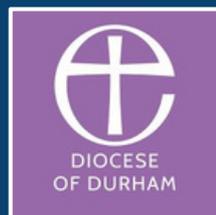


# PROFILES OF OUR PARISHES

THE PARISH OF EASINGTON - THE CHURCH OF ST MARY THE VIRGIN, EASINGTON VILLAGE

THE PARISH OF EASINGTON COLLIERY - THE CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION

THE PARISH OF HAWTHORN - THE CHURCH OF ST MICHAEL AND ALL ANGELS



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## Our Diocesan Vision - An introduction from Bishop Sarah

This is an exciting time to be exploring joining the Diocesan family in Durham Diocese. We are on the cusp of a fresh chapter in our mission and ministry together. We are currently discerning with the National Church who will be the next Bishop of Durham, called to lead as we seek to make real our vision for the transformation we so desire across our Diocese. We are deeply encouraged by the award of significant national funding, demonstrating real confidence in our vision.

Our strategy for transformation and missional growth ('Called to Fruitfulness') is an opportunity and invitation for each of our parishes to step out in faith together, responding practically to our priorities to **Challenge Poverty, Energise Growth, Care for God's Creation and Engage with Children, Youth and Young Adults.**

Making this a reality it will look different in every community. In some places it will come about in collaboration with others. Nobody is expected to do everything immediately or alone, but we are all invited and expected to find ways to respond relevantly.

In praying for a Priest in Charge for the parishes of Easington, Easington Colliery, and Hawthorn we are looking for someone excited by and wanting to be part of this vision and new future. Together we pray hopefully:

*Loving God, guiding the people of Durham Diocese faithfully through the years:*

*We thank you for saints who have marked our path,  
young and old, known and unknown, from all places and in all walks of life.  
Help us to find your way in our generation:  
transformed by your truth, sharing your life, blessing our communities.*

*Through Jesus Christ our Lord,*

***Amen***

We look forward to meeting together and sharing in this with you.

In Christ,

**+Sarah**

**Bishop of Jarrow**

**Acting Bishop of Durham**



# Vision Statement

*We seek to share Christ's love, serve our communities and grow as disciples in the heart of East Durham.*

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## Parish Settings

Our three parishes sit within the Deanery of Easington, which serves an overall population of 92,504 across the East Durham Area, stretching across three neighbouring coastal communities.

### The Parish of Easington

The Parish of Easington includes the historic church of St Mary, a Grade 1 listed building, set within a conservation area and which occupies a prominent and elevated position within the picturesque setting of Easington Village.



The church is situated directly opposite the historical setting of Seaton Holme, also a Grade 1 listed building, which is of special architectural and historical interest. Adjacent to the church is an easily accessible, very well equipped and well used community hall, with on-site parking and direct pedestrian access to the church.



The parish serves a population of 4,219 and has an Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) ranking of 2,361. There has been a number of new housing developments within the parish in recent years.



Easington C of E Primary School sits beside St Mary's, with two further primaries and Easington Academy Secondary School nearby. In 2024 the SIAMS report found that Easington C of E Primary is *living up to its foundation* as a Church School, with a very positive write-up.

## The Parish of Easington Colliery

The Parish of Easington Colliery includes the Church of The Ascension, which occupies an elevated position adjacent to the local shopping area and allotments and which is located in close proximity to the Durham Heritage Coast, serving a population of 3,413 and with an IMD ranking of 235.

The IMD ranking speaks to the significant deprivation which exists within the parish. The church has a well used community hall within its enclosed grounds and also good parking provision on site. Significant works to the fabric of the church and the enlargement of the kitchen in the hall, have been approved and the parish is in receipt of significant levels of external grant funding, together with funds raised within the parish, to expedite these works and improvements in the near future. There are two schools served by the parish, Easington Colliery Primary School and Hope Wood Academy.

The parish sits within a former mining community and has a significant mining heritage, which is celebrated in many and varying ways, through services held at the church and by awareness raised through the Easington Colliery Heritage Group.



## The Parish of Hawthorn

The Parish of Hawthorn includes the Church of St. Michael and All Angels, located within a picturesque and tranquil village setting and serving a population of 450. The parish has an IMD ranking of 2,033. Housing in the parish has remained fairly static over the years, although the local planning authority is presently considering an application to build new housing adjacent to the existing village settlement.

The church is a focal point within Hawthorn Village St. Michael's has access to the local village community centre, situated in close proximity to the church and where a number of parish events are held.

Given its modest population, there are no schools within the parish, although children in the parish attend schools in other parishes, with which the parish has good links.

Hawthorn is home to the second largest Coastal Dene in the county, consisting of relatively unspoilt ancient woodland and a species rich in magnesian limestone meadow.



## Wider Context

These three parishes provide ministrations to a combined population of just over 8,000 souls amidst a landscape that moves in a mile or two from medieval village green, through terraced colliery streets, to farmland and ancient dene opening onto the Durham Heritage Coast.

The area enjoys quick access by car to the A 19 and regular buses to Peterlee, Durham, Sunderland and Hartlepool. Walkers and cyclists follow the coastal path and explore Hawthorn Dene Nature Reserve. Amenities within the East Durham Area, include village shops, GP Practices, Dalton Park Retail Centre, Seaham Harbour and its shopping centre, Horden train station, Peterlee bus station, Peterlee Shopping Centre, and Retail Park, Peterlee Community Hospital and East Durham College. From December 2025, The Grand Central Train Operator will be permitted to timetable direct train travel from Seaham Train Station, to London.

There are active links with two residential care homes and a range of community groups, which meet regularly in our community halls.

In recent years, the area has also welcomed new residents from West African backgrounds and people relocating from southern England, which brings **opportunities for missional growth**, outreach, welcome and discipleship.

The three parishes were brought together under the oversight of an Incumbent, following deanery-wide reorganisation in 2021. There is a **real energy to work together** under new clergy. We are open to joint worship, different forms of worship (for example Forest Church at Easington) and to varying our individual service times, to create a sustainable and manageable pattern for our new Incumbent, across the two benefices.

A combined parishes Songs of Praise Service, held at The Church of The Ascension, was very well attended and warmly received, supported by the the Praise Band from Easington St.Mary, Easington Deanery Choir and organ accompaniment, affording opportunities for fellowship and building upon long standing relationships and friendships.

