





**2025 Annual Report  
of the  
Parochial Church Council of  
Christ Church Willaston**



## 2025 Annual Report of the Parochial Church Council of Christ Church, Willaston

### Aims and Purposes

Christ Church PCC has a responsibility to promote in the ecclesiastical parish, the whole mission of the church pastoral, evangelical, social and ecumenical. Additionally, the PCC is entrusted with the maintenance of the church and the churchyard, although in 2025, the re-ordering of the interior of the church was completed. The aim of the re-ordering was to provide for the parish an inclusive, safe and flexible space to be used not only for worship but for community focused activities and private hires for businesses, meetings and celebrations. Initiated in September 2024, the re-ordering handover was completed in June 2025. During this process we were very kindly hosted by the Willaston Methodist Church.

### Objectives and Activities

Our services and worship practices embody faith through prayer, scripture, music, and sacrament. In particular, we strive to empower ordinary individuals to embody their faith within our parish community through:

- Worship and prayer, fostering knowledge of the gospel and developing trust in Jesus.
- Providing pastoral care for parishioners.
- Engaging in outreach initiatives.

The PCC is dedicated to ensuring that as many individuals as possible have the opportunity to participate in worship at Christ Church and become integral members of our parish community. To effectively facilitate this work, it is imperative that we preserve the integrity of Christ Church and its surrounding environment, whilst also striving to incorporate diverse groups in its mission.

## Achievements and Performance

### Worship and prayer

The PCC collaborated closely with Canon Lyndon, other clergy and further individuals called to ministry to provide a diverse range of services throughout the week and year, which our community finds both beneficial and spiritually enriching.

From January until June 2025, we were kindly hosted by the Willaston Methodist Church for our weekly worship. This required coordination to accommodate both the churches under one roof. It was decided that the styles of worship would alternate to support the congregation. During this period, we were responsible for organising the two Sunday services, ensuring equal time for both styles. Our service time was 9:00am each week. Given the limitations imposed by our absence from Christ Church, these arrangements proved remarkably successful.

During the re-ordering process, Willaston Methodist Church consistently demonstrated exceptional hospitality. Every request was met without undue difficulty, and we showed deep gratitude for their unwavering support during the transitional period. A donation of £2,000 was made as a gesture of gratitude after the re-ordering process had been completed.

The average weekly attendance was 56 (36 at the 9.00am service and 20 at the 10.30am service), but this number increased at festivals, including a total of 644 attendees at the Christmas services and other special services. The timing of the 9.00am Sunday service has proved difficult for some members of the congregation and numbers fell slightly over the winter.

For the majority of the year, the church continued to welcome new individuals to our 9:00am Parish Eucharist (Holy Communion) service and our 10:30am All-Age Worship, held each Sunday. We have been encouraging more families and young people to join our church so that they may experience a more engaging worship experience with contemporary hymns and songs. In 2025, we observed satisfactory attendance at Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter Sunday Services.

On our return to Christ Church in June 2025 the normal two service format was resumed.

The Bishop of Birkenhead presided over the Ascension Day service.

In addition to our regular services, we provided opportunities for our community to commemorate and express gratitude to God at significant life milestones. Six baptisms affirmed the gift of life; and four funeral services, eight interments of ashes services and two memorial services. All of which offered a space for friends and family to express their grief and offer thanks for the life that has come to an end and commend the person into God's keeping.

## Church Electoral Roll.

There were 113 parishioners on the Church Electoral Roll in December 2025. The Church Electoral Roll figures are in line with the 2024 figures and in respect of average weekly attendance figures the numbers have been maintained.

## Deanery Synod

In February, the Diocesan Ministry Team spoke about Vocational Culture and encouraged everyone present to consider their part in ministry in their own churches. In May, the Diocesan Environment Team spoke about the national Eco Church and Net Zero Carbon initiatives and asked those present to check that their church had completed the Energy Footprint Tool. In October, Christ Church hosted the Deanery Synod meeting. The Diocesan Racial Justice Officer spoke about *From Lament to Action*, urging everyone to think about unconscious bias and how to avoid it.

