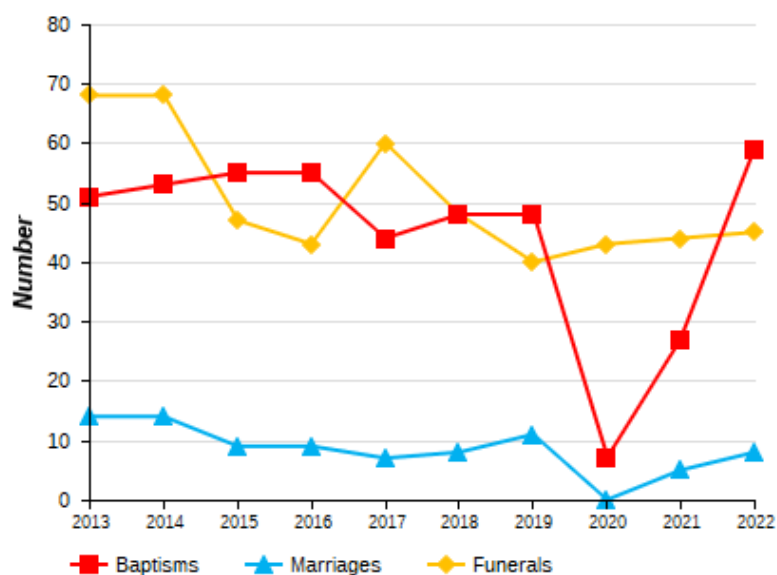
## A Year in Numbers: some facts and figures from our Mission Statistics

The number of parishioners on the Electoral Roll was 125, this is a slight reduction on last year's figure of 131. Our 'Worshipping Community' (those who regularly come to church, at least every 2 months) is currently at 132 people, shown in the table below. We had 14 people join us in the year but also 18 who sadly are no longer worshipping with us. This includes some dearly loved members of our church family who died during the year. This also includes a number of families with children who are no longer part of our worshipping community. Increasing numbers of our worshipping community are part of our 'church at home' who we stay in touch with and visit with home services of worship or who access worship on-line (21 people).

### Worshipping Community

Age	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
0-17	34	40	53	11	8	15	11
18-69	148	167	37	66	59	61	59
70+	87	88	170	66	57	56	58

Reporting of figures for 'Usual Sunday Attendance' (USA) was suspended in 2020 & 21 because of the pandemic. In 2019 on a 'usual' Sunday we had 93 adults and 5 children attending a number of different worship services in church. Immediately after the pandemic on returning to church this figure was just over 20 attending a single service in the church building. In 2021, following a 'season of invitation' this number was over 50. Since then, we have continued a slow upward trend and USA is now 79 across 3 services (74 adults and 5 children). This is still lower than the numbers of people attending before the pandemic – it does not include our 'church at home' people. In addition we have upwards of 20 people attending mid-week services on Tuesday and Thursday.

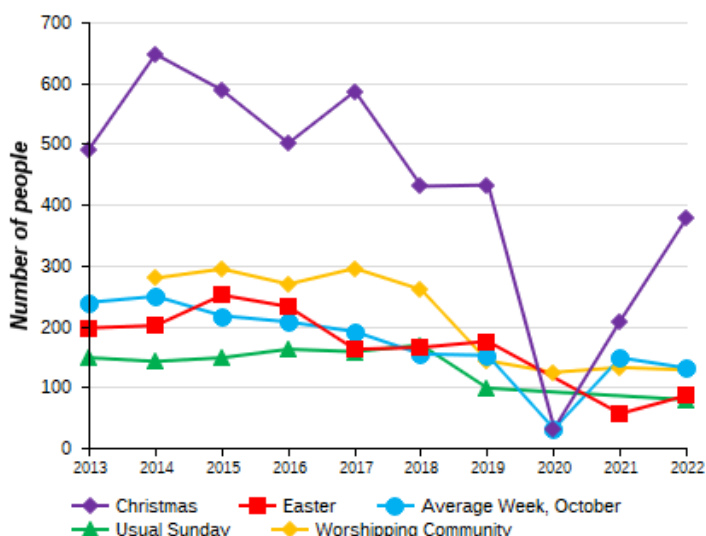


We continue to serve our community through funeral ministry: we conducted 45 funeral services last year (compared with 44 in 2021, 43 in 2020, 40 in 2019).

We have significant numbers of people coming back to us for other 'occasional offices'. Last year there 59 baptisms in our church (27 in 2021, 7 in 2020 and 48 in 2019). This included 17 children in the age range 1-4 and 11 adults. We had 5 adults and 3 children from our church confirmed last year and 3 children admitted to Communion.

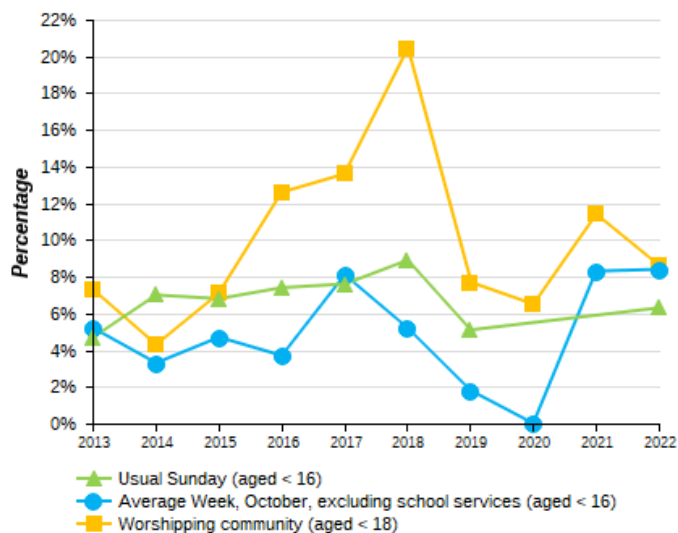
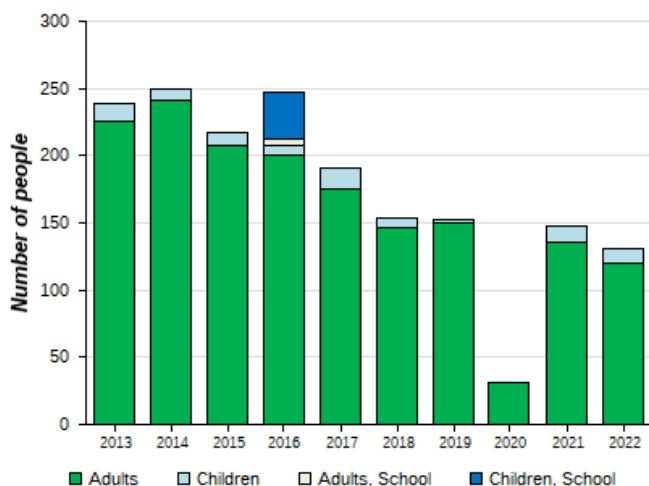
We held 8 weddings & blessings of marriage (we did 5 in 2021, none in 2020 and 11 in 2019).

We had significant numbers of people coming to worship with us for seasonal services in December: 377 people came to services on Christmas Day and Christmas Eve (this compares with 208 in 2021, 30 in 2020 and 432 in 2019). There were 86 people worshipping with us on Easter day last year (compared to 56 in 2021, none in 2020 & 175 in 2019).



Numbers attending regular and season services are down around 15-20% of numbers pre-pandemic. We have had to work hard to keep the reduction to (only) this level.

Our average weekly attendance figures in October was 131. This was down on numbers last year and in 2019 (148 & 152 respectively). This figure is deceptive as we have civic, parade and invitation services that are very dependent on external factors. It does include a legitimate reduction in numbers including some children through our merging our 'Sparks' family service into a combined 'All age Communion'. In addition to the people who worship in our church building, we have upwards of 20 people who are part of our 'church at home' community regularly worshipping on-line or receiving home communion.