In various ways, the search for a new Incumbent, has drawn our parishes closer, fostering a willingness to work more holistically and collaboratively. There are already long established and close working relationships between St. Mary's and The Church of The Ascension, including the provision of support for the communities of Easington Colliery, in collaboration with Easington Colliery Methodist Church, Fareshare, East Durham Trust, Easington Colliery Regeneration Partnership and local elected members of both parish and county councils.

## Our Churches & Styles of Worship

All three churches are now fairly "central" in their Anglicanism. Formal and ordered forms of worship are appreciated by many in these deeply traditional mining villages, but more informal worship is also appreciated. At The Church of The Ascension, for example, children accompany informal worship using percussion instruments and at St. Mary's, where a firmly established worship band plays on one Sunday a month. St. Mary's and The Church of The Ascension both have pipe organs which have undergone restoration in previous years and St. Michael & All Angel's has an electronic keyboard. All three parishes are receptive to exploring new forms of worship.



Celebrating faith together across the benefices.

Parish	Population	IMD Ranking	Avg. Sunday Attendance (2024)	Electoral Roll (2025)
Easington	4,219	2,361	28	64
Easington Colliery	3,413	235	11	12
Hawthorn	450	2,033	13	22

*St Mary's Wednesday attendance is typically around 10, rising to 175 during the monthly school service.*

# *St Mary's Easington Village*

## *Working with the Four Diocesan Priorities*

### **Energising Growth**

An annual Alpha course continues to be our most effective doorway for people exploring faith. We are keen to expand in this direction with bible study groups and Youth Alpha. Sunday attendance averages 28, rising sharply on festivals, and every baptism family is invited back into the church. Regular preaching, small-group discipleship and opportunities to serve aim to turn first-time attendees into growing disciples.

### **Engaging with Children, Youth & Young Adults**

A Parents-and-Toddlers group meets weekly in the parish hall; Youth Group (fortnightly, average 30) offers games, food and a short reflective slot that introduces Christian values; and the lay team delivers whole-school assemblies plus a monthly praise service in Church with the Easington C of E Primary School. A children's resource corner in church and small but growing library round out provision, though we are convinced that sustained, priest-led leadership will be critical in guiding these seekers beyond first contact into committed discipleship and church membership.

### **Challenging Poverty**

Responding to high deprivation indices in East Durham, members of our PCC host a weekly "CAFE (Church Action for Families in Easington) Together" hot-meal ministry (25-35 meals) which has been running for 13 years, Warm-Space/Film afternoons, a Food-Bank collection point and regular charitable giving, including the Children's Society box scheme and East Durham Trust partnerships. Members of our PCC visit residential homes every six weeks, offering communion by extension and hymnal worship.

## Caring for God's Creation

Recent eco-steps include full LED relighting, installation of two A-rated boilers, reduced-hour exterior floodlights, wild-flower zones in the churchyard and adoption of 100 % renewable-energy tariffs. A Hive smart-heating system is to be installed in the community hall shortly, and the PCC has begun mapping a route to Net-Zero by 2030, drawing on the Church of England Energy Footprint Tool.

## *Mission*

Mission is woven into every PCC agenda and roughly 20 % of the worshipping community is directly involved in outreach, whether that be leading Alpha, staffing CAFE Together, volunteering in school or singing in the praise band.

Drawing on the Vacancy-Audit, the PCC's mission priorities are to deepen engagement with children, teenagers and their families, launching an Alpha for Youth, offer a larger variety of services, and to widen our worship and discipleship pattern with Bible-study services. Each strand will flourish only as we enlarge the volunteer team and under the steady leadership of a resident priest.



St. Mary's has a substantial faith link with the adjoining Church Primary School, including a whole school service once a month in the church with the praise band and lay team (if no clergy available). We also have four members of St. Mary's lay team who actively volunteer in the school helping out with assemblies (weekly) and praise music (once a month), as well as targeted reading support and support for neurodivergent learners since two of the volunteers are themselves trained primary teachers.



Children from the Church Primary School attending Ash Wednesday Service

## *Finance*

St Mary's encourages generous giving through preaching, celebration and fundraising activities from time to time. As well as envelope collections, contactless and online bank-transfer options with Gift Aid are also in place. The reserve policy holds three months' running costs.

All parish share requests are met in full and on time, though at a level below the diocesan guided figure.

Annual accounts and trustee reports are produced promptly; the outstanding action is appointment of an independent examiner.

## *Buildings*

The Grade 1 listed twelfth-century church stands in a conservation area beside the village green. Inside it is largely accessible via ramps; large-print hymn books and a loop system support those with sensory needs. The building is open for worship twice weekly and as a heritage/tourist site on Friday and Saturday afternoons over the summer period. A modern parish hall (built 2000) sits 50 m away and hosts more than 20 hours of community use each week, ranging from karate, ukulele classes, choir, new age Kurling, brownies, a youth club and private functions.



St Mary The Virgin Easington Village



The Community Hall

In the Church Community Hall, repair or replacement of the main entrance doors and windows has been identified as a key priority. The hall is an important venue for parish events, community meetings, and social gatherings, so maintaining a welcoming and weatherproof environment is essential. Potential sources of grant funding are being explored to support this work

Routine maintenance tasks such as gutter clearance, inspection of lightning conductors, and the servicing of the intruder alarm are met from church funds. Larger repair or improvement projects, when required, are typically supported through targeted fundraising or external grant applications.

Within the church itself, several works remain outstanding from the 2021 Quinquennial Inspection Report. The most significant is the replacement of the existing heating system with a modern, energy-efficient alternative that will provide reliable warmth throughout the year while reducing long-term running costs and environmental impact. This matter was discussed in detail during the Archdeacon's visitation in July 2025. The PCC is now preparing a substantial lottery-fund grant application to address the heating replacement and other essential works highlighted in the QI report. This forms part of our wider effort to ensure the long-term care and sustainability of the building.



## *Governance*

The PCC meets once a month; prayer and scripture open every meeting and trustees report a good grasp of their legal responsibilities. Discussion is generally open and constructive, although members acknowledge some difficulty filling vacant officer posts. Safeguarding culture is strong, led by a diligent Parish Safeguarding Officer, and the online Dashboard is fully implemented.