Meetings are interesting and informative and are open to all members of our local Anglican churches.

**Helen Heath and Viv Ley**

## The Church

Canon Lyndon Bannon and the church wardens led the PCC as part of their responsibilities. The PCC was able to continue making significant strides in the Church Reordering Project and was delighted to see the project completed in collaboration with the Re-ordering Project Group and the Re-ordering Project Fundraising Group in June 2025.

Our connection with Weatherstones Care Home has remained steadfast, and monthly services were conducted there throughout 2025, led by Christine Smith, Helen Heath and several lay church members.

The relationship between the school and the church has flourished, largely due to the efforts of Canon Lyndon and our other Foundation Governors, Christine Smith and Anita Mitchell, in this area. The school now attend services in church which reflect the church year including Harvest, Christmas, Easter and Year Six Leavers' services.

Home Communion and pastoral care visits were provided by Canon Lyndon Bannon to those in need, upon request and with the consent of the individual. From late autumn a rota has ensured that the church was open on a Saturday morning for private prayer. Supported by Jane Murray and other members of the congregation.

Canon Lyndon Bannon has continued to cover the interregnum, for which the PCC gives thanks.

Regular meetings were held in church and elsewhere, including the Men's Group and the UpLIFT Ladies' group. Both activities were organised and facilitated throughout 2025 by Canon Lyndon Bannon and his wife, Claire, to whom the PCC gives thanks for their providing of a diverse range of enjoyable events throughout the year.

A *Places of Welcome* weekly initiative was introduced in October which has proved very successful and we extend our thanks to all volunteers involved in providing a friendly space where people can enjoy refreshments on a drop-in basis.

Other groups held meetings in various locations within the parish. The *Mothers' Union* and the *Knit and Natter* group continued to meet at the Methodist Church then relocated to the church once the hand over had been completed. The *Home Group* met bi-weekly at Helen Heath's home to engage in a relaxed and informal exploration of the Bible and a weekly prayer group hosted by Christine and Mike Smith in their home has proved encouraging and supportive to many people.

A dedicated fund was established to cover any costs associated with maintaining our magnificent organ in optimal condition. The PCC gives thanks to our resident organist, Professor David Speechley, for his unwavering service and commitment to the organ's upkeep. In September and October 2025, Prof. Speechley arranged two magnificent recitals, one by Prof Ian Tracey and a trumpet and organ concert given by Dr Colin Porter and Mr Owen Bryce both of which were very well received and attended.

At the time of writing this report, the Scout Hut is almost demolished, and it is proposed the space is used by the school possibly for horticultural projects. Churchyard maintenance, supervised by Mike Smith, our Operations and Maintenance Manager remains at the time of writing the report, under the care of *Trees of Green Gardens*, which is supplemented by volunteer assistance.

## **Sacristy Team**

During 2025 the Sacristy Team has been privileged to serve Canon Lyndon and the Body of Christ in Willaston.

During the upheaval brought about by our change of venue from Christ Church to The Methodist Chapel, we were able to support worship and grow in fellowship within the team. We experience joy in the roles we perform. A strong comradeship makes the task even more rewarding.

The members of the team, Chris Brown-Bolton, Alan Roberts, Chris Parry, Charles Hurst and Stephen Harrington perform a number of roles within the Eucharist. The training of the team is a vital element in ensuring that each celebration is fully served even if the full Sacristy team is not available.

Our return to Christ Church, has seen the Team assisting in the Gospel reading, and acting as Acolytes in the opening and closing processions. We look forward to supporting a new Incumbent once appointed and pursuing vigorous Mission as instructed in Matthew 28:19-20 from the splendid new facilities of the Community Hub, growing the Church family within our village community.

**Chris Brown-Bolton**

## **Operations and Maintenance**

Throughout 2025 Mr Mike Smith guided us in compliance with current health and safety and fire safety standards, for which the PCC gives thanks.

The last seven months post reordering have been a busy and interesting period for the church. As we re-entered the newly reordered building and started to get to grips with its modifications and new technology.

