



ANNUAL REPORT

FINANCIAL YEAR 2025

**THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF
ST PAUL'S SCOTFORTH**

CHARITY NUMBER 1134789

**St Paul's Church
24 Scotforth Road
Lancaster
LA1 4ST**

The parish office is in St Paul's Parish Hall [facing the church across the A6]

Structure, Governance and Management

The Parochial Church Council [PCC] is a “body corporate”.

The Trustees of this charity are the members of the PCC.

The Annual Parish Meeting [APM] held before 31 May each year elects two Churchwardens and members of the PCC.

Deanery Synod representatives are appointed for a 3-year term of office. Currently our parish has 3 representatives on the Deanery Synod.

Rule 14 of the Church Representation Rules states that the Clergy licensed to the parish, the Churchwardens, and the Deanery Synod representatives are ex-officio members of the PCC.

At St Paul's the Minister of the Parish is the Chair of the PCC and a lay member of the PCC is to be elected as Vice Chair. St Paul's PCC has decided that the Vice Chair of the PCC shall be the Churchwarden with the longer service.

The PCC has decided that the PCC should include the following as ex-officio members: the Treasurer, the Secretary, the Safeguarding Officer and the Vision Champion.

The APM in 2012 decided that from 2013 the elected members of the PCC should be elected to serve a term of three consecutive years and can serve two consecutive three-year terms, after which they are expected to stand down for a minimum of one year before offering themselves for re-election. This policy is intended to create a balance between retaining experience while introducing fresh insight into the PCC.

The PCC aims to have a minimum of three members elected from those who regularly worship at St Paul's Hala Centre.

By law the PCC must meet at least 4 times per year. At St Paul's our practice is for the PCC to meet on the first Monday of most months. The PCC does not usually meet in January and August.

PCC Membership during 2025

Vicar	Catherine Haydon	Office ends Leaving the parish
Associate Priest	Catherine Haydon	Note 1
Churchwardens	Jayne Weatherill Keith Weatherill	Note 2 Note 2
Deanery Synod members	[elected in 2020 for a 3-year period, re-elected in 2023]	
	Grace Illidge	APCM 2026
	Phillip Simpson	APCM 2026
Elected members of laity		
	Vacancy	APCM 2026
	Vacancy	APCM 2026
	Vacancy	APCM 2026
	Vacancy	APCM 2026
	Paul Ducklin	APCM 2027
	Elizabeth Field	APCM 2027
	Katherine Froggatt	APCM 2027
	Tom Grimwood	APCM 2027
	Samuel Dawkins	APCM 2028
	Maureen Leach	APCM 2028
	Vacancy	APCM 2028
	Vacancy	APCM 2028
Members Ex-Officio:		
Safeguarding Officer	Jayne Weatherill	Note 3
Secretary	John Gedge	Note 3
Treasurer	Brian Threlfall	Note 3
Vision Champion	Jim Currin	Indefinite

Note 1: Rev Catherine was our Associate Priest until 14 September 2025 when she was inducted as our Vicar.

Note 2: Churchwardens are elected at the APCM and confirmed in office at the Archdeacon's Visitation later in the year.

Note 3: These three appointments are made by the PCC at the first meeting after the APCM.

The duties of the PCC

The Synodical Government Measure 1969 contains what might be described as the official “job description” of the PCC. It states:

1. It shall be the duty of the incumbent and the Parochial Church Council to consult together on matter of general concern and importance in the parish.
2. The functions of the Parochial Church Council shall include:
 - (a) co-operation with the incumbent in promoting in the parish the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical;
 - (b) the consideration and discussions of matters concerning the Church of England or any other matters of religious or public interest, but not the declaration of the doctrine of the church on any question;
 - (c) making known and putting into effect any provision made by the Diocesan Synod or the Deanery Synod, but without prejudice to the powers of the Council on any particular matter;
 - (d) giving advice to the Diocesan Synod and the Deanery Synod on any matter referred to the Council;
 - (e) raising such matters as the Council considers appropriate with the Diocesan Synod or Deanery Synod.
3. In the exercise of its functions the Parochial Church Council shall take into consideration any expression of opinion by any parochial church meeting.