During the recent vacancy the churchwardens, treasurer and a voluntary parish administrator have kept ministry flowing and paperwork up to date. It should be emphasised that St Mary's has a particularly strong PCC who are supportive to the Clergy, and PCC meetings are generally very constructive.

In addition to our PCC, lay participation consists of Baptism and Wedding preparation, chalice and music assistance, plus a strong readings, intercessions and refreshments team.

On the first Sunday of each month at St Mary's, our praise band leads in contemporary hymnal praise. During interregnum, this service has also been completely lay-led.

## *Engagement & Building Priorities at St Mary's*

**Numerical fragility:** Although we show recent signs of growth, regular attendance sits below 30 and the age-profile is skewed toward older adults. While festival services, baptisms and community events draw large crowds, translating that goodwill into sustained Sunday involvement is an ongoing challenge, particularly during this period of interregnum.

**Building warmth and accessibility:** Worshippers often comment that the medieval stone church is cold outside summer months, hampering both comfort and mid-week use. The planned heating overhaul will be a major logistical and fundraising effort, but is critical to widening community engagement and safeguarding the fabric for future generations.

# *The Parish Church of The Ascension*

## *Working with the Four*

### *Diocesan Priorities*

#### **Energising Growth**

Since the start of the vacancy in July 2023 the PCC has grown in strength and we are now engaging proactively with parishioners, making known the presence of God and His Church. We have two members of the PCC who are under the age of 22 and we typically have around 11 people attending church on a Sunday morning. They are volunteering to read lessons and take part in church life. We have various community activities for all ages in the hall, which is used as an informal setting in which to introduce stories about Jesus to the users of the hall.

We have regular and seasonal events for families in the church, to familiarise themselves within the church and informal settings to nurture parishioners and spread the good news of Christ. Two PCC members have also undertaken Open the Book training and we have been liaising with the Headteacher at one of the two schools served by our parish. Where previously, the school was unreceptive, the new Headteacher is most receptive and we are proactively developing this relationship.

Our two schools are Hope Wood Academy (number of pupils on roll 227) which is a Special Educational Needs setting for pupils in the age range of 2-19 years and Easington Colliery Primary School (number of pupils on the roll 532) for children in the age range of 3-11 years. We now have a Pastoral Minister, who is authorised for home visits and the distribution of communion at home and we are rekindling our connections with local care homes and sheltered housing facilities.

We now have WI-FI and computers on site and are encouraging members of our community to come along, meet us, make use of these free facilities, including undertaking job searches, form filling, or online training, for which we are able to provide support, if required. These facilities are also beneficial for existing or new church members and our community volunteers, to undertake training to obtain various accreditations, such as safeguarding training.

### Our Harvest Service



### Donkeys at Easter



### Community Event



### Winter Warmer



## Caring for God's creation

Our parish is a former colliery village, which one had a coal mine at its heart. Our property mix comprises traditional terrace houses along with new more recent private housing developments, including a large private housing development adjacent to the church. Although the mine, support buildings and infrastructure are no longer here, the land has been reclaimed and landscaped and is now a thriving green area, with a memorial garden, children's play area, pond and monument, which is very important to our community.

Nature Reserve



Pit Memorial Garden



As a church, we purchase green electricity, through the parish buying service and the lightbulbs in our church are LED. The faculty for our roof replacement project has been granted by the Chancellor of the Diocese and the specification of the replacement church roof includes installation of high-level insulation materials, as specified by our parish architect.

Our church hall has good natural lighting, which minimises the use of artificial lighting and we have a new energy efficient double oven cooker.

We have a resident colony of bees which return each year.

We offer a range of summer activities, including local children assisting with gardening and litter picking on site, with provision of appropriate personal protective clothing and adult supervision.

There are spacious gardens around the enclosed church grounds. Ours is a spacious site, with good on site parking provision. The grounds are set mainly to lawn and the church hall is situated within the grounds of the church.

The site, which is adjacent to sizable allotments and close to the scenic East Coast Heritage Trail, regularly attract foxes, rabbits and sparrow hawks.

We are considering the creation of a small commemorative garden within the grounds of the church, in memory of those who perished in the Easington Colliery Pit Disaster of 1951 and also as a setting to offer peace and tranquillity, for any who may wish to come along to remember and reflect.

This setting will also help to promote learning for children around Caring for God's Creation and the importance of its beauty.

## Engaging with Children, Youth and Young Adults

We are using informal settings such as our community kitchen, known as June's Kitchen, named in memory of a former long standing Churchwarden and Mother's Union Lead, to reach out to and welcome parishioners who are struggling to put food on the table, by offering free, or pay what you can afford nutritional meals, depending on individual circumstances.

For those who visit our hall, we seek also to use it as an informal setting by which we can spread the good news of Jesus Christ, to nurture and encourage new believers, to help them to know of the love of Jesus Christ, to encourage them to become Christians and in time, to come to their own profession of faith through confirmation.

We have already had successes in this endeavour, with the baptism of children from families who attend our mission based activities in the church hall and some of our younger adults being confirmed, alongside our older members of our parish.

The recent purchase and use of percussion instruments to accompany some songs and hymns, has encouraged members of the congregation to express themselves, through such musical participation in the service. We regularly hold seasonal events, in which the whole community can become involved, in celebrating and learning about the festivals and seasons within the church calendar. For example, we have very well attended Easter Celebrations with children and their parents involved in an Easter Egg hunt in the church, with each egg containing a part of the Easter Story. When all of the eggs are collected, the children and their parents come together and complete the Easter Story, while learning of the love that Christ has for all of them and experiencing the joy of His resurrection.

We also have very popular Advent and Christmas events and the Christingle service is very well attended, with help from families, in preparing the Christingles. Within the hall, we also run child-based activities. Now that we have WI-FI and computer facilities we are hoping to set up events and activities for the older children, within a warm space, in the winter evenings.



Harvest  
Celebrations



## Challenging Poverty

Our parish is one with varying types and levels of poverty and deprivation, scoring amongst some of the most deprived areas of the country. We have prioritised our missional outreach at targeting the most acute needs of our community.

In our church hall, we run several activities aimed at tackling those needs, including the provision of food at no cost or a low cost, every week, on Mondays, Fridays and Sundays. Across the parish, there are significant levels of deprivation including mental and physical needs of health. We also deliver meals to those who are fearful or unable to leave their home. The concept of June's Kitchen has been expanded so that we can pre-cook and freeze ready meals, for parishioners to consume through the week.