Children represent 6% of our USA and 9% of our worshipping community (compared to 5% & 8% respectively in 2019). All three primary schools and the Kepier school visited church for special Services in Advent for the first time in many years: we had 1267 people at these services (compared to 682 in 2021); in addition, we welcomed a further 393 people from the congregation and local community to special services in Advent (compared to 166 in 2021).

## ***The Year in Review – a word from our Rector***

Last year wider society as a whole continued in its journey navigating the 'recovery' phase of the covid pandemic, people in our communities faced the pressures of the cost-of-living crisis. As a nation we celebrated the Queen's Platinum Jubilee and sadly later in the year mourned the death of Her late Majesty commemorating her seventy years of faithful, dedicated service. Our parish church of St Michael and All Angels did much in the year to serve our local community and to enable the worship and prayer of the people of Houghton-le-Spring.

We began the year having returned to a full complement of worship services: in a 'normal' week that is 4-5 services of Holy Communion, 1-2 Services of the Word and 1-2 Baptism services; in addition, we hosted many extra seasonal, civic and special services for the community. At the beginning of the year our congregation size was roughly half of our pre-pandemic numbers. Towards the end of the year numbers at our regular services and seasonal services were roughly 15-20% down on what they were before covid. I actually feel that we should celebrate that we have managed to regain this level of congregation: it is not so in all churches and it has taken a lot of hard work to bring our numbers back to those sorts of levels. As well as the worship we host in our building we retained some forms of on-line worship, particularly our weekly Facebook on-line service – we have a small but committed community who continue to worship in that way. Others who are unable to worship in church are also part of our 'church at home' community and regularly receive Holy Communion distributed by members of our Ministry Team. As well as our 'Pastoral Care Scheme' we have other more informal pastoral care that takes place between our church members. The production and distribution of our parish 'Signpost' magazine continued to be an important way of remaining in touch with people who are still very much part of our church family even if they're less able to physically be present in the building on Sunday mornings. We are very blessed to have an active and hardworking chapter of Mother's Union at Houghton and they have provided a great point of focus and important care for members of church and wider membership.

We conducted an unprecedented 59 baptisms last year, the largest number in the last 10 years. These included a large number of children aged around 3 (perhaps unsurprisingly a couple of years after we had no baptisms in the pandemic). We also had a large number of adults who came forward wanting to discuss aspects of faith and this led to their being baptised. We held a significant number of funerals in our church, very sadly losing some much-loved people from our church family. We thank God for their lives and with their loved ones we grieve their passing. We've sought to reach out to support those grieving: as well as our funeral ministry we held an 'All Souls' service, a Remembering Service at Christmas (with Derek Moss Funeral Directors) and ran a monthly bereavement support group in our Space4 Hub on Newbottle Street.

We are very fortunate to have some great support from retired ordained ministers with PTO (Permission to Officiate): Rev'd Margaret Lee, Rev'd Judith Howes and Rev'd Claire Cullingworth along with our dedicated team of Readers in Sue Elsey, Ros Pickersgill and Anne Clappison all of whom have provided significant support to our church over this last year. Our Ministry Team have enabled us to deliver our regular & seasonal services, occasional offices, bereavement and pastoral care, discipleship development courses as well as a multitude of other ministries. Our Curate John D'Silva contributed much to our church life last year: of particular note, his ministry with children and families of young children, his schools ministry, his work with our Space4 project.

John left us in the year to complete his curacy in a different context. We're grateful for all John did for us in his time with us and offer prayers & good wishes for his future ministry.

We ran a number of courses and events over last year to help people explore and take steps in their faith. Early in the year we held confirmation classes for members of our Young Church and also a course for children being admitted to Holy Communion. We hosted a Lent Course on 'Women of Holy Week' – this was a shared course with our neighbours in St Matthew's Newbottle and St Michael and All Angels, Easington Lane. In the course of the year we held two 'Exploring Faith' courses helping adults consider and prepare for confirmation. Throughout the year we held significant numbers of informal preparation for adults preparing for Baptism. Over the course of the year 11 adults were baptised in church, 3 children were admitted to Communion, 3 young people were confirmed in Durham Cathedral and 5 adults were confirmed here in the Deanery. Through our preaching and teaching in church we hope to encourage all our congregations to take further steps forward in their faith journeys.

We have a small and dedicated team who did much to support the development of our children and young people in a number of ways over the year. Our regular Young Church sessions and Communion preparation was led by our talented and committed leader Clare Taylor. Clare is joined now by Philippa Elsey, Janine Elsey and Jade Turnbull along with our Readers who are leading the development of our All-age worship offering along with Young Church. At the beginning of the year, we held our 'Sparks' service especially for families with young children monthly in the Kepier Hall. After the summer, we incorporated this into a new relaunched All-age Communion service – to try and bring our communities together in the church building, to enable our newly admitted children to participate in Holy Communion and better use our ministry team capacity. As we did this, we're very aware of the risk to some of our regular families at Sparks falling away given the different format and different start time for families. We are though, greatly encouraged by the 'energy' and creativity of the new format: it included more serious topics helping children understand grief ('Waterbugs and Dragonflies') and knitted Mary and Joseph characters entering church to 'Mission Impossible' music on a zipwire! We had local Guides attend three services in the year; we held a number of services for our dedicated Mother's Union chapter. We were really pleased that primary schools came to us for end of year services, schools came to us for Remembrance services and all three primaries and Kepier school attended church for Christmas services at the end of the year.

Music continued to play a major part in our church life over last year. We are very blessed to have such a talented Musical Director and Organist in George Peebles who leads our very accomplished robed choir. George and the choir support our worship at six or more of our services every month as well as some major seasonal and special services in the year. We relaunched our services with more contemporary music in the year and are very blessed that Stuart Clappison and Andy Slater lead this music for us. Andy, along with Tom Ritson, provides support with organ playing at our midweek, seasonal and funeral services. Last year saw the reintroduction of a much fuller music programme: our amazing Gilpin Singers community choir led by Laura Parkin held two concerts; we hosted Organ Recitals, Brass Band Concerts and our 'Late Summer Concert' (in October!) with wonderful contributions from our musicians, singers and guest artists from local schools.

We held a number of very big civic events last year helping celebrate Her late Majesty the Queen's Platinum Jubilee – we held special celebratory services in church (with wonderful music from our musicians and singers), we joined in community events in the Old Rectory with church members helping tell the story of our famous Rectors of the past, and we also gifted copies of a commemorative book 'Her Faithful Majesty' to our congregations. At this time, we had little idea that later in the year we would be supporting our community in mourning the death of Her late Majesty and transition to the reign of our new King Charles III. During the national period of mourning significant numbers of the community came to us to pray, pay their respects and sign our Book of Condolence and attend our Memorial Service giving thanks for the life and mourning the passing of Her late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

We were delighted to host a returned full 'Feast Service' and to welcome people to Kepier Hall for lunch during October's Houghton Feast: we were joined by the Bishop of Jarrow, the Deputy Lord Lieutenant, the Mayor of Sunderland, our Member of Parliament and other civic guests. The evening saw us hold our 'Community Hymn Sing' and sing the 'Hymn Hit Parade' culminating in the Favourite Hymn of the Folks of the Feast for 2022: 'How Great Thou Art'! Our traditional Remembrance Sunday service moved back into the church building and we were full! Huge numbers also attended the outdoor Act of Remembrance at the Cenotaph. Advent and Christmas saw our hosting our traditional Carol Services which were very well attended. I personally sang 'Away in a Manger' 18 times over the season which I always use as an indication of how Advent is progressing!