When the PCC of St Paul’s registered as a Charity we said we would provide “public benefit” by:

- Regular public worship
- Providing sacred space for prayer
- Pastoral work including visiting sick and housebound
- Taking regular assembly in schools
- Provision of Young ‘Fun’ Church
- Promotion of Christianity through sermons, events and meetings
- Promoting the mission of the church
- Supporting other charities in the UK and overseas

How does the PCC seek to fulfil its duties?

Regular public services are held in the parish church and the Hala Centre.

Parish Church

Sunday	8.00 am	Holy Communion (BCP)
	9.45 am	Holy Communion
	6.30 pm	BCP Evening Prayer (on second Sunday of month)
Wednesday	9.00 am	Morning Prayer – by telephone conferencing
Thursday	9.15 am	Holy Communion

Hala Centre

Sunday	11.15 am	Service of the Word or Holy Communion
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The parish undertakes occasional services [baptisms, marriages, funerals], seasonal services and commemorations as required.

The parish is part of the Diocese of Blackburn within the Church of England.

The Diocese calculated our “Parish Share” which includes a contribution to the cost of running the Diocese and a contribution to subsidise the mission of the church in areas of the Diocese with financial difficulties.

The clergy and authorised lay people take communion to those unable to attend public services including people in local care or retirement homes.

The parish has a Lay Pastoral Care Team which visits members of the congregation, and others, in their own homes and in hospital as requested.

The parish has statutory links with Scotforth (St Paul’s) Primary School including the appointment of 4 of the school’s Foundation Governors. There are members of the PCC who are also Governors.

The parish organises a Young ‘Fun’ Church led by appropriately cleared leaders at the 9.45am service.

The parish sponsors several uniformed groups [Rainbows, Brownies, Guides, Beavers, Cubs and Scouts]. Parade services are held involving the members of the uniformed groups in the regular worship of the church.

The parish holds the Diocesan “Child Friendly Church” award.

Candidates are prepared for “Confirmation” [admission to membership of the church] through a course run bi-annually, a service was held in 2022 which was led by Bishop Julian.

House groups are available to help members of the congregation develop and explore their faith in an informal setting. There are currently three groups, two on a Monday evening and one on a Tuesday morning.

The parish has several social groups including a Women’s Fellowship and a Tea@2 group.

The parish has received the Bronze Eco Church award and we hope that our work in this area will continue moving forward.

The parish is involved in ecumenical work locally as a member of Churches Together in Lancaster and also of South Lancaster Churches Together.

The parish has an annual prayer rota which covers all the streets in the parish and these appear in our weekly Parish News.

The Parish Hall and St Paul’s Hala Centre are used for a number of social events each year, and are available for hire.

The PCC has complied with the duty to have “due regard” to the House of Bishops guidance in relation to safeguarding. The parish has a Safeguarding Officer who monitors our activities to ensure we comply with the relevant legal obligations and Diocesan policies. Safeguarding is a standing item on the PCC agenda.

The parish has a Health and Safety Officer who monitors our activities to ensure we comply with the relevant legal obligations and Diocesan policies. Health and Safety is a standing item on the PCC agenda.

Photographs of the members of the PCC are displayed in the parish church, St Paul’s Hala Centre and on our website so that members of the congregation can identify them.

The parish has links with mission partners serving overseas.

The parish has a long-standing tradition of supporting other charities which is covered in more detail in the financial section of this report.

The parish maintains a Terrier / Inventory of moveable church property.

There were 85 on the Electoral Roll at the 2025 APCM.

Vicar's Report

What a year 2025 was for us here at St Paul's! We started the year off in vacancy, and after a slightly complicated appointments process, it was my utter joy and privilege to be licensed as your next vicar in September. Thank you once again for all of your support and encouragement during what was a really challenging time, both for me personally and also as a parish. If it wasn't for your love and unwavering support I wouldn't have re-applied, so thank you, I am beyond grateful.