We work in close partnership with East Durham Trust, providing food parcels for those in need and we are able to arrange a top-up of prepayment cards for those in need of fuel, as part of our response to fuel poverty. A number of the meals we prepare, are enabled through our membership of the Fareshare Scheme, to assist the sustainability of our food related mission projects, although grants and other sources of funding are sought and obtained, to enable us to cover our food provision and cooking overheads.

Feeding Families



Food Parcels



Clothing Bank



Christmas Gifts



## Mission

As a church, we feel called to respond to the level of deprivation in Easington Colliery. Over the past three years, the PCC along with our community volunteers, have worked proactively to make a positive impact.

As members of East Durham Trust, we provide food parcels to members of our community who are struggling, along with making referrals to statutory agencies, helping our visitors to complete forms and offering advice.

A food delivery service is available to parishioners who may be reluctant to leave their home, or who may have physical or other impairments. We also run from our church hall, a free clothing and household goods outlet, of items donated from within and beyond the local community.

For the past two years, at Christmas, we have offered in the church hall, a free three-course meal on Christmas Day, prepared by PCC members and community volunteers and which has resulted in some 40 members of our community who are struggling, or who find Christmas Day difficult, enjoying our hospitality. We have used these and other such opportunities, to welcome all and to promote fellowship with in our community. We also deliver meals to our local care home.

We have been awarded a grant from an electrical distributor, to help address local fuel poverty in the parish. A member of our PPC is designated to assess such need and to top-up pre-payment cards, where there is evidence that households are in fuel poverty.

We also have a wide range of summer activities suitable for all, which involve food, raffles, competitions for the children, various stalls, bouncy castles and animals, such as donkeys and other animals with which the children can interact. We have established good mutual relationships with local businesses, who often provide us with donations of goods and services, or financially, to help us maintain our community outreach activities.

We have also established a positive working relationship with our local councillors, who provide funding towards our missional activities and we work closely and collaboratively with them, in service to our community, through the provision of various community oriented events.

Fun Fair



Morning Mingle



Christmas Day Lunch



Fresh weekly produce



In terms of our hopes and aspirations for the future, we will work holistically with our new Incumbent, to grow the mission of the church in our parish, including through the establishment of a Sunday School, informal worship and street evangelism.

We enjoy close links to Easington Colliery Heritage Society, which uses our church hall for exhibitions and which has provided historical material and context, in support of our successful external grant funding activities.

We are keen to explore other ways in which we can work proactively across our community and through prayer and practical support, to respond to local issues.

These include social exclusion, feelings of worthlessness, helplessness, feeling marginalised and to embrace those who feel they have been forgotten about by society, especially younger members of our community of working age, who are unable to secure gainful employment.

## Finance

The PCC has taken steps to strengthen governance and we include a finance report at every PCC meeting. We are part of the Parish Giving Scheme. We use face to face interactions and social media platforms to improve connectivity with parishioners.

We now have an electronic payment system in place for donations to be made at regular services and occasional offices. We also participate in the Gift Aid Scheme.

Given the high level of deprivation in the parish and our prioritising of the Diocesan Poverty Priority we are placing significant emphasis on securing financial resources to provide hot food for those in our community who are struggling.

Since 2023 the PCC has worked proactively with grant funding organisations and has undertaken various parish centred fund raising initiatives, to secure significant funding (in excess of £260,000 to date) for a new roof for the church, the enlargement and re-equipping of the kitchen in the church hall, to support our ministry of food provision to those members of our community who are struggling.

Over the past two years, we have progressively increased our parish share and all payments are up to date.

Our End of Year Accounts are attached in the Appendices.

## Buildings

Ours is a disabled accessible church, which can accommodate around 120 people.

The matters identified in our most recent QI report as urgent, have been attended to, with the exception of the recovering and refurbishment of the church roof.

In respect of this, we have received a sizeable six figure grant from the National Lottery Community Fund, along with receipt of other additional external grant funds and parish centred fund raising activities, which have allowed us, in October 2025 to commence the required re-roofing of the church and this work is expected to be fully completed within two months. The enlargement and refurbishment of the kitchen in the church hall, is expected to be completed by spring 2026.

The remaining non-urgent minor repairs referenced in our most recent QI report, cannot be carried out until the roof project is completed.

We also have designated areas within the church for use by wheelchair users. We have a new versatile sound system, including radio microphone and we have a regularly tuned and maintained pipe organ.

We are fortunate to enjoy a decent-sized and accessible Church Hall located in the church grounds, with toilets, including a disabled person toilet and baby changing facilities.

We work closely and proactively with Communities Together, an independent Christian Charity, which works alongside churches and communities, to alleviate poverty.

Our Church



Inside our Church



Our Hall





Inside our hall



## Governance

Since 2023, our new PCC comprises of six members and we have a sub group which is designated as a Fundraising and Events Committee, which membership also includes our community volunteers.

We have two Churchwardens who sit as ex officio members of the PCC and who are also our Treasurer and Secretary. Our Deanery Lay Chair, of many years standing, is our Vice Chair of the PCC and we have extended a standing invitation to our Area Dean, to attend all meetings.

The PCC works well with the Area Dean and the Lay Chair, to ensure that Church of England Representation Rules and all other applicable legislation, regulations and best practice, is fully complied with.

## Worship

At present, we have a Sunday Eucharist at 11am. However, we are flexible in terms of timing and joint services with our sister parishes. We are also keen to embrace midweek worship and other opportunities for prayer, service of the word and family friendly services. In addition to a very well attended Remembrance Day Service in November of each year, we also lead other acts of remembrance.

For example, this year, we commemorated the 80th Anniversary of VE Day and anniversaries unique to our parish, such as our late Victoria Cross holder and the Easington Colliery Pit Disaster of 1951 during which 83 miners perished. During our interregnum, we have been confident in organising and lay leading the Annual Remembrance Day Service, in collaboration with the parish council, the local British Legion, the Easington Colliery Brass Band ( now in the National Championship League) and local ex-service men and women. We are committed to continue our lay leadership services, in close consultation and collaboration with our new Incumbent.