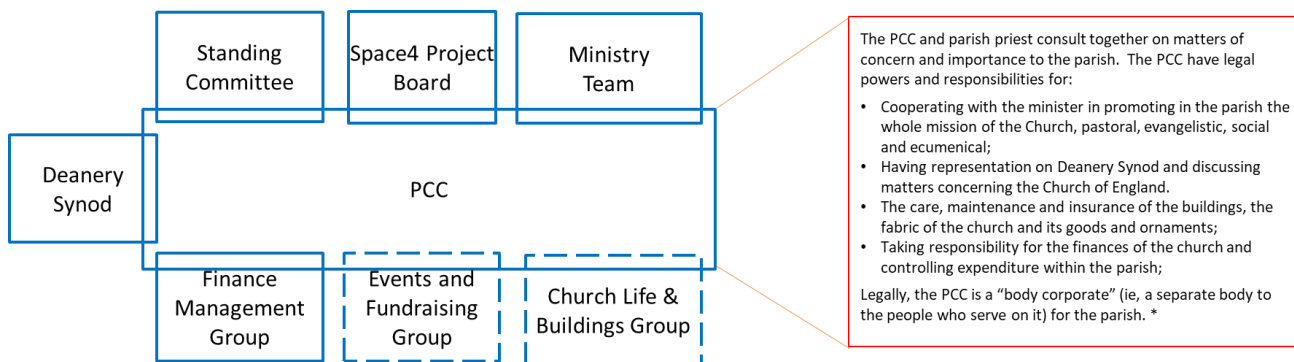
Last year we made huge progress in serving our community through our Space4 project. We do this, of course, 'standing on the shoulders of giants' in the Gilpin tradition! We have significant funding to do that well through grant funding from Lottery's Reaching Communities Fund and other funders. We are aiming to do this while moving to more of a 'social enterprise' model so the project can become more sustainable in future. We continue to aim to be a 'Space4 everyone to flourish': focussing on responding to food poverty, supporting people struggling with isolation and anxiety (especially the elderly and those feeling marginalised), challenging inequalities facing children and young people. Under the umbrella of the project we also reopened our Toddlers Group in Kepier Hall for two sessions a week. A good example of our shift in focus of the project is moving our foodbank to more of a community foodstore where people can come and have agency to choose the food they need and make a donation if they're able to; in the year we also began working with 'Tyne and Wear Citizens' to help us move into Community Organising as we seek to challenge some of the injustices people in our communities are facing. We employ five members of staff on our community project: Daniel, Jade, Candice, Susan and Meghan as well as sessional workers and large numbers of incredible volunteers. We have a very strong and dedicated Project Board with members of PCC and Community to lead our project. As an indication of the impact we're having we can identify over 500 unique people who engage with us through Space4 – that's one in twenty people of our whole parish population!

We began the year with significant pressures on our church finances. In order to meet increasing local and central costs we anticipate that we will need to give focus to energising growth across church: this will take time and in the interim, we continue to try to manage our finances well with great support from our Treasurer and wider Finance Group. A good indication of how well we are managing our finances is how close our expenditure was last year to our budget! We had

anticipated a deficit budget but we overachieved on our income – we are very grateful to all who give generously to church in both financial giving, the giving of time and talents and the endlessly creative ways we’ve managed to fundraise that have enabled us to do this.

There was, as ever, significant work behind the scenes to keep our church building operating. This includes huge efforts from our church wardens, verger, technical verger, assistant verger, cleaners, gardeners, stewards, linen and silver washers, brass polishers, tea makers, cake bakers, people on rotas etc etc as well as our incredibly creative flower arrangers and dedicated open-church stewards (I’m sure to have missed someone out by starting to list – you know who you are and I’m very grateful to you for all you do!). Throughout the year, there was a huge amount of work involved from our PCC and our Standing Committee; we’re indebted to them and to our incredible Parish Administrator who also provided great support ‘behind the scenes’ for our church people, the wider community and to me personally!

In October we agreed a new approach to help us clarify our governance structure and to help PCC discharge their accountabilities in leading the church. This involves the set up of two new groups to look after our Events and Fundraising and our Church Life and Buildings which we will establish in the year ahead.



\* PCC have further legal responsibilities as trustees including ensuring compliance with charity law; ensuring safeguarding in church; employer of staff; GDPR data controller, agreeing forms of worship, provision of registers and seats!

We began work with our brothers and sisters at St Matthew’s Newbottle and St Michael & All Angels, Easington Lane with whom we are joining in a group ministry. Towards the end of the year (and at present) we are continuing to explore opportunities to work together as parishes and our ministers are providing cover for services with St Matthew’s now officially in vacancy. A joint ‘Steering Group’ will help navigate this journey in this New Year and we await news on the availability of a non-Stipendiary minister to join the team.

Our PCC did some work in the year looking at our strategies for helping us focus on different important aspects of our church life: *Energising Growth, Engaging with Children and Young People, Challenging Poverty, Caring for Creation*. To help us communicate this, we summarised this on a ‘Plan on a Page’ for St Michael and All Angels. One of the intentions behind this is to help us keep a ‘balance’ across different parts of our church life.

St Michael and All Angels  
Plan on a Page

Aims

1. Developing pathways for children and young people to learn and grow as disciples.
2. Providing good worship for children, young people and families.
3. Extending our engagement with children, young people and families.

Priority 2023

Establish monthly All-age Worship Service

**Engaging with  
Children and  
Young People**



**Energising  
Growth**

*seeing signs  
of the kingdom*

Aims

1. Spiritual Growth.
2. Numerical Growth.
3. Growth in Service.

Priority 2023

**Build-up community  
'more parties than meetings'**

Aims (draft)

1. Cultivating a shared vision for our call to stewardship for the good of all.
2. Promoting responsible consumption, choices & behaviour as individuals and church.
3. Working together to challenge wider environmental indifference and injustice.

Priority 2023

Record, review and evaluate our energy use.

**Caring for  
God's Creation**

***In Houghton-le-spring:  
blessing our community, in  
Jesus name, for the  
transformation of all.***

*We seek to be:*

*Hospitable, inclusive, flourishing.*

**Challenging  
Poverty**

Aims

1. Work together creatively with our community to respond to food poverty.
2. Respond to isolation & anxiety particularly among the elderly and those who feel marginalized.
3. Work with our community to respond to inequalities particularly those affecting children & young people.

Priority 2023

**Engage in Community Organising**

Towards the end of the year, based on what I'd heard from our PCC, I commended to us three priorities for the year ahead – that was just one thing in three areas of church life. These are: Establishing a monthly All-age Worship Service; Engaging in Community Organising; and, to help us Build-up Community and to Energise Growth, to aim to have 'more parties than meetings'. Given we've also set up two new groups and more meetings I know this isn't going to be easy to achieve but I think we're up for the challenge!

**ST MICHAEL AND ALL ANGELS  
HOUGHTON LE SPRING**

**ANNUAL STATEMENT  
OF ACCOUNTS**

**1 JANUARY – 31 DECEMBER 2022**

**PCC Treasurer  
Mrs Sue Bradley**

**Independent Examiner  
Mr Peter Brown**

**St Michael and All Angels Parish Church  
Church Street  
Houghton le Spring  
DH4 4DN**

**Registered Charity No. 1135095**



# St Michael and All Angels, Houghton le Spring

## Treasurer's Annual Report for Year 1 January – 31 December 2022

### Overall Bank Balance

The end of year Overall PCC and Next 900 Bank Accounts Balance at **31 December 2022** breakdown and comparison to previous years is detailed below:-

	December 2020	December 2021	December 2022
<b>PCC - Unrestricted</b>	£29,232.14	£25,024.86	£31,869.61
<b>PCC – Restricted</b>	£11,270.00	£14,770.00	£21,078.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£40,502.14</b>	<b>£39,794.86</b>	<b>£52,947.61</b>
<b>Next 900 Account</b>	£ 3,454.61	£ 3,898.61	£ 4,324.61
<b>Overall Total</b>	<b>£43,956.75</b>	<b>£43,693.47</b>	<b>£57,272.22</b>
<b>CBF Legacies</b>	£ 164.09	£ 164.11	£ 166.27

### Assets

The PCC hold a log of all material assets and this report covers only the monetary assets.

### Outstanding Liabilities

We have no outstanding liabilities.