Despite officially being in vacancy for two thirds of the year, there was still plenty going on at St Paul's. Sunday mornings continued to be a busy but joyful time of worshipping together, with a usual Sunday attendance of around 140 people across our 3 main services (8am BCP, 9:45 Family Service, 11:15 Hala worship). Our Thursday morning service remained popular, and our monthly Sunday evening service of Evening Prayer is faithfully attended and appreciated. Alongside our regular acts of worship, it has been an absolute joy to baptise many people this year, and conduct a few weddings, as well as being a real privilege to come alongside people in their time of grief and conduct funerals for their loved ones. This has certainly been one of the things which has kept me busiest this last year, but also one which continues to give me life. It is a brilliant opportunity to share the love of Jesus with people and ensure they know the church is there for them in both good times and bad.

The key Christian festivals were observed appropriately with special services such as Harvest, Remembrance Sunday, All Souls, Advent and Christmas. These have helped to forge and cement relationships with those who don't regularly attend church, and provided opportunities to share the good news of God's love with our parish and wider community. Thanks to the Scouts for their attendance at church parades, and for keeping us well fed with the BBQ! It was especially wonderful to see so many people in church over of Christmas services, particularly at the Christingle where we had a packed church hearing about the birth of the baby Jesus, and luckily no incidents with candles!

Further highlights of the year include the continued ministry of our work with children and young people, with Fun Church being an integral part of our 9:45 service. Thank you to all those who have given their time this year to support and encourage our young people, we couldn't do this without you. More volunteers are always welcome! We continue to work with our local schools, with Ripley St Thomas coming into church at the end of each term for a Eucharist, as well as more regular work with Scotforth St Paul's. The school also have their end of term services in church, and I lead worship in school on a weekly basis. Classes made visits to church, and I visited school for a whole host of reasons, both as priest and governor, including multi-cultural week, music concerts, RE lessons, staff visits, and many more. It's a real joy to have such a wonderful church school on our doorstep, and a relationship I hope to continue to grow.

Outreach in the parish continued with our monthly Tea@2 meetings, and I am grateful to the volunteers from the Lay Pastoral Team who provide this ministry as well as visiting our 'at home' church community. We have also continued to visit Chirnside House on a monthly basis to take communion for residents there, and have built a new relationship with Ashton Manor, which is flourishing. Parishioners showed concern for those who are vulnerable and in need through supporting the Olive Branch with food donations and contributing to the Hala Pantry Christmas gift appeal. We also continued to support Hala Pantry, with members attending both for financial reasons and also to help combat food waste.

During the year, our architects from Harrison Pitt Associates continued to monitor the building, especially the roof, and we began the process of applying for National Lottery Heritage funding to be able to carry out the necessary repairs. We were moved onto the Historic England At Risk register, as a sign of the continuing deterioration of our roof, and are in the process of applying to move our Listed Buildings status from 2 to 2*. This repair and reordering work will continue to be

a large part of our work over the next few years, with fundraising and community outreach projects taking place in order to secure the future of our unique building. Plans were also made to celebrate our 150th anniversary, looking to the future as well as celebrating the past. Our new Audio-Visual system was fitted in January, and the use of the screens has enhanced our worship of God.

Looking Forward

In 2026 we are celebrating our 150th anniversary, following Jesus in the footsteps of St Paul. As well as celebrating and giving thanks to God for all that has taken place, it's a perfect opportunity to look ahead to the next 150 years, and to think about the kind of church that we want to be. This will be a team effort, as we seek to grow in love for God and one another, reaching out into our community to share that love with others. This isn't something that I can do alone; if we want to be a church which is still here in another 150 years we need to step up and step out in faith, sharing the load, and using the gifts and skills God has given us. As a church family which proudly proclaims "All are welcome", how can we work together as the Body of Christ to include more people in our family, so that the communities of Scotforth and Hala know how loved they are by God? This isn't an easy task, but one I know we're more than ready to rise to, with the help of God. So, here's to 2026, and another 150 years of worship at St Paul's Scotforth.

Rev Catherine

**The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of St. Paul's Scotforth
Treasurer's Report and Financial Review 2025**

The Annual Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2025 should be read as part of this review.