VE Day



Remembrance Day



Wedding



Brass Band



# *St Michael and All Angels, Hawthorn*

## *Working with the Four Diocesan Priorities*

### **Energising Growth**

Alpha courses and Lent courses have been run in person or online. Meetings in church range from 8 to 20 and the average for 2024 was 13. We have 22 members on the Electoral Roll at present. Christingle sees a packed church. One villager who initially came to church has been baptised and confirmed and is a regular and valuable member.



### **Engaging with Children, Youth & Young Adults**

The village is predominantly older generation and as such, we rarely have contact with young children or teenagers. We do not have a school in the village and the nearest is served by St Mary's teams attending. We have play mats available, a toy box and juice on hand.



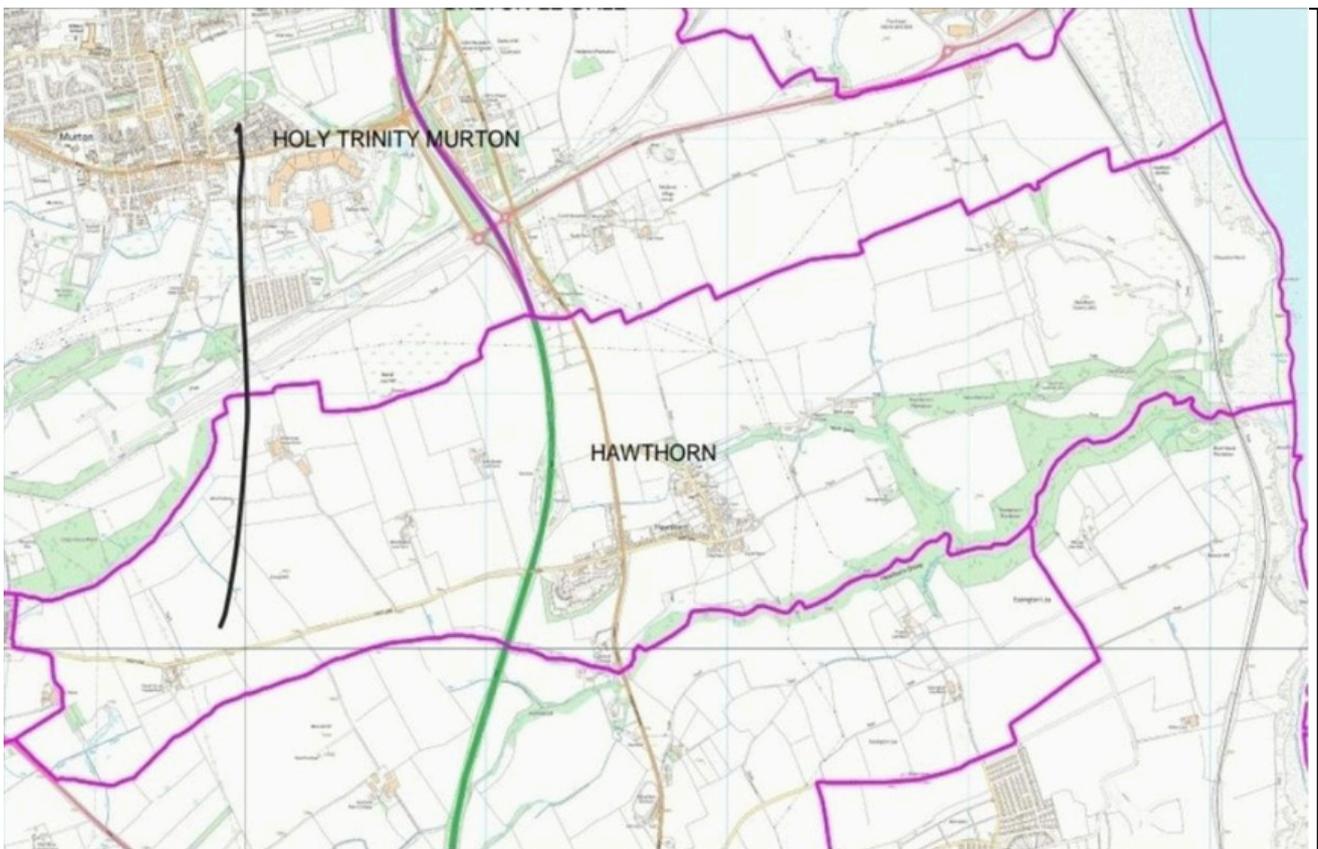
Families who live away visit parents etc but these are then limited to one off occasions. One family did attend and during this time, 2 young children were born and became regular visitors. Although, due to family commitments, they no longer attend, we are still in contact.



## Challenging Poverty

We live in a fairly affluent rural farming village, populated mainly by retired people and professionals. We run a coffee morning after church in the home of a member of the congregation, together with a fortnightly coffee morning held in the community centre. Other events in church and the community centre are open to everyone.

We collect for the local food bank with tinned goods and donations on a regular basis to the East Durham Trust partnership. The Christingle Service collection is sent directly to the Children's Society. We have no care homes in our parish, although Communion at home is offered to those who are housebound.



The catchment area of Hawthorn

## **Caring for God's Creation**

We have had LED lighting installed in the church for over 3 years now. Our electrical heating system is due to be replaced as soon as a faculty is granted, with application forms already submitted to the diocese. Our energy provider is 100% green energy and we have no other utilities connected to the church. A number of areas at the south-west corner of the churchyard are allowed to grow wild and attract a variety of insects to visit and pollinate.

Our PCC has begun to map a route to Net-Zero by 2030, drawing on the Church of England Energy Footprint Tool, which was to include the addition of EV panels to the south elevation of the church. This, together with battery storage and an inverter system, would have meant (with feed in tariffs from the sale of excess electricity) we would be debt free from the installation and receive an additional income. However, Durham County Council turned down the application as the church is in a conservation area.

## **Mission**

We have a regular weekly service in church on Sundays at 9:15 am. Other services throughout the year include Good Friday, Easter Sunday, Christingle and Christmas. These are attended by our Sunday attendees, with increased attendance at the other services. Weddings, baptisms and funerals are the other services that are held as and when required. Depending on the occasion, these can be well attended. We have also held burial of ashes services.

Considering the number of people living in the parish, (approximately 450 across 200 homes and farms) our average weekly attendance for 2024 was 13. Encouragingly, this percentage of attendees, relative to parish population, is well above the national average. We have an Electoral Roll numbering 22, with some registrants not residing in the parish boundary, but regularly attending services. Numbers of attendees increase when major feasts are celebrated.