### Receipts and Payments for 2021 in comparison to previous years.

	December 2020	December 2021	December 2022
<b>Receipts</b>	£ 90,192	£104,208	£118,057
<b>Payments</b>	£ 86,694	£104,915	£104,903

An overview breakdown of some of the main headings of Receipts and Payments and comparison to previous year is detailed below:-

Receipts	December 2020	December 2021	December 2022
Planned Giving	£ 43,951	£ 46,709	£44,719
Gift Aid Recovered	£ 12,332	£ 9,363	£11,578
Collections	£ 3,501	£ 7,168	£10,228
Donations	£ 6,956	£ 3,328	£ 9,261
Online Donations	£ 703	£ 1,017	£ 534
Parish Magazine Sales	£ 1,770	£ 1,881	£ 1,783
Parish Magazine Adverts	£ 1,563	£ 135	£ 1,013
PCC Fees	£ 4,656	£ 8,504	£ 9,569

Fundraising                                      £ 2,232                                      £ 4,644                                      £ 5,810

As you will see our Planned Giving in 2022 has reduced by £1990, as a result of our actual overall number of Regular Givers reducing from 2021:-

<b>Regular Planned Givers</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>
Parish Giving Scheme	41	40	40
Standing Order	35	33	30
Stewardship Envelope	37	28	26
<b>Total Regular Givers</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>96</b>

Gift Aid recovered although claimed in 2022 relates to income from 2021 and up to 31 March 2022 (GASDS), this has increased due to adhoc donations and a full return to Church services.

Collections from our Church Services, Funerals, Weddings, Baptisms and Other Events have again increased this year compared to the 2021 figure again due to a full year of activity taking place.

Donations – the £9,261 includes a £5,308 from the Bellringers of Houghton Church which have now disbanded and very kindly donated their remaining funds to PCC Funds restricted to being used for Bellringing, Music and promoting the Church in the local Community.

The Gilpin Singers have generously donated £1,000 in 2022, thank you.

The Friends of Houghton Church made a donation of £450.72 to pay for the upgrade and replacement to lighting in the Bell Tower. Thank you for your continued support.

Parish Magazine Sales have been reasonably consistent over the last year. Our pricing structure for 2022 was £6 per annum for an email version and £1 per copy for the printed version or £10 instead of £12 for a full year. Thank you to all involved in the production of the Magazine especially Malcolm Foster, Philippa Eley and the magazine distributors.

Parish Magazine Advertising, has reduced from pre-covid days. We agreed during the pandemic to support local businesses by not charging them for their Magazine Adverts, although the Magazine continued to be distributed. Post pandemic some did not return to advertise with our Magazine, mainly due to financial constraints on their businesses.

PCC Fees – 43 Funerals (38 in Church, 5 Crematorium Only) 6 Weddings and 1 Wedding Blessing and 5 Burial of Ashes took place in 2022.

Fundraising got underway in early March with a Coffee Morning, but our busiest month was October starting with our lovely Late Summer Concert. During the Houghton Feast celebrations events held were a Coffee Morning / Lunches, a concert by Houghton Brass Band and T Rox Concert. In November we had a very well attended Bonfire and Fireworks Night and at the end of the month a Christmas Coffee morning with Santa and Stalls. Thank you to all involved in arranging and making these happen and those who contributed and participated. The Bonus Ball raised £1,356 during 2022 and continues to run smoothly thank you to Brian Scott for organising and to all who take part.

The National Church allocated £15m across all dioceses to distribute as Grants to support parishes facing increased energy costs. Durham Diocesan allocated the grants based on PCC 2023 share pledge and we at St Michael and All Angels received a grant of £6,624.

<b>Payments</b>	<b>December 2020</b>	<b>December 2021</b>	<b>December 2022</b>
Parish Share	£ 35,000	£ 49,200	£48,000
Clergy & Staffing	£ 13,353	£ 9,303	£ 9,448
Repairs & Redecoration	£ 2,525	£ 921	£ 1,086
Church Running	£ 20,171	£ 18,816	£21,866
Parish Magazine Costs	£ 1,020	£ 1,037	£ 1,020
Costs of Generating Funds	£ 9,346	£ 12,296	£18,063
Transfer to Restricted	£ 9,500	£ 3,500	£ 6,308

We paid £48,000 for our Parish Share in 2022, we made a pledge of £47,000 but agreed at PCC to pay a further £1000 towards the original Guided Pledge provided by the Diocesan of £50,430.

Clergy and Staffing costs remain lower than pre-covid mainly due to some salary sacrifice and low expenses from our Rector and Curate.

Repairs and Redecoration costs – repairs carried out in 2022 include main Boiler, upper vestry boiler, leaking radiator, replaced lights in the Bell Chamber, replaced lights in the Bell Tower and replaced the light outside the vestry door.

Church Running – includes Utilities, Insurance, Organ/Choir, Photocopying, Technology and Upkeep of Service. Contracts are in place for most of these cost headings.

Costs of generating Funds – covers Fees paid out for Funerals, Weddings, Burial of Ashes and costs of activities and events in Church.

### **Restricted Budget Breakdown**

#### **Balance carried forward from 2021:**

Organ / Music Fund	£ 2,000
Legacy	£ 770
Parish Share Contingency	£ 12,000

#### **Income 2022**

Bellringing Donation	£ 5,308 (Transferred from Unrestricted)
Legacy	£ 1,000 (Transferred from Unrestricted)

**Total as at 31 Dec 2022**                        **£ 21,078**

#### **Next 900 Account**

Balance carried forward from 2021	£3,898.61
Income in 2022	£ 426.00

**Total Balance**                                 **£4,324.61**

*(Please see attached detailed Receipts and Payments Accounts for Year ended 31 December 2022)*

## End of Year Summary

Overall, we have been able to maintain satisfactory Unrestricted Reserves and are in a stable financial position as we enter 2023, although we still need to carefully manage budgets especially around the ongoing rise in prices.

As mentioned above our Planned Giving has reduced mainly due to the reduced number of givers. We should begin to look at ways and opportunities to further promote St Michael and All Angels to the wider community and to enable easier and more ways to access online giving e.g. donate button on website, use of QR codes, text donations.

The aim will be to begin looking at opportunities during 2023.

At September PCC 2022 we agreed our pledge to pay a Parish Share of £47,000 in 2023 (our Guided Pledge from the Diocesan is £49,534) we have agreed to review this on a Quarterly basis with the aim of paying more towards the full guided pledge amount by the end of 2023.

Thank you to all for your help and support and generosity throughout the year.

Thank you to Peter Brown, External Examiner, for reviewing and examining our Accounts for 2022.

Sue Bradley  
PCC Treasurer

**St Michael & All Angels Houghton-le-Spring**  
**Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December**  
**Receipts and Payments Accounts**

**2022**

	Note	Unrestricted Fund	Unrestricted Designated Fund	Restricted Funds	Endowment Funds	Total Funds 2022	Total Funds 2021
		£	£	£	£	£	£
<b>Receipts</b>							
<b>Voluntary receipts:</b>							
Planned giving		44,719	-	528	-	45,247	47,237
Collections		10,228	-	-	-	10,228	7,168
Gift Aid recovered		11,578	-	-	-	11,578	9,363
All other giving/voluntary	2	17,648	-	-	-	17,648	13,832
		84,174	-	528	-	84,702	77,600
<b>Activities for generating funds</b>	3	6,823	-	-	-	6,823	4,779
<b>Investment income</b>	4	120	-	-	-	120	101
<b>Church activities:</b>							
Income from trading	5	3,851	-	-	-	3,851	1,881
Asset sales	6	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other receipts	7	23,089	-	-	-	23,089	20,375
		26,940	-	-	-	26,940	22,256
<b>Total receipts</b>		118,057	-	528	-	118,585	104,736
<b>Payments</b>							
<b>Church activities:</b>							
Parish share		48,000	-	-	-	48,000	49,200
Clergy and staffing costs	8	9,448	-	-	-	9,448	9,303
Church running expenses	9	21,866	-	-	-	21,866	18,816
Hall running costs	10	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mission giving and donations	11	5,230	-	-	-	5,230	3,405
Costs of trading	12	1,210	-	-	-	1,210	10,973
Repairs and redecorations	13	1,086	-	-	-	1,086	922
Asset purchases	14	-	-	-	-	-	-
		86,840	-	-	-	86,840	92,619
<b>Cost of generating funds</b>	15	18,063	-	94	-	18,157	12,380
<b>Governance costs</b>	16	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Other Outgoing Resources costs</b>	16	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total payments</b>		104,903	-	94	-	104,997	104,999
<b>Excess of receipts over payments</b>		13,153	-	435	-	13,588	(263)
Transfers between funds	17	(6,308)	-	6,308	-	-	-
		6,845	-	6,743	-	13,588	(263)
Sale/(purchase) of investments		-	-	-	-	-	-
Cash at bank and in hand at 1 Jan		25,025	-	18,669	-	43,693	43,957
Cash at bank and in hand at 31 Dec		31,870	-	25,411	-	57,281	43,693