A total of **109** new safety features have been introduced into the building to ensure a safer environment, and to give early warning in a gas or fire emergency.

New safety enhancements introduced into the building may not be obvious or evident but are complementary and crucial to the building's health and safety package as a whole.

The new safety assets included are:

- A “mostly” re wired building.
- A new electrical intake / distribution enclosure.
- An upgraded main electrical distribution board, with its associated wiring, fusing, switching and surge protection.
- New fire safety lighting internally and externally throughout the building.
- New fire safety information signage throughout the building.
- Two FD 30 fire doors, one in a high-risk enclosed location, the other in a critical safety transition area.
- Extra fire extinguishers in strategic locations.
- An integrated fire alarm management system comprising:
  - X1 Fire alarm control panel.
  - X4 Fire alarm call points.
  - X6 Areas in the building with emergency lighting.
  - X10 Emergency lighting key switch testing points.
  - X1 Mains interlinked multi smoke and heat detector.
  - X8 Mains smoke detectors with integrated sounders and VAD.
  - X1 Heat detector.
  - X1 High level fire alarm sounder.
  - X2 High level beam reflectors.
  - X2 Beacon strobes.
  - X3 Areas, with mains operated smoke alarms with internal sounders.
- Fire safety lighting Installations:
  - X3 Emergency Illuminated exit signs.
  - X3 Emergency bulkhead luminaires.
  - X8 Emergency micro point luminaires.
  - X1 Solenoid auto shut off valve – installed on the natural gas supply to the boiler.
  - X2 Carbon monoxide alarms.
  - X3 Natural gas alarms.
  - X1 Accessible toilet “call assistance alarm”.
  - X25 New light fittings throughout the building.

### **Planned Maintenance**

The level of planned maintenance, inspection and testing required over the seven-month period post reordering, has come from both our regulatory (mandatory) requirements, as well as our non-specialist periodic testing in accordance with the regulations. The testing and inspection is documented in our maintenance management strategy, and is controlled and documented by a spreadsheet, Christ Church document No CCW 03 - inspection and maintenance schedules for the given year. The document identifies all our maintenance activities, and the due date by which each activity is required to be tested or examined.

The scheduled inspections and examinations are carried out by either third-party contractors for regulatory examinations requiring certification, (*which incur a cost*), or by in house examination and testing carried out by the operations and maintenance manager (*at no cost to us*).

The total number of examinations, inspections and tests, carried out post-handover of the building, amount to a total of **354** activities in the seven-month period post reordering, to the end of December 2025.

### **Regulatory - Audit Action Completion**

We still have outstanding actions from the two-fire safety risk assessment audits carried out over the last eight years:

1. From the Cheshire Fire Authority Fire Safety Audit dated November 2017 - which identified 11 deficiencies to be addressed.
  - One of which is still outstanding and is “fire safety awareness and safety training”.
2. Also, from the independent fire safety audit of October 2022, by EAL Fire safety solutions ltd, who identified 27 fire safety deficiencies to be addressed, of which two items still remain outstanding, and are:
  - Fire safety awareness and safety training.
  - A requirement to carry out annual fire drills.

It should be noted that fire safety management systems and processes, as well as a significant amount of policy documents and procedures, along with other fire safety information and documentation, (***a requirement of the fire safety audits***), had to be put in place before we could address the training and fire drill actions from the audits.

We are now in a position to roll out the training, and the fire drill Q1 this year.

Quinquennial – audit actions (these diocese generated inspection audits take place every five years).

#### Quinquennial inspection action items from the 2020 audit.

The required actions have been carried out mostly in the reordering project. However, some masonry work, due to the time of year / weather conditions, as well as the scale of work and cost, have been carried over to the 2025 Quinquennial scope of work.

The Quinquennial inspection action items from the 2025 audit Include:

- Masonry repairs to the building.
- The commissioning of an Agricultural report.
- The deconstruction and removal of the scout hut.
- Flashing and mortar works.
- Window repairs, including work to replace broken leaded glass.

The only urgent work was masonry repairs to the central heating boiler (waste gas), lined sandstone stack, which have now been completed.