All parishes within the Church of England pay the Parish Share which is calculated by, and paid to, the Diocese. It supports the mission of the wider church, including payment of the clergy stipends, housing and pensions in our own parish. We have paid our amended Parish Share, reduced to £60,000 for 2025, in full and have also agreed, with the Diocese, the amount to be paid in 2026 again showing a significant reduction on the Parish Request figure, derived from the standard formula used to calculate it.

In 2025, we have paid over £16,000 to maintain the Church building and to run the services. Ignoring expenditure on anything else at all, coupled with the Parish Share payment, this means that the running costs of the Church are nearly £1,500 a week and will be even more next year!

It is important to remember that we do not receive funds directly from the Government or from the Church of England. We, the parishioners, have to provide all the money to run the parish ourselves – all £1,500 of it every single week.

The adoption of a Reserves Policy continues to clarify the PCC's thinking about the use of Reserves, particularly with respect to any that may be used for the replacement of the roof in due course and are defined as being restricted for that purpose. The cost of the work on the roof will exceed a full year's normal income many times over and much of this will have to come from grants from lottery funding (which are invariably time limited) – but these could not be applied for until the roof was "officially" at risk as defined by the experts but it is now finally there. So, the parish has to maintain its reserves, and to undertake fundraising to increase them, until the work has been carried out.

On paper, our long term restricted/endowment Investment Fund decreased in value by over £6,000.00 this year (5b). The restricted fund for a new roof (completely ring-fenced for this purpose) continues to grow slowly to £201,567.00 with investment interest being added, together with further donations from parishioners. In 2025, we had to spend about £1,000.00 from this fund to repair slates which had slipped. £6,000.00 has been paid to a professional fundraiser to guide us through the long process of applying for very large grants (well over £1.3 million) to replace the church roof. To properly understand the accounts, it is vital to remember that the Diocesan reduction in our Parish Share is crucial and without it and a £10,000.00 legacy received this year, we would be over £52,000.00 in the red – so we must find ways to increase our regular income for the future. As it is, the accounts show that we have an overall shortfall of £6,099.24 in unrestricted funds.

Funds Held as Custodian Trustees

None.

Brian Threlfall - Treasurer

Parish Safeguarding Report – 2025

All the new safeguarding policies and procedures were ratified by the PCC in April 2025 and a Safeguarding Audit was carried out. All training and DBS clearances, where required, are up to date with the exception of those still going through the appointment process. Refresher training has taken place when required. Advance notice of training is always sent to volunteers and the aim is to ensure this takes place before their previous training has expired.

There were no reportable safeguarding incidents in the parish during 2025.

We are at Stage 3 of the Safeguarding Dashboard which has information on all our policies and procedures and is ratified at PCC meetings and Stage 3 of the Safeguarding Hub which looks at roles and recruitment within the parish. We have 68 cleared volunteers.

The Parish Safeguarding Dashboard is a wonderful platform and easy to use – which you can't say about every new initiative. It will also mean that there would be a clean handover for any new Parish Safeguarding Officer taking on the role in the future as all information is held centrally on the Dashboard and Hub. We are still awaiting news about integration with the National Training website.

The role of Parish Safeguarding Officer is definitely not for the faint-hearted and you have to develop a thick skin on occasions. However, it wouldn't be the demanding role it is without the numbers of volunteers we usually have at work in the parish – without your help and co-operation there are activities and groups that wouldn't take place – so thank you.

I have undertaken this role for almost 20 years; if anyone feels 'called' or has experience in this field and would like to contribute to church life in this way I am very happy to talk to you – I will be standing down from this role at the first PCC meeting after the Annual Meeting this year. The Dashboard and Hub have made the task of keeping track of training/DBS much easier and it is hoped that future developments, after the initial input of data that has taken place, will similarly be the same for all the Safer Recruitment tasks.

It has, in the main, felt that I have contributed to parish life during my time as your safeguarding officer, although it hasn't been without its challenges – both locally and nationally. It would be remiss of me not to mention all the continuing safeguarding media coverage nationally, which I have no doubt will continue for some time yet.