We have an ageing population within a rural, farming community setting. Our demographic cross section comprises farming, professionals including doctors and dentists and retired people. Ours is a fairly affluent village, having seen additional homes built at Western Park, The Paddocks and St. Michaels Rise.



We have a broad and adaptable style within our church, reflected in the forms of worship, but also offer traditional styles of worship. We have also had joint services in the past with our two other churches, to embrace these. A notable service, attended by our sister churches, to mark the occasion of the retirement of Reverend Paul Paterson, on his 75th birthday, was followed by a Sunday lunch in the community centre for our other churches to attend and then afterwards for refreshments, open to everyone in the village.

We have run Alpha courses, Lent courses and various post holders on the P.C.C. attend other training courses pertinent to their needs. We enjoyed a well attended wedding dress exhibition in church and presently are organising a Soup and Stotties morning in the community centre, following our harvest festival service.

We hold morning prayers on a Wednesday morning at 9:15 at the home of parishioners situated opposite the church, which offers a more informal setting for worship, fellowship and refreshments. There is a church coffee morning held in Hawthorn Community Centre on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of the month.

## *Finance*

Creative use has been made of the large gardens attached to the home of two parishioners, to host events which have helped to raise funds for the parish and these have been very well attended.

Parish finances are in good standing. We meet our Parish Share contribution, which is just under £15,000 per year. This has been enhanced by a number of donations and bequests. Parishioners also can contribute via a card machine in church, cash on the plate and a number are regular weekly/monthly payees by direct debit. Accounts are finalised for each January, audited, presented to the P.C.C. and at the A.P.C.M. These have been presented in an open and easy to understand format and at such meetings, are open to scrutiny and questions.

Our End of Year Accounts are attached in the Appendices.

## *Buildings*

Ours is the only church building and graveyard in Hawthorn. The church was built in the 1860's by the Pemberton family (local squirearchy) who lived in Hawthorn Towers, beside the railway line. Many of the houses back then, were located in that area, than in the present village, including Gamekeepers Cottage and The Laundry.



The building, considering its age, is in fairly good condition. The normal associated problems, including general repairs, painting and replacement of flashing, tiles etc are dealt with as they arise, so they do not deteriorate further. Cutting and pruning within church grounds, is done on a weekly basis between March and October each year. The church has just commissioned electrical work to meet present standards and envisage having a new, efficient and budget friendly heating system in the church.



St Michael and All Angels  
around 1862



St Michael and All Angels

## *Governance*

We have access to advice and support from our Diocesan Governance Manager, Area Dean and Deanery Lay Chair, to provide advice and guidance on matters concerning governance. Decisions within our church are made at our bi-monthly PCC meetings, where members have certain roles, including Church Warden, Safeguarding Officer, Treasurer, deanery representatives, and Secretary. Regular reports are received from our PCC officers concerning all aspects of parish business.

We use different forms of communication in recognition that not all PCC members have access to internet or suitable phones, so reports are available in all formats. We regard good governance as being essential to the effective and efficient management of parish business, with all PC meetings being conducted in an open and transparent manner.

## *Current Service Patterns*

We are open to joint worship and to varying service times to create a sustainable pattern across the two benefices.

<b>Church</b>	<b>Sunday Service</b>	<b>Mid-week Service</b>
St Mary's Easington Village	9:30 AM (60 minutes)	Wednesday 9:30 AM (30 minutes)
The Ascension, Easington Colliery	11:00 AM (60 minutes)	
St Michael's, Hawthorn	9:15 AM (60 minutes)	Wednesday 9:15 AM (Morning Prayer)

## *Occasional Offices*

Baptism and wedding enquiries arrive via email or phone, and are logged by volunteer administrators. We also host annual All Souls memorial services in each church.

The table represents numbers in 2024.

<b>Church</b>	<b>Baptisms</b>	<b>Weddings</b>	<b>Funerals</b>
St Mary's Easington Village	6	4	9
The Ascension, Easington Colliery	6	2	32
St Michael's, Hawthorn	1	0	2

St Mary's also receives a monthly visit from the Easington Village C of E School bringing around 150 children and 25 adults.

## *Additional Roles and Support*

The Incumbent is required to serve as an ex-officio on the governing body at Easington C of E Primary School. This relationship has borne rich fruit with well attended monthly services and weekly church assembly which the incumbent can lead.

The Incumbent will become an ex-officio member of Easington Deanery Synod and a member of the Deanery Chapter.

## *Deanery and Ecumenical Links*

In 2013, the charity CAFE Together was set up in partnership with Easington Colliery Methodist Church to deliver affordable meals at the church every Thursday, as well as support and friendship to the local community. Several members of St Mary's Church have been actively involved ever since, with this Project now operating under the auspices of 'Focus Easington' but still based at the same venue, which has been recently refurbished and developed into 'The Welcome Centre'.

There's great scope for a cafe church style of worship that could be offered jointly by the Anglican and Methodist churches as a Christian outreach initiative in this area. The Church of the Ascension has previously enjoyed joint services with the Methodist Church, and this is a relationship which could flourish under a new Incumbent.



All three churches have good working relationships with their respective parish councils. St. Mary's benefit from a solid relationship with Easington Parish Council, which is based opposite the church in Seaton Holme and is proactively exploring ideas to work more closely for the benefit of the community, for example, tourist / historical trails over Heritage weekends and bell-ringing classes (we have a full peal of 8 bells).

The Church of The Ascension also works closely with their Parish Council, organising Remembrance Day Services and parades. Our three parishes were well represented at a Deanery Songs of Praise Service held in September 2025.

All parishes are represented on the Deanery Synod, and we also contribute towards the Deanery Development Plan.

Overseas links include: Lesotho, Water Aid, Toilet Twinning, and Christian Aid emergency appeals.

Ecumenical links include CAFE Together, Christian Unity and Communities Together Durham.

Since the end of coal mining, other Christian denominations have found it challenging to sustain a local presence. We are thankful that our three Anglican churches have remained rooted here—adapting to new realities and, alongside our friends at Easington Colliery Methodist Church, continuing a steady Christian witness and practical service at the heart of the community.