### **Breakdown maintenance**

- 1) We have an ongoing compliance issue with our insurance company, relating to the Church’s lightning conductor and its compliance. Significant modifications have been carried out in the reordering project to improve its functionality, however ground conditions (the high-level solid sandstone

substrate), reduce our saturation levels, prohibiting our full compliance with the regulations. The issue is currently with our insurers, who have passed it on to their underwriters. We await their direction.

- 2) A malfunction of the new projector screen, saw its removal back to the manufacturers. The issue has now been resolved.

### **Maintenance strategies**

- A new maintenance strategy document has been developed relating to the health and safety management of our church grounds and walled enclosures.
- Two more maintenance strategy documents have been identified, for development, relating to:
  - The management of grave tilting and disruption.  
This document will define our long-term strategy and approach to rectification and the re-positioning of our tilting gravestones, via a priority-based approach on an annual basis.  
The rectification of the gravestones has significant cost implications. Graves will be addressed on a priority basis, via a controlled and documented rolling programme over the coming years.
  - The graveyard management rules and regulations, concerning grave and plot management will be developed by a separate Christ Church strategy document.
  - The remaining two strategy documents aim to be in place Q1 this year.

### **Caring for God's Acre - Graveyard Grounds Management Plan.**

The caring for God's acre graveyard grounds management plan has been in place for a full season now.

The plan has provided a developing landscape appropriate to the beautiful setting of the building, which has displayed to our community and visitors our continual care for both our grounds (and the building). It shows that we respect those who have died, while allowing flora and fauna to thrive in a variety of informal settings.

The coming year's strategy for 2025, will be discussed with the grounds management company, to determine our direction strategy and plan for the coming year, which will include the field and site of the old scout hut.

**Mike Smith.**

### **Re-ordering Procurement Group**

Our church reordering project reached the Practical Completion stage last year on 27th June and the final account will be settled at the end of June this year after the main contractors' defects liability period has expired and any corrective works have been completed and signed off by the architect.

The completed reordering is in accordance with the faculty plans and specifications prepared by the architects and mechanical and electrical engineers which were approved by the PCC and the Diocese. These were handed to us by

the PCC when this group was formed specifically to deal with the tendering and procurement stages of the project on their behalf.

The work has been carried out within budget and has been approved by the Archdeacon who congratulated us all on the resulting church interior and its worship and multi-purpose community usage.

The repair and repointing of stonework identified in the Quinquennial Report was continued after Practical Completion but had to stop because of the cold winter weather. We are planning to recommence the work in Spring and then to carry on with it for as long as our budget and fundraising allows.

During the Winter we are doing minor internal works and we are providing a low fencing screen and paving area for our seven waste bins. We are applying for a faculty to allow us to proceed with additional reordering works including CCTV, internal plaques and boards, wand stands, flag brackets and, in case we manage to raise the funds and obtain the necessary approvals for it, a glass front for the porch.

The scouts have demolished the superstructure of the old scout hut but have not yet removed the sub-structure or tidied up this area of our graveyard. It is therefore not yet sufficiently safe for the schoolchildren to commence their wilding project for this area under our 'Caring for God's Acre' initiative. The initiative is in progress in all the other areas of our graveyard.

**Bill Hardman on behalf of the RPG**

## Community Hub

The Christ Church Community Hub opened on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2025. All bookings (church related and private customer bookings) are now done online through the Lemon Booking system. NB: Willaston Memorial Hall uses the same booking system. Prices were kept in line with the Memorial Hall.

Anne Hughes is the booking secretary. Steve Harrington does the booking secretary role when Anne is unavailable. Jane Murray is the Community Hub Host and deals with the invoices/refunds and Mike Smith is the health and safety person which includes conducting pre visits for customers if required. Chris Brown Bolton is the church treasurer, which encompasses the community hub bookings charges.

All church related bookings are free (which includes the village school who use the church for school services) Any local village groups such as Brownies, Scouts will have a discounted rate. All other customers are charged according to our price list which is displayed on the community hub webpage. This webpage is currently embedded into the church website and is titled community hub.