However, we can know that, as a parish, we are doing all we can to safeguard all children, young people and vulnerable adults regardless of what is happening around us. It is about us acknowledging that WE have a responsibility to all children, young people and vulnerable adults in our parish community to provide a safe and caring environment for them to attend church and take part in activities. That means ensuring we follow all the guidance and practices to ensure that we do our utmost to protect those who are vulnerable. We provide as safe and secure an environment that we can and that those individuals know we are doing our part to take care and nurture everyone.

Jayne Weatherill (tel: 843135)
Parish Safeguarding Officer

Churchwarden's Building Report for 2025

The annual audit of the Terrier took place during February and March and these documents are available to view on request if anyone wishes to see them. It includes not only the Church but the Parish Hall and Hala Centre. Thank you to Sarah and Kate for their assistance in the Hall and to Jim for his assistance at Hala. The Warden's Log is also up to date.

With regards to our buildings during the year – a log is kept for most incidences that occur either in church, the parish hall or the Hala Centre.

Parish Hall:

No major works were carried out in 2025. The major visible update to the Hall was the purchase of 50 new chairs (blue) at the beginning of the year to replace ones that have been, and continue, to be broken (green). The major hidden update was the removal of cupboards to the righthand side of the stage, behind the fire door. The flooring these were stood on was found to be unsafe and the plaster on the walls behind them was rotten. The flooring was stabilised, the plaster replaced and a safety hand rail installed. The annual fire system service and PAT testing for the Hall, Church and Hala was completed in April. Minor electrical faults occurred during the year with the washroom water heater and a water heater in the caretaker's store requiring replacing. There was also a theme of door problems, with a number of door locks, fire door openers and soft closures having to be replaced. These minor problems are an indicator of wear and tear in an aging building.

Hala Centre:

This building is unique as we are not responsible for all areas of the building fabric. Here too, as we hire out the building, all maintenance schedules that are our responsibility and risk assessments are in place. The leak still awaiting fixing from last year has, apparently, been assessed and reported as fixed/no action required. Besides removing some broken tables and regular cleaning (including an annual high level clean) no work has been needed in the Hala Centre. Externally, the Cross does need some attention – this is scheduled for 2026.

Church:

2025 saw a major change to the interior look of the Church and the way services could be delivered (especially visible at the Sunday 9.45am service) with the installation of the Audio-Visual system. This was completed by mid-February and the first service using it was on the 16th February. Mainly used at the Sunday 9.45am services, this has been well received – the quality of singing has been noted as being improved! Its use has required an extra volunteer to be needed to operate the PC for the PowerPoints. February also saw progress on starting our Lottery bid with initial contact being made with a professional bid writer to support our application. The PCC formally appointed Architects, Project Management, Quantity Surveyors, Sustainability Experts, Structural Engineers and Bid Writer at the March meeting. Mid-August saw our inclusion on the Historic England At-Risk register, but our application to have our Listing raised from Grade 2 to 2* is still outstanding. Known leaks still give us problems, but new problems have been comparatively few – a slipped tile requiring scaffolding in July. Like in the Parish Hall, a number of minor electrical issues have had to be dealt with, tripping plug sockets, failed/faulty lights. The intermittent and random floodlighting of Church remains a problem and will carry over to 2026.

A busy year for fabric matters. However, it should be noted that a lot of the minor tasks, and in some cases, larger projects are all undertaken by volunteers. We are extremely grateful to everyone who donates their time to help with all the work undertaken – you know who you are.

Keith Weatherill - Churchwarden

Deanery Synod Report for 2025

The deanery synod meets about three times a year. We have representatives from churches in the Lancaster and Morecambe who make up the deanery. At these meetings we start with a simple worship service followed by information share regarding any issues that Churches are experiencing and any upcoming clergy vacancies or appointments that have taken place. Most meetings will have a theme and a guest speaker in a specialised subject.

This year in October we heard from Professor John Witton who was working on Net Zero Project. He spoke about how we could protect God's creation. Always look at ways we could reuse, recycle and reclaim items to save money and better utilise our resources. Simple changes like using LED lighting was a cost saving to Churches and Church buildings.

In January a special service was held at Christ Church Lancaster for the installation of the Reverent Carol Backhouse as the new area dean.