**St Michael & All Angels Houghton-le-Spring**  
**Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December**  
**Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the year**

	Note	Unrestricted Funds	Unrestricted Designated Fund	Restricted Funds	Endowment Funds	Total Funds 2022	Total Funds 2021
		£	£	£	£	£	£
<b>Cash funds</b>							
Bank current account		31,870	-	25,403	-	57,272	43,693
CBF deposit fund						-	-
						-	-
						-	-
Other cash funds						-	-
		<b>31,870</b>		<b>25,403</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>57,272</b>	<b>43,693</b>
<b>Other monetary assets</b>							
Income tax recoverable						-	-
						-	-
						-	-
<b>Investment assets</b>							
Investment Fund Shares at market value						-	-
						-	-
						-	-
						-	-
						-	-
<b>Assets retained for Church use</b>							
						-	-
						-	-
						-	-
						-	-
						-	-
<b>Liabilities</b>							
						-	-
						-	-
						-	-
						-	-
						-	-
						-	-

## Further Analysis of Receipts and Payments

	Note	Unrestricted Fund	Unrestricted Designated Fund	Restricted Funds	Endowment Funds	Total Funds 2022	Total Funds 2021
		£	£	£	£	£	£
<b>Receipts</b>							
<b>All other giving/voluntary receipts:</b>	2						
Other regular gifts		763	-	-	-	763	1,286
Donations, appeals, etc		9,262	-	-	-	9,262	3,328
Legacies		1,000	-	-	-	1,000	-
Recurring grants		-	-	-	-	-	-
Non-recurring one-off grants		6,624	-	-	-	6,624	9,218
Other funds generated		-	-	-	-	-	-
		<b>17,648</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>17,648</b>	<b>13,832</b>
<b>Activities for generating funds:</b>	3						
Bookstall sales - fund raising		-	-	-	-	-	-
Magazine income - advertising		1,013	-	-	-	1,013	135
Fundraising Activities & Events		5,810	-	-	-	5,810	4,644
		<b>6,823</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>6,823</b>	<b>4,779</b>
<b>Investment Income:</b>	4						
Dividends		-	-	-	-	-	-
Trust fund interest		-	-	-	-	-	-
Bank and building society interest		120	-	-	-	120	101
Rent from lands or buildings		-	-	-	-	-	-
Rent from Masts and other property		-	-	-	-	-	-
		<b>120</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>101</b>
<b>Income from Trading:</b>	5						
Bookstall sales - trading		-	-	-	-	-	-
Church hall lettings - trading		-	-	-	-	-	-
Parish magazine sales		1,783	-	-	-	1,783	1,881
Use of photocopier		-	-	-	-	-	-
Other income		2,068	-	-	-	2,068	-
		<b>3,851</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>3,851</b>	<b>1,881</b>
<b>Asset sales:</b>	6						
Sales of fixed assets		-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Other receipts:</b>	7						
PCC Fees for weddings and funerals		9,569	-	-	-	9,569	8,504
Assigned Fees for weddings and funerals		13,520	-	-	-	13,520	10,640
Insurance claims		-	-	-	-	-	1,231
Surplus - sales of fixed assets		-	-	-	-	-	-
Sundry income for Mission		-	-	-	-	-	-
Sundry income		-	-	-	-	-	-
		<b>23,089</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>23,089</b>	<b>20,375</b>

## Payments

### Church activities:

Missionary giving and donations	11	5,230	-	-	-	5,230	3,405
---------------------------------	----	-------	---	---	---	-------	-------

**Payments**

**Church activities:**

Missionary giving and donations	11	5,230	-	-	-	5,230	3,405
Clergy and Staffing costs	8	9,448	-	-	-	9,448	9,303
Church running costs	9	13,536	-	-	-	13,536	14,182
Church utility costs	9	8,330	-	-	-	8,330	4,635
Hall running costs	10	-	-	-	-	-	-
Costs of trading	12	1,210	-	-	-	1,210	10,973
		<b>37,754</b>	-	-	-	<b>37,754</b>	<b>42,498</b>

**Major repairs and building works:**

Church major repairs	13	1,086	-	-	-	1,086	921
Hall + major repairs		-	-	-	-	-	-
New building costs		-	-	-	-	-	-
		<b>1,086</b>	-	-	-	<b>1,086</b>	<b>921</b>

**Asset purchases:**

Purchase of fixed assets	14	-	-	-	-	-	-
--------------------------	----	---	---	---	---	---	---

**Cost of generating voluntary income:**

Costs of Church Activities & Events	15	2,565	-	-	-	2,565	1,079
Fees paid out for weddings and other services		14,837	-	-	-	14,837	10,634
Investment management costs		661	-	94	-	754	667
Bookstall costs		-	-	-	-	-	-
		<b>18,063</b>	-	<b>94</b>	-	<b>18,157</b>	<b>12,380</b>

**Governance costs:**

Examination/audit fee	16	-	-	-	-	-	-
		-	-	-	-	-	-

**Other Outgoing Resources:**

Other Outgoing Resources:		-	-	-	-	-	-
		-	-	-	-	-	-

Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees	Signature	Print Name	Date of approval
	<i>John Owen</i>	JOHN OWEN	
	<i>S. Bradley</i>	Sue Bradley	



**Independent Examiner's Report to the members of St Michael and all Angels Parish Church, Houghton le Spring, Parochial Church Council.**

I report on the annual accounts for the year ended 31st December 2022.

**Respective responsibilities of the PCC and Independent Examiner**

The members of the PCC consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to

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

**Basis of Independent Examiner's Statement**

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission.

An examination includes a review of the accounting records 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 management committee concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in a full audit, and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the accounts.

**Independent Examiner's Statement**

In connection with my examination, no matters have come to my attention

1. which give me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements

- to keep accounting records in accordance with s.130 of the 2011 Act; or
- to prepare accounts which accord with these accounting records have not been met; or

2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



Peter Brown, BA(Hons)

42 Coptleigh, Houghton le Spring, Tyne & Wear, DH5 8JE

9 February 2023

**SPACE4  
HOUGHTON LE SPRING**

**ANNUAL STATEMENT  
OF ACCOUNTS**

**1 JANUARY – 31 DECEMBER 2022**

**Accounts Prepared by  
Social Enterprise Acumen**

**Independent Examiner  
Mr Peter Brown**

**Space4  
76 Newbottle Street  
Houghton le Spring  
DH4 4GB**



## Receipts and payments accounts

For the period from	Period start date 01/01/2022	To	Period end date 31/12/2022
---------------------	---------------------------------	----	-------------------------------

### Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Endowment funds to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £	Last year to the nearest £
<b>A1 Receipts</b>					
Donations	6,396	363	-	6,759	4,163
PCC Grant		4,200	-	4,200	4,200
Other Grants		103,002	-	103,002	108,406
Fundraising	191		-	191	385
Sales		9,569	-	9,569	1,319
Other			-		432
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total (Gross income for AR)</b>	<b>6,587</b>	<b>117,134</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>123,721</b>	<b>118,905</b>
<b>A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).</b>					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total receipts</b>	<b>6,587</b>	<b>117,134</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>123,721</b>	<b>118,905</b>
<b>A3 Payments</b>					
Staff Salaries		46,391	-	46,391	37,327
Sessional Workers		11,007	-	11,007	8,165
Rent		9,556	-	9,556	8,693
Utilities and Overheads		6,236	-	6,236	805
Product Costs		19,193	-	19,193	587
Expenses		5,377	-	5,377	1,903
Transport		120	-	120	722
Food and Consumables		1,182	-	1,182	11,692
Equipment		2,409	-	2,409	583
External Support			-		195
Office Costs & Training		72	-	72	
Professional Fees		4,580	-	4,580	1,846
Other			-		36
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>106,123</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>106,123</b>	<b>72,554</b>
<b>A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)</b>					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total payments</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>106,123</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>106,123</b>	<b>72,554</b>
<b>Net of receipts/(payments)</b>	<b>6,587</b>	<b>11,011</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>17,598</b>	<b>46,351</b>
<b>A5 Transfers between funds</b>			-	-	-
<b>A6 Cash funds last year end</b>	<b>32,037</b>	<b>64,794</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>96,831</b>	<b>50,480</b>
<b>Cash funds this year end</b>	<b>38,624</b>	<b>75,805</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>114,429</b>	<b>96,831</b>

## Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
<b>B1 Cash funds</b>	Bank Account 33254356	36,946	75,782	-
	PayPal Statement	1,601		-
	Petty Cash	100		-
	<b>Total cash funds</b>	<b>38,647</b>	<b>75,782</b>	<b>-</b>
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	Agreement Error	Agreement Error	OK
		<b>Unrestricted funds to nearest £</b>	<b>Restricted funds to nearest £</b>	<b>Endowment funds to nearest £</b>
<b>B2 Other monetary assets</b>	Details	-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
<b>B3 Investment assets</b>	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
<b>B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use</b>	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
<b>B5 Liabilities</b>	Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	

Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees

Signature

Print Name

Date of approval

*John Barron*  
*S. Bradley*

JOHN BARRON  
Sue Bradley

# Independent Examiner's Report on the Accounts

Report to the Management Committee of Space 4 on the accounts for the year ended 31st. December 2022.

## Respective responsibilities of the Management Committee and Independent Examiner

The Management Committee are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. They consider that an audit is not required for this year (under section 43(2) of the Charities Act 1993 (the act)) and that an independent examination is needed.

As the Independent Examiner, it is my responsibility to

- examine the accounts (under section 43(3)(a) of the Act);
- follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners (under section 43(7)(b) of the Act); and
- state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

## Basis of Independent Examiner's Statement

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners. 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 management committee concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in a full audit, and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the accounts.

## Independent Examiner's Statement

In connection with my examination, no matters have come to my attention

1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements
  - to keep accounting records
  - to prepare accounts which accord with these accounting recordshave not been met;
2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



Peter Brown BA(Hons.)  
42 Coptleigh, Houghton le Spring, DH5 8JE  
9 February 2023



## **Church Wardens' Report**

We have still to complete the check of the Terrier in Church and we hope to complete this task very soon. We are still using the one-way system around Church with the hand sanitising stations still in use.

**Building works:** In 2022 there were no major building works in Church but unseen work has taken place. Firstly the fluorescent tubes in the actual bell chamber failed. These were replaced with brand new LED lamps. The new lamps are much brighter than the old ones. As we were receiving requests from bell ringers to ring our bells and three out of the four fluorescent tubes had failed, we had all four of them replaced with LED fittings and at the same time renewed the lights in the upper office. This was very kindly paid for by the Friends of Houghton Church.

The choir vestry also has fluorescent tubes but over the years they have lost their brightness, so an estimate for their replacement has been requested. As an interim solution the wall lamps were upgraded with LED lamp bulbs and whilst they were being ordered new LED lamps were bought for the clock which now sparkles at night! Every year Sunderland City Council pay to have the clock serviced. The company, Smiths of Derby, have their own key and can gain access, but this year they requested that I (Alastair) open up for them. The engineer duly arrived and serviced the clock mechanism. He then showed me graffiti from previous engineers dating back to 1910! He also lubricated the hammers which strike the bells when the clock chimes. Sometimes these jammed off after bell ringers had visited and would have to be manually returned to position!

The Churchwardens would like to thank our Director of Music, George Peebles, and our choir for their contribution to the worship in our Church. We would also like to thank Tim Cullingworth for his professional assistance in broadcasting our online services. A huge thank you goes to our Young Church leaders and helpers, our Sidespeople/ Stewards and members of the coffee rota. Also we would like to thank the Editor of our Church Magazine, Malcolm Foster, who has single-handedly produced a copy every month.

We would also like to thank the members of our Ministry Team for their steadfast contribution to our many services and helping to maintain the mission and ministry of St. Michael and All Angels.

***Rita Turnbull and Alastair Bradley, Church Wardens***

### **Electoral Roll**

The number on the Electoral Roll this year stands at 124 which is down from 125 last year. We have had a few people added to the list but also we have lost a few over this last year. Please let me know of any changes of address or telephone numbers.

Thank you.

***Rita Turnbull, Electoral Roll Officer***

## **The Deanery Synod**

The Deanery Synod meets at approximately 3 monthly intervals. Following the pandemic, when the meetings were held via Zoom, they are now held in churches across the deanery, enabling members to meet in person.

The Angels Way Lindisfarne Gospel Pilgrimage took place in September, giving the pilgrims an opportunity to engage during their journey with local schools and churches.

Parishes in vacancy add to already heavy workloads, and the health and well being of the clergy is of concern. At the meeting in January 2023 Reverend Alistair Prince, Vocations and Strategy Adviser, gave an address about changes in selection and training for ministry. Wings for Worship is a programme designed to train lay members of our churches to lead worship and to preach.

Guided Parish Pledges should be submitted by 10<sup>th</sup> October, 2023.

At the Diocesan Synod held in May 2022, Bishop Paul thanked all who had engaged with Living in Love and Faith and the Pastoral Principles course. The College of Bishops entered a period of reflective prayer on the initiative and proposals are expected to be presented to the General Synod in February 2023.

At the Deanery Synod held in January 2023 parishes were invited to share news, highlights, issues and concerns. The main issues raised across the Deanery were falling congregation numbers, not enough young people and young families being attracted to Church, financial constraints and pressure of workloads on clergy and lay staff. Positive signs of recovery post Covid were noted but attendance numbers were down, and it was felt that loss of capacity within church families was resulting in some reluctance to volunteer for such roles as church warden or treasurer.

It is proposed that the Choir of Durham Cathedral bring the Choral Evensong Experience to parish churches in each of the deaneries through 2023-2024.

The next Deanery confirmation service will take place on Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> October 2023, when we look forward to welcoming candidates into the church family.

***David Hann and Dian Scott***

## **Safeguarding Report**

We continue to operate to the values and principles set out in the Parish Safeguarding Policy. Due consideration and assessment of any actual or perceived safeguarding risks is given to all activities across the Church to ensure all participants are safe and protected.

The safeguarding training programme for PCC members continues with the vast majority of members renewing their training during 2022.

Work continues to develop a comprehensive training log of all posts and post holders across all church activities.

The church has adopted and operates within the Diocese Safer Recruitment Policy. This has been applied successfully in the recruitment and appointment to various posts within our Space 4 project.

All new members, volunteers or salaried staff have been subject to the necessary Disclosure and Barring Checks, whilst a programme of renewal continues for all existing volunteers and staff.

In line with our Safeguarding Policy a number of safeguarding issues have been reported over the past year. All are recorded and considered by appropriate officers from the Church and Diocese with agreed action plans put in place. It is pleasing that most issues have been sufficiently managed to closure. Those which remain open continue to be actively managed.

***Kevin Bond, Parish Safeguarding Officer***



## REPORTS FROM THE CHURCH AFFILIATED ORGANISATIONS

Prepared for the

### 2022 Annual Parochial Meeting

#### **2<sup>nd</sup> Houghton Rainbows, Brownies, Guides and Rangers**

At the moment we have 28 Rainbows, 31 Brownies, 13 Guides and 9 Rangers. We still have a waiting list for Rainbows. Things have finally got back to normal after Covid and the units are doing their regular activities.

Brownies had a pack holiday in the Kepier Hall in May with the theme Harry Potter.