Anne Hughes, Steve Harrington, Jane Murray and Mike Smith meet every few months to discuss any issues and the minutes of their meetings are sent to the PCC by Anne Hughes.

We have had two regular customers to date- PopCats music toddler group (until December 2025) and a Pilates group (on going to date). Other bookings have included community meetings, children's parties and a number of PTA children's discos. We also have a music festival event in the calendar.

## Pastoral Care

Due to illness or age, several parishioners were unable to attend church services. Canon Lyndon Bannon made himself available to visit those who have requested it, offering communion either at their homes or in hospitals. They also extended visits to bereaved families, for which the PCC gives thanks.

## Mission and Evangelism

Throughout the year, our mission at Christ Church remained steadfast in its commitment to assisting those in need, embodying the principles of our faith. The church continued to engage in fundraising efforts that supported various charitable organisations, including *Christian Aid*. Additionally, we actively encouraged our parishioners to contribute to the local *Food Bank*. Furthermore, we diligently collected donations. Additionally, we supported *Teams4U*, a programme dedicated to empowering communities and transforming lives through education, health and humanitarian aid.

## Ecumenical Relationships

Neston & District Churches Together, a vibrant ecumenical committee, was chaired in 2025 by members of Neston Life Church. Ecumenical services held during the year included a Service of Prayer for Christian Unity followed by the AGM (in January), a Christian Aid Service (in May) and the ever-popular Carols for Christmas in Neston Market Square. All local churches and their services were advertised at the N&DCT stall at Neston Fair in July and their Christmas services in the Neston Local magazine.

The World Day of Prayer Service for the Cook Islands was held at Parkgate and Neston United Reformed Church. Our much appreciated 'Open the Book' teams continued to lead collective worship in our local primary schools on a half-termly basis. Prayer Breakfasts and fundraising events for Fairtrade and Christian Aid projects were well-supported. £490 was donated to the Christian Aid Myanmar Appeal. Christian Aid Week collections raised over £6,000. The annual Christian Aid Sponsored Walk raised over £2,500 and the Bucket Collection at Gordale Garden Centre, over £500. All these collections showed significant increases on the 2024 totals and huge thanks are expressed to all who donated during the year.

Christ Church and Willaston Methodist Church joined together for the annual Pentecost Service on the Green and the Service of Remembrance in November. Meet the Nativity Characters was enthusiastically supported by children and staff of Willaston CE Primary School. During the first half of 2025, Willaston Methodist Church continued to be outstanding in its generosity of providing the Christ Church congregation with the use of their building for formal worship at 9am every Sunday whilst the Christ Church building re-ordering was taking shape. Christ Church PCC showed its gratitude to the Methodist Church for its welcome during this time with a generous gift.

## Fellowship

The church actively engaged with the broader community through special services, such as Christmas, Easter, Ascension Day, Pentecost, and Harvest, as well as organising events to foster a sense of community within the church.

In June 2025, we successfully hosted an Open Day, inviting members of the wider community to visit and view the church redevelopment. This was a well-attended and highly successful event to introduce our newly refurbished building and demonstrate its potential.

Our planned events including concerts have significantly contributed to the church's visibility as a central hub within the community, attracting not only regular churchgoers but also newcomers who have not previously visited Christ Church.

Furthermore, fellowship opportunities, provided through various groups and gatherings outside the church, encouraged individuals to explore Christian beliefs and engage in shared experiences.

## Safeguarding

Anne Hughes is the Christ Church Willaston PSO with Helen Heath as the designated Lead Recruiter. They have equal access to the Christ Church SG (Safeguarding) email contact [aswillaston@outlook.com](mailto:aswillaston@outlook.com) which appears on our SG poster in church and on the church website. The church website has a designated SG page which is clearly visible and accessible.