## *Rectory*

The Rectory is a modern and pleasant home situated within a cul-de-sac comprised of only twelve houses. It's within five minutes walk of St. Mary's Church and Easington Village Church of England Primary School. Easington Academy Secondary School is less than five minutes walk from the Rectory.

There are four bedrooms, one with en-suite, a bathroom and a downstairs toilet. There's also an office, study, dining room, kitchen, utility room, and a lounge with patio doors opening into a pleasant and private rear garden.

Rectory Address: 5 Tudor Grange, Easington, SR8 3DF.



The Rectory

## *Person Specification*

We are praying for an adaptable, flexible Incumbent with a clear passion for mission—especially among children, teenagers and their families—who will relish running Alpha, shaping imaginative family-friendly worship, and turning festival crowds and school contacts into lasting discipleship. We are seeking someone with a heart for evangelism, meeting people where they are and relishing the challenge of helping newcomers begin and grow in faith.

You will inherit strong foundations in Warm-Space hospitality, CAFE Together, June's Kitchen, and food-bank partnerships. We hope you'll build on this community-based social action while developing fresh outreach ideas that meet East Durham's current needs. Alongside mission energy, we desire someone who can strengthen links with schools and care homes, inspire volunteers across our three parishes, and lead the two benefices confidently to grow the kingdom of God in these communities, with spiritual leadership, creativity, resilience, and a collaborative and holistic approach.

We will offer a warm and hospitable north east welcome, and will fully support and help you to quickly settle and integrate within our parish communities.



St Mary The Virgin



The Church of The Ascension



St Michael and All Angels

## *Links*

### **St Mary's, Easington Village**

**Website:** <https://lbidesign.wixsite.com/stmarys>

**Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/stmaryseasingtonvillage>

**A Church Near You:** <https://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/13493/>

### **St Michael & All Angels, Hawthorn**

**Website:** <https://www.hawthornchurch.net/>

**Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100064150616949>

**A Church Near You:** <https://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/13496/>

### **The Ascension, Easington Colliery**

**Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/theascensioneasingtoncolliery>

**A Church Near You:** <https://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/13494/>

## *Durham Diocese Prayer For Mission*

God of Mission, who alone brings growth to Your church. Send your Holy Spirit to give vision to our planning, wisdom to our actions, and power to our witness. Help our church to grow in numbers, in spiritual commitment to you, and in service to our local community.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

# Appendices

## St Mary's The Virgin, Easington

Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December

2024

### Receipts and Payments Accounts

	Note	Unrestricted Fund	Unrestricted Designated Fund	Restricted Funds	Endowment Funds	Total Funds 2024	Total Funds 2023
		£	£	£	£	£	£
<b>Receipts</b>							
<b>Voluntary receipts:</b>							
Planned giving		11,826	-	-	-	11,826	11,830
Collections		3,457	-	-	-	3,457	4,764
Gift Aid recovered		3,340	-	-	-	3,340	1,997
All other giving/voluntary	2	10,280	-	-	-	10,280	5,039
		<b>28,904</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>28,904</b>	<b>23,630</b>
Activities for generating funds	3	2,073	-	-	-	2,073	1,479
Investment income	4	-	211	110	-	321	204
<b>Church activities:</b>							
Income from trading	5	8,680	-	-	-	8,680	7,386
Asset sales	6	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other receipts	7	17,151	-	-	-	17,151	22,734
		<b>25,831</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>25,831</b>	<b>30,120</b>
<b>Total receipts</b>		<b>56,807</b>	<b>211</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>57,129</b>	<b>55,432</b>
<b>Payments</b>							
<b>Church activities:</b>							
Parish share		12,480	-	-	-	12,480	13,930
Clergy and staffing costs	8	2,793	-	-	-	2,793	3,189
Church running expenses	9	15,976	-	-	-	15,976	31,675
Hall running costs	10	12,621	-	-	-	12,621	7,330
Mission giving and donations	11	1,266	-	-	-	1,266	890
Costs of trading	12	-	-	-	-	-	-
Repairs and redecorations	13	-	-	-	-	-	-
Asset purchases	14	539	-	-	-	539	-
		<b>45,675</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>45,675</b>	<b>57,014</b>
Cost of generating funds	15	3,171	-	-	-	3,171	4,913
Governance costs	16	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other Outgoing Resources costs	16	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total payments</b>		<b>48,846</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>48,846</b>	<b>61,927</b>
Excess of receipts over payments		7,961	211	110	-	8,282	(6,495)
Transfers between funds	17	(4,868)	4,798	70	-	-	0
		<b>3,093</b>	<b>5,009</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>8,282</b>	<b>(6,495)</b>
Sale/(purchase) of investments		-	-	-	-	-	-
Cash at bank and in hand at 1 Jan		15,747	6,820	6,072	-	28,639	35,134
Cash at bank and in hand at 31 Dec		<b>18,840</b>	<b>11,829</b>	<b>6,252</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>36,922</b>	<b>28,639</b>

<b>The Church of the Ascension Easington Colliery</b>			
<b>Receipts and Payments</b>			
<b>Year ended 31st December 2024</b>			
		2024	2023
<b>General Fund Receipts</b>			
Envelopes, Loose Plate, Funeral Collections		3,318.75	3,448.03
Funeral and Wedding Fees		3,478.00	3,798.70
Funeral Extras		597.00	514.58
Donations		1,191.00	90.00
Social Events		1,868.70	2,372.40
Sales		242.78	
Bank Interest		470.32	294.84
Hall Lettings		4,079.40	2,805.70
Gift Aid		1,965.40	
Grants		2,900.00	
<b>Total General Fund Receipts</b>		<b>20,111.35</b>	<b>13,324.25</b>
<b>General Fund Payments</b>			
Parish share and Deanery Synod		4,500.00	3,080.00
Insurance		3,285.92	3,579.63
Buildings and Grounds Maintenance		3,929.75	4,932.19
Upkeep of Services		1,076.79	1,193.59
Administration		30.16	125.04
Heat, Light and Water		6,635.81	5,150.33
Cost of Social Events			457.00
Other expenditure			
<b>Total General Fund Payments</b>		<b>19,458.43</b>	<b>18,517.78</b>
<b>Weddings and Funeral Designated Fund Receipts</b>			
Collections for Charities		333.74	238.24
Fees payable to the Diocese		3,107.20	3,311.22
Fees payable to clergy		1,962.40	2,633.62
Fees payable to organists		610.00	590.00
Fees payable to vergers		1,050.00	1,170.00
<b>Total Weddings and Funeral Fund received</b>	<b>7,063.34</b>		<b>7,943.08</b>
<b>Weddings and Funeral Designated Fund Payments</b>			
Collections for Charities			208.64
Fees paid to the Diocese		4,699.34	1,934.98
Fees paid to Clergy		1,962.40	2,633.62
Fees paid to the Organists		540.00	650.00
Fees paid to the Vergers		1,575.00	860.00
<b>Total Weddings and Funeral Fund payments</b>	<b>8,776.74</b>		<b>6,287.24</b>