Guides and Rangers had a sleepover in the Kepier Hall in September which included a trip to an activity centre.

All the units took part in the Houghton Feast parade using the theme Queen's Jubilee.

All units attended the Harvest Festival service in October.

The units took part in the Remembrance Sunday parade.

In December we went to Hardwick Hall for the "I believe" event. The girls had a fantastic time doing Christmas activities all day and a special visit to Santa.

***Sheila Wynn***

#### **Liturgical Choir Report**

We have slowly got back to a little more normality although Covid and other viruses are still a concern.

The choir led the church's big events, including the Feast Civic Service and our Special Lenten Service on Passion Sunday which was well supported by St Matthew's, Newbottle and St Michael and All Angels, Easington Lane. Our Advent and Christmas Carol Services were also very well supported.

Our Late Summer Concert with the liturgical choir, the Gilpin Singers and other soloists was excellent. We are grateful for the support of Graham Brown, a gifted musician, who accompanied the choirs and soloists. Our new instrumental music group performed for the first time and were well received by the audience.

I would like to thank the choir for their commitment and support. We are always looking and hoping for new members.

I would like to say a thank you to Rector John for his support and encouragement to maintain our great music tradition at St Michael's.

Finally, I would like to thank our other musicians here at St Michael's who help with the music Tom Ritson, Andy and Stuart.

***George Peebles, Director of Music***

## **Kepier Trust and Management Committee**

After what has been a profoundly difficult year on many fronts, we are now very much looking forward to a new era in the life of the Kepier Hall.

We thank all of our groups who have stayed loyal to us, having undergone a necessary increase in their hire charges because of the huge hike in heating, lighting and other factors beyond our control. We have been so grateful for their support.

Most of the groups we had before Covid have returned, albeit perhaps in a different guise. I am particularly thinking of the Toddler Group which has emerged with enthusiasm and vigour under the watchful eye of Susan from Space 4 . She is of course ably supported by ladies from the original Toddlers whose group endured for over fifty years.

We are also extremely pleased to have the Food Store and Clothing Bank now established in the Kepier Hall – all of these positive enterprises highlight the original words in the constitution of the Kepier which is to serve the community of Houghton both for leisure activities and to meet the needs of the parish .

We, as a Trust and management committee, have welcomed our new Caretaker/Co-ordinator Mr. Darren Snaith who is no stranger to the Trust having been our Treasurer for several years. He began his employment with us in January on a part time basis and is tackling the complexity of the Kepier with gusto. His is very approachable and is happy to sort out any problems that you may have.

The Trust and Management look forward to a full and successful year at Kepier after three years of uncertainty.

***Jean Henderson***

## **Bereavement Group: LIGHT**

‘Light’ has continued to meet and grow in Space4 on the first Tuesday of each month @1.30pm. Numbers of people attending fluctuate depending on holiday season, cold season and all the other demands on people’s lives, particularly grandparent duties. A typical session will have around 6 users and reports received are always favourable; that people found it helpful to meet with others and find they share the same experiences. In this last year I stumbled across an excellent resource book of stories by Tom Gordon, retired hospice chaplain from Edinburgh and member of the Iona Community. Tom writes wonderful stories from his experience of coming alongside bereaved partners at the hospice, and with excellent story telling skills he relates tales that our members are readily drawn into and so evokes the most amazing stories from them too.

If you know anyone experiencing bereavement, please point them in our direction.

Grateful thanks to Rev Judith Howes and Reader Anne Clappison for assisting and occasionally leading the sessions.

***Rev Margaret Lee***

## **Mothers Union Report**

We have 44 members, 3 being indoor members.

2 members of Newbottle branch have joined us and 2 members from Easington Lane Branch have also joined us. Newbottle and Easington Lane branches have had to close because of low numbers.

We had a Beetle drive to raise money for 'Away from it all', a Mothers Union project which helps families to have a holiday or break away. Instead of drawing a beetle we drew a caravan. Everyone that attended had a good afternoon.

The June trip out was at the Causey Inn for afternoon tea. A lovely afternoon was had by all.

We celebrated the Queen's Jubilee in July. 60 members and friends attended. We had a lovely lunch and Bucks fizz, and entertainment was Kayleigh Cares, vintage singer. I had feedback from one member who said that it was the best jubilee celebration she had been to.

In September we held our Harvest home lunch of pies and peas. We had a quiz and bingo and a good natter. The ladies enjoyed it.

We had a stall at the church Christmas coffee morning. Members donated food for the hampers to raffle and for the Christmas anagram. We sold some crochet blankets and Christmas ornaments that had been donated. Money was split between church and Mothers Union.

The AGM was held in January.

Branch Meal was on 27th February at Homer Hill

***Joan Beattie, Mothers Union Leader***

## **The Friends of Houghton Hillside Cemetery 2022**

The committee held no meetings during 2021 but we resumed in June and started to organise litter picks and tidy-ups. Our website was hacked during the Pandemic, but our expert is working on a new one.

Sadly, one of our founding members, Thelma Steele, passed away during the summer while visiting her daughter in Brighton. Her funeral took place in Church and the committee is planning to remember her with a memorial plaque. We planned a big clean-up at the autumn half term, but this had to be cancelled because of illness. Our AGM was held in Church on 20th October, and we welcomed Dot Fenwick who talked about her great great grandfather George Wheatly who is buried in the cemetery and has an unusual monument as a headstone.

For Remembrance Day, we laid a wreath at the Cenotaph at Church and one against the monument in the Cemetery. The War Graves commission had cleaned the headstones in the cemetery prior to this and people have laid poppies and crosses on the graves.

We are looking forward to getting back to full swing in 2023!

***Alastair Bradley, Chair.***

### **Men's Night out –“Last Orders”**

The Pandemic and lockdown effectively ended our monthly meetings and despite having “on-line” quizzes during 2021, the group has not physically restarted.

2023 will be a new year and a new start for the men of the Church.

***Alastair Bradley Organiser.***

### **Flower Guild**

We are very grateful for the kind and generous sponsorship of the flowers. Leslie and I enjoy making the arrangements and have experimented in the last year with pew end flowers for weddings.

If you wish to sponsor a pedestal arrangement at any time during the year (other than Lent or Advent) there is a sign up list on the notice board at the back of Church.

***Carole Cunningham***

### **Hand-Bells**

As the pandemic restrictions eased we were able to give some thought to restarting the Hand-Bells group, and managed to find a few new willing recruits to fill our empty places. We started rehearsing a couple of months before the Advent Carol Service and we were pleased that the practices went so well we were able to play at that service and also on Christmas Eve.

After Easter we plan to start meeting on a monthly basis until the autumn. If you are interested in joining us please get in touch.

***Carole Cunningham***

### **Friends of the Houghton Parish Church**

After two years of inactivity regarding the Friends of the Church's musical weekend, we were delighted to welcome back Houghton Brass and Houghton Youth Band and also Dr.Gordon Stewart, organist, who entertained us for the George Whitfield Organ Concert. Both events were very well supported, along with the ever popular Friends Coffee morning.

It was so clear that everyone was thankful to be back in Church enjoying the music and fellowship which is so important.

We thank all Friends of the Trust who continue through their membership to financially support the relentless work required to the ancient fabric of this important landmark in Houghton. This year the Trust was able to finance new LED lighting to the Bell Tower and Office for the sum of £460.

If you are not already a Friend, you may consider becoming a member from as little as £10 per annum, to enable the continuing maintenance of St. Michael and All Angels.

***Jean Henderson***

## **Young Church**

We were thrilled this year to move back into church. We are currently running sessions alongside the main Eucharist at 10am in the meeting room which allows us to share our activities with the congregation at the end of the service. We still have a regular group of 4 or 5 children taking part each Sunday and we celebrated 3 children receiving their Holy Communion before confirmation.

At present we follow the Gospel stories in church planning from Sermons 4 kids and other useful resources that support the children's faith journey each week. Alongside this, each week worksheets, word searches and colouring materials are available for any children who may want to take part. These activities follow the Gospel story theme in church.