Helen Heath (Lead Recruiter) has processed a number of DBS checks. A list of who requires which check (Basic or Enhanced in our case) was followed. Anne Hughes and Helen Heath have equal access to the Diocese SG Dashboard. This is an online tool that gives assurance to parishes that they are complying with the statutory requirements and Church of England policies, or else it explains what actions need to be taken. The dashboard comprises a list of statements, each accompanied by a coloured light: Green is good, Amber for action and Red means urgent. The wardens, Canon Bannon and Christine Smith have view only access.

The PSO, lead recruiter and PCC members have all completed the three mandatory Diocese SG training modules namely the Basis Safeguarding Awareness, Foundation and Raising Awareness of Domestic Abuse. These SG modules are online, repeated every 3 years and are accessed through the Church of England safeguarding portal. In addition to this, members of the Sacristy Team and Place of Welcome volunteers have completed the Basic Safeguarding Awareness module. The PSO has a record of all safeguarding training including renewal dates.

Our church has adopted the Church of England's SG policy. A poster displaying this information is displayed in the Nave and Meeting Room. Hard copies of this can be found in the Nave.

Our church now has a Safer Recruitment process which has been applied to members of the Sacristy Team. This includes a job description, application form, interview, references and completion of the Basic SG Awareness module.

Place of Welcome volunteers have been given a job description, SG volunteer guidelines and have been asked to complete the Basic SG Awareness module.

In preparation for the recruitment of a new vicar, Helen Heath and Chris Brown Bolton have completed the Safer Recruitment module through the Church of England safeguarding portal.

The current SG action plan has the following points.

- To have a photo/video release form in place- completed.
- To work through the Safer Recruitment guidance as recommended by the Diocese SG team- ongoing
- Secure PCC approval for an ex-offender recruitment policy- completed.
- To begin working through the C of E 'Safer Environment and Activities' guidance- ongoing
- To continue to work through the Diocese SG tasks on their dashboard.

Our Facebook page now only advertises church services/events and the comments' section has been disabled. Our church no longer has an X account. Customers booking the church community hub need to agree to follow our church SG policy or provide one of their own.

**Anne Hughes Parish Safeguarding Officer**

## Home Group

Home Group meet every first and third Wednesday evening each month. It is an informal meeting that starts with a cuppa and fellowship together. We explore a bible passage or some verses of scripture and then talk about it sharing our own thoughts and interpretation. We share our experiences and what we have learned from the passage and how to apply it to our daily lives. We end with a short time of prayer together.

We did a joint Lent course with the Methodist Church and then finished studying the Bible Society Book of Romans Course. There was a film to watch, and it was unpacked and explained by Andrew Ollerton. There are questions to discuss and a section of Romans to read and explore together.

In September we started the Alpha course to get us prepared for running it in Spring 2026

All are welcome to join us and enjoy a time of fellowship, exploring our Christian faith, the bible and sharing and learning off each other.

**Helen Heath**

## Prayer Group

We hold the prayer meeting every Tuesday at 5.30pm at 21, The Knowe. Anyone and everyone are welcome, as a one-off visit, or to join us regularly – the more the merrier.

We have a number of regular attendees who meet together to give thanks to God and ask for God's blessing and His will on all that concerns our church, community and beyond.

We begin with a thought and word from the Bible, then share our prayer requests, often led by events planned through church and other issues. We regularly use the 'Say One For Me' cards too, requesting prayer for individuals or situations. These cards can be found in church and at the church gate.

We make sure that the plate and box are checked regularly for new messages and prayer requests.

We believe that prayer changes things and is vital as we go forward in the name of Jesus and ask God to use us to His glory in mission and sowing seeds of faith and to support those who need peace and healing.

We know from Paul's letter to the church in Rome that the Holy Spirit intercedes for us as we make our requests known to God.

**Romans 8:26–27**

*“In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God’s people in accordance with the will of God.”*

God is at work in our church, through the power of the Holy Spirit, as we come to Him in prayer and submission. We are confident that He will use us in this community if we ask His blessing and are willing vessels.

**1 Thessalonians 5:16–18**

*“Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.”*

**Luke 18:1**

*“Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up.”*

**Christine Smith**

## Men's Group

During 2025 the Men's Group once again ran a varied programme of events.