This year is a special year as we celebrate 100 years of the diocese of Blackburn. There are numerous events planned with a special called All for Jesus. On the 16th May there will be a Big Day out held in Blackpool. You will find family friendly events at St John's church opposite the Winter Gardens Theatre so a great day out if you are available that weekend.

Phillip Simpson

South Lancaster Churches Together

The group was originally started in 1998 as part of an ecumenical movement to facilitate co-operation between Christian churches in Scotforth, Bowerham and Hala. These churches were St. Paul's Scotforth with Hala, Greaves Methodist Church, Trinity United Reformed Church at Bowerham and St. Bernadette's Roman Catholic church. In September 2023 a special "Songs of Praise" service was held at St. Bernadette's to celebrate 25 years of our working together. However, over the years several changes have taken place. Greaves Methodist Church has become Lancaster Methodist Church and also runs the Cornerstone in the city centre while the URC and Roman Catholic clergy now also have responsibility for churches at Forton and Thurnham. At a meeting on the 25th March 2025, it was therefore decided that the time had come for SLTC to merge with Lancaster Churches Together to contribute to ecumenical work in the wider area and since then we have no longer met as a separate group.

Margaret Ives

The Church Gardening Team

It now seems to be becoming harder to keep on top of the garden. We are all getting older and climate change is making things difficult with lots of rain one month and then drought conditions the next month. You just never know what is going to happen next.

However, we have a stalwart team who get on with the job regardless of the weather. We meet every Wednesday at 2pm and garden for a couple of hours with a nice long tea break in the middle. This year we have been very fortunate to have had three new volunteers to join our existing team of seven. One who comes weekly and two who come fortnightly. Over the summer holidays we also had the willing help of a young family. It's never too early to start gardening and there's always something to do.

From December to March we take a break from gardening but as we are such a friendly lot we still meet up a couple of times for a chat and something to eat.

If you feel that you would like to join us, please feel free to join us once the garden season restarts at Easter.

Maureen Leach and the Gardening Team

Women's Fellowship

Women's Fellowship meet on the 2nd Monday of each month in the parish hall at 2pm. The meetings last approximately 1-1¼ hours.

Most months we have a speaker, followed by a drink and biscuits. We do not meet in August and in January we have a festive lunch and in July we have an afternoon tea.

Each month we have a raffle and the proceeds from that are for our donation to the chosen charity for that year. We often donate to a local charity and this year we are supporting St Paul's Church Roof Appeal.

We have approximately 30 members but would be happy to have more and if anyone would like to visit us, we would be very pleased to see you or, if you would like more information, you can ring me on 01524 62020.

Jean Mount

St. Paul's Hala Pantry

St. Paul's Hala Pantry food club has now completed its fourth year of operation. The food club offers members a shop from excess food and/or food waste gathered from supermarkets and other food providers. It is a longer-term solution to food poverty as well as having an environmental element, rescuing good quality food waste from landfill.

The cost to members of a weekly shop was raised to £4 in February 2025 reflecting raised costs of food purchase, van hire and fuel. At the end of 2025 St. Paul's Hala Pantry had a membership of 78 households. Our weekly attendance varied between 24 (post-Christmas) and 51 households. Members mainly come from the south Lancaster area, but some do travel from further away. We continue to support a few refugee/asylum-seeker families.

We could not run Hala Pantry without our volunteers and we estimate it takes approximately 28 volunteer hours to set up and run the Pantry each week. Twenty-three individuals have supported us through volunteering in 2024 and we are very grateful for their time and commitment to this club. We are currently short of drivers for the run to Preston to collect supplies from Fare Share and also the local collection from EggCup and Sainsburys. In the short term we are able to pay for a delivery via EggCup.

We currently have funding to employ a manager for 4 hours a week. The Administrator manages the volunteer recruitment and retention process, weekly rotas, finance spreadsheets, ordering of supplies, liaises with our suppliers and other community food groups and undertakes risk assessments. Kate Webster stepped down as Administrator in the autumn of 2025. We are very grateful for all that Kate did whilst working with us.

We have again been fortunate to be supported at Christmas by the generosity of members of St. Paul's church and Hala who have provided gifts for the children of member families.

Katherine Froggatt