As well as completing tasks/activities each session the children have also taken a role in the 'all age' worship in church each month where the children, help with the sermon, take part in the offertory procession, choose the music and the older children support in giving communion. This is a more inclusive service and has proved very successful with children of all ages through to the adult congregation!

A huge thank you to Philippa, Janine and Jade who have taken more of an active role in running and supporting sessions.

If anyone knows of any primary aged school children who would enjoy hearing a bible story and then making a craft, please feel free to invite them along.

***Clare Taylor, Young Church Leader***

## **Signpost** *[Interview with Editor Malcolm Foster]*

*What's been good over the past year?*

The fact that we're back into the regular routine of writing, producing and delivering our monthly Church magazine. In terms of subscribers, we're almost back to where we were before the pandemic. The pandemic made us all appreciate the value of a monthly magazine that kept everyone informed during such a life-changing period. In fact, Signpost was a vital lifeline for many, helping them to feel connected at a time when many felt isolated. The monthly publication of Signpost is an important part of our Church life.

*And the greatest challenge of the past year?*

The same as every year - meeting the monthly deadline! Very many thanks to all of our contributors who enable this to happen. And, of course, Roger (Elsey) is still a great loss. Roger not only wrote his regular article for Signpost, but he also was a reviewer for the magazine - and I really valued his opinion when I needed a second pair of eyes.

*At a time when so much of our life is online, is there still a place for a paper Signpost?*

Yes, definitely! First, not everyone is online. Second, even if people are online, many like to have a paper copy for easy reference. It's also nice to be able to leave copies of Signpost at the back of the Church so that visitors can see what's going on at St Michael and All Angels. Of course, paper copies need to be delivered, and I am extremely grateful to our team of volunteers who hand deliver Signpost the length and breadth of Houghton-le-Spring each month.

*Thank you, Malcolm – and please accept our gratitude for all you personally do to bring us Signpost each month.*

## **Gilpin Singers**

The ladies in the choir have continued to enjoy meeting throughout the last year, with successful concerts in June and December, also singing at the Church's Late Summer Concert. Our leader Laura Parkin continues to teach and inspire the ladies for which we are very grateful. Also thanks to our accompanist Graham Brown, and to George Peebles for his input when requested.

This summer we plan to have a special concert to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Gilpin Singers. Many of the choir are founder members which proves how much fun, friendship, satisfaction and love of singing the ladies experience from this group. The theme for the Summer Concert will be based on these sentiments.

We are currently at full capacity. If anyone is interested in joining the choir please get in touch (with the Church Office) to be added to the waiting list.

***Carole Cunningham***

## **St. Michael and All Angels Toddler Group**

The toddler group re-opened on 1.5.2022 after a two year absence due to Covid.

As a new member of the team, I was delighted that some of the staff who had previously volunteered decided to come back. Their experience and knowledge has been invaluable and helped me to settle in to my new role. I would also like to say that all of the volunteers at team toddlers are amazing and I could not run the toddler group without them.

The toddler group has grown and currently has approximately 50 children attending over the two sessions.

We cater for all ages/stages and abilities. Children with SEND are very welcome to attend as we are an inclusive group. The toys available to the children change each week and include construction toys, problem solving toys, role-play, books, messy play, small world, large toys and our lovely slide which is always a favourite with the children. Through the activities provided children use their brains to problem solve, their hands to develop their fine motor skills and the large toys to develop their gross motor skills. Through the use of role play children's imagination is encouraged. The art and craft table provides the children with the opportunity to work with their parents/carers. All the activities provide help the children to develop holistically.

I recently asked parents/carers if there was anything we did not provide that they would like. One response was to have the refreshments available throughout the session. This was acted upon and we have received lots of good feedback. This also provides the opportunity for parents/ carers to interact with each other while they sit around the refreshment tables provided.

The children's Christmas parties were a huge success with many families attending.

### **Some Comments from parents/carers.**

"Happy for him to come here, it's great".

"Nice today as the heating is on and nice to have the music". (I have bought a nursery rhyme CD to play throughout the session).

"Your all brilliant, Reuben loves coming here".

Nana said to Cameron who is 2. "Say bye to Susan", Cameron "Bye, I've had a lovely time".

***Susan Watson***

## **Space4 Hub**

In July 2021 we set to relaunch our Space4 high-street hub after the final national lockdown. We spent the most part of year 1 encouraging people to meet back in person rather than square boxes via Zoom. I'm so chuffed to say that we are now just as busy, if not busier, than how the project was operating before anyone had heard anything of 'covid'. October 2022 brought over 760 pairs of feet across the threshold of our Hub doors giving us an average of 30 people a day. Since January '23 the same sessions have welcomed closer to 50 people a day. There are many reasons why I feel we are going from strength to strength:

**Hub redesign:** We have recently invested over £5000 to make better use of our space. The room feels more spacious despite installing large table-top counters which enables us to facilitate better food and drinks than the tea, coffee, and biscuits we had previously been limited too! As we approach the summer, I'm hoping we will have an array of hot food options to choose from.



**New hours and workshops:** We want our floorspace to be used as much as possible by as many like-minded groups that we can find! Additional partnerships with groups such as the Voluntary Community Alliance (VCS) has enabled us to extend our drop-in hours, did you know on a Thursday we are currently open 9:30AM till 19:30PM! We are filling the extra spaces in our diary with thematic sessions such as a games club and movie nights.

Partner agencies like SHARP are able to come and arrange face-to-face meetings at our venue offering support with benefits advice; while our phone, internet connection and [occasionally intermittent] printer is accessible to all.

**New team members:** We couldn't manage a fraction of what we manage to achieve without the phenomenal team we have built. We love welcoming new members to help us be 'boots on the ground' or assisting with 'backstage admin gubbins'. This year we hosted a Christmas Meal celebration *and* a game of laser quest as a small 'thank you' for all that people give.

**Continuation of established activities:** I'm besotted that our Christmas Day meal provision was still able to occur this year. You may remember that during Dec '22 we were hosted in the adjacent *Nutmeg Tree Café* which sadly closed their doors around October. This year we based ourselves at Kepier Hall and had *The Nutmeg Tree Café* staff return to support our cause. Did you see members of our Cake and Chat group in the Northern Echo? We were delighted to celebrate the

100<sup>th</sup> birthday of two members of our Space4 community. Other groups such as Wednesday crafts and Bereavement support are meeting regularly within the Hub.

### **Kepier Hall**

We are too big to host our whole provision of service in one venue, so we are thankful for Kepier Hall offering us a friendly home for our Space4 Community Store, Uniform and Toddler groups.

**Community Store:** Our Community Store is our primary vehicle to help folks keep their cupboards fuller in an affordable way across Houghton-le-Spring. In January just shy of 450 people benefited from what we offer. We have continued to take gradual steps to feel established such as implementing a card machine, additional wall signage and a 'proper till'.

Our range of goods has increased with special thanks to the feedback gleaned from regular supporters. This has also helped shape 'meal-kit' boxes which provides all ingredients required for a hearty meal for a suggested donation pricing system. You may not know, but we don't advertise a set price on any item; we operate on a 'suggested donation' basis with a starting point being 'any 10 items for £3.50'. Anything surplus which is offered simply off-sets those who can't contribute as much to replenish stock.



**Our Toddler Group** is feeling quite full on a Tuesday afternoon with some availability on a Friday morning. Each month has a special theme to inspire the craft activities which helps the toddlers engage with their senses and developing minds. Light refreshments are now available across the session.

**Community Listening:** As a Project we want to challenge the inequalities we see across Houghton-le-Spring. Our partnership with Tyne and Wear Citizens is providing the tools, training and resources to shape our work. Nine members of our community have already completed their two-day training course and we look to host more training events in the future. We are currently conducting a listening campaign which we will then use to unite like-minded figures that are passionate over the same causes to bring positive change.

If you would like to hear more or experience some of what Space4 provide please get in contact with our Operations Manager Daniel on [Space4daniel@gmail.com](mailto:Space4daniel@gmail.com)

***Daniel Alcock***