<b>General Fund</b>		2,024	2,023
Brought forward. 1st January 2024		25,532.47	45,176.00
Receipts 2024		20,111.35	13,874.25
Payments 2024		- 19,458.43	18,517.78
Fund Transfers			- 15,000.00
<b>Carried forward 31st December 2024</b>		<b>26,185.39</b>	<b>25,532.47</b>
<b>Roof Fund</b>			
Brought forward. 1st January 2024		22,611.00	8,985.00
Fund Transfer			15,000.00
Receipts 2024		1,000.00	
Payments 2024		- 5,890.00	1,374.00
<b>Carried forward 31st December 2024</b>		<b>17,721.00</b>	<b>22,611.00</b>
<b>Coffee Morning Fund</b>			
Brought forward. 1st January 2024		-	137.03
Receipts 2024			200.00
Payments 2024		- 186.92	337.03
Transfer to June's Kitchen		186.92	
<b>Carried forward 31st December 2024</b>		<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Church Hall Maintenance Fund</b>			
Brought forward. 1st January 2024		37.36	1,500.00
Receipts 2024			2,082.36
Payments 2024		- 1,302.40	1,295.00
Transfer to Fuel Poverty Fund			- 2,250.00
<b>Carried forward 31st December 2024</b>		<b>- 1,265.04</b>	<b>37.36</b>
<b>Community Kitchen Fund</b>			
Brought forward. 1st January 2024		3,696.60	3,500.00
Grants			
Receipts 2024		950.11	2,800.00
Payments 2024		- 2,169.66	2,603.40
Transfer to June's Kitchen		- 2,477.05	
<b>Carried forward 31st December 2024</b>		<b>-</b>	<b>3,696.60</b>
<b>June's Kitchen</b>			
Brought forward. 1st January 2024			
Grants			
Receipts 2024			
Transfers		2,608.13	

<b>Carried forward 31st December 2024</b>		<b>2,608.13</b>		
<b>Community Fuel Poverty</b>				
Brought forward. 1st January 2024		678.00		
Receipts 2024				
Payments 2024		360.00		72.00
transfer to June's Kitchen		- 318.00		750.00
<b>Carried forward 31st December 2024</b>		<b>-</b>		<b>678.00</b>
<b>Sound System</b>				
Brought forward. 1st January 2024		- 1,184.00		
Fund Transfers				1,500.00
Receipts 2024		500.00		
Payments 2024				2,684.00
<b>Carried forward 31st December 2023</b>		<b>- 684.00</b>		<b>- 1,184.00</b>
<b>Sequestration</b>				
Brought forward. 1st January 2024		30.70		
Receipts 2024		734.30		202.92
Payments 2024		1,205.32		172.22
<b>Carried forward 31st December 2024</b>		<b>- 440.32</b>		<b>30.70</b>
<b>The Church of the Ascension Easington Colliery</b>				
<b>Balance Sheet at 31st December 2024</b>				
		2024		2023
<b>Current Assets</b>				
Bank Current Account		8,863.97		19,743
Bank Deposit Account		31,735.05		31,265
Cash and cheques not banked		1,813		1,867
paid cheques not presented				
		<b>42,412</b>		<b>52,875</b>

<b>Represented by</b>				
General Fund brought forward	25,532			45,176
General fund receipts	20,111			13,874
General fund payments	- 19,458			- 18,518
Fund transfer				- 15,000
General fund at 31st December		26,185		25,532
Wedding and Funerals Fund		- 1,713		1,535
Roof Fund		17,721		22,611
Coffee Morning Fund		-		
Church Hall Maintenance fund		- 1,265		37
June's Kitchen		2,608		3,697
Community Kitchen fund		-		
Community Fuel Poverty		-		678
Sound System		- 684		- 1,184
Sequestration		- 440		- 31
<b>Total Funds</b>		<b>42,412</b>		<b>52,875</b>

**ST MICHAEL AND ALL ANGELS CHURCH, HAWTHORN: 2024 YEAR END RETURNS**

**Income and Expenditure Statement for period 1st January 2024 to 31st December 2024**

INCOME			EXPENDITURE		
	2024	2023		2024	2023
Collection Plate	£1,967.26	£3,435.25	Insurance	£1,457.93	£1,419.40
Regular Giving	£4,482.00	£3,982.55	Churchyard Upkeep	£3,560.00	£1,480.00
Donations	£514.10	£893.50	Parish Share	£14,108.40	£13,436.40
Fundraising Events	£1,532.23	£1,081.97	Energy Costs	£1,007.24	£1,425.90
Trust Fund Interest	£853.55	£637.15	DBF Fees (Durham)	£24.80	£316.00
Church Fees	£337.60	£695.00	Maintenance	£51.99	£610.00
Gift Aid Reclaim	£3,015.68	£3,118.27	Miscellaneous	£4,013.75	£2,385.90
SumUp Income	£1,571.00	£4,002.55	Cash Payments	£65.00	£130.00
Priest fees reclaimed from DDBF	£865.62	N/A			
	£15,139.04	£17,846.24		£24,289.11	£21,203.60
Bank Balances (at 31/12/2023)	2024	2023	<p align="center">Correct to 31/12/2024 Accounts Audited January 2025 by Rev Paul Harrison</p>		
Current Account	£1,453.14	£5,867.93			
Active Saver Account	£30,790.83	£35,126.26			
DBF Trust (Church Hall)	£15,014.17	£15,014.17			
DBF Trust (Pemberton Estate)	£1,044.00	£1,044.00			
DBF Trust (PCC)	£600.00	£600.00			
National Savings (awaiting reply)**	£8,760.93	£8,673.95			
Cash in hand	£0.00	£381.01			
Total	£57,663.07	£66,707.32			