The group meets once a month (usually on a Tuesday or Thursday), and alternates between a talk in church and a pub social.

The speakers at the group in 2025 were all 'in-house' and included: Stephen Harrington, Paddy Bannon. Bill Hardman and Mike Smith. It is always good to learn more about our fellow group members and talks were varied and very interesting indeed!

All meetings in church begin with either Evening Prayer or Compline (Night Prayer). Our pub socials have included visits to Bromborough, Lower Bebington, Birkenhead, Liverpool, Heswall and even Willaston! In the summer, we held an 'extraordinary meeting' on a Saturday afternoon, and travelled across to Liverpool to visit the *Black Lodge Brewery* in the Kings Dock and *Love Lane / Higson's Brewery* on Bridgewater Street. We even stumbled upon the *Bundobust Brewery* on the way back to the station!

The group continues to grow, having almost 30 people on the email list now! This year has seen our first ecumenical member, joining us from the Roman Catholic Church, and one other member living as far away as Cambridgeshire!

We always accept and understand not everyone can attend everything all the time, and so simply look forward to seeing people as, when and if they can join us. We look forward to welcoming you in 2026 - our programme for this year is on the church website.

In conclusion, our 'rule' is simple: come to what you can and want to, don't come to what you can't and don't want to!

**Canon Lyndon**

## UpLIFT

UpLIFT is now well into its tenth year having been formed in May 2016 in order to provide a space for both members and non-members of the church to come together for a time of fellowship and friendship.

The group meets monthly on the second or third Thursday evening and is free to all who wish to come (we only charge for tickets or materials as an event requires). The group is open to all ladies whether they are Christians or not. We usually participate in a very wide variety of events including walking, theatre visits, craft activities and meals together.

Since the last APCM, we have visited Byrne Avenue Baths for a tour in April 2025. We enjoyed a walk around the walls in Chester on a late spring evening in May, followed by a fascinating tour and talk about our new church building by Bill Hardman in June. We came together for a shared supper, utilising our new church kitchen and facilities in July before meeting in The Nag's Head for our August gathering. As autumn came, we welcomed Canon Lyndon to talk to us about church growth in September and enjoyed a fun bingo night in church, in October. We welcomed the Commonwealth Graves Commission to come and talk to us in November before rounding the year off with an Advent carol service in church. It has been wonderful to return to our church building and make use of the super new facilities for our meetings. We still have more exciting activities booked and planned for the year ahead.

Details about our group and the events we have planned can be found by speaking to Helen or Claire.

**Helen Heath & Claire Bannon**

## Mothers' Union

Throughout 2025, Mothers' Union supported work with families locally, nationally and internationally through prayer and practical action. Our strong, supportive group of members in Willaston enjoyed meeting monthly to hear about local initiatives and take part in fund-raising activities.

During the year, we shared Easter reflections, were transported back in time to life in Occupied Belgium and to VE Day 80 years ago. We caught up with charitable projects in Uganda and Zambia as well as two local projects 'Welcome to Willaston' and Christ Church's own new venture 'Place of Welcome'.

Our first meeting in the refurbished Christ Church gave us the opportunity to soak up our new surroundings and to hear and sing along with Chris on the new digital piano. We finished the year with our annual Deanery Advent Service, held this year at Burton. All are welcome to join us next year as we mark our 115<sup>th</sup> year in Willaston and our 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary nationally!!

**Viv Ley**

## Parish Magazine

The 10 issues of the Parish News were distributed as usual to all parishioners who subscribed, as a printed magazine. The magazine kept parishioners informed of important matters concerning our church and community, both locally and further afield acting as outreach.

Once more we are extremely grateful to the village, both as readers and as contributors who make their submissions each month, and keep many informed and interested in their activities. Contributions are welcomed. Gratitude is again due to all the volunteer distributors who delivered, come rain or shine, and to Viv Ley who maintained the organisation of the volunteers, distribution and subscriptions.

In late 2025 the PCC decided that the last issue of the printed magazine will be in March 2026 with the magazine moving to the Christ Church website as an online publication. Many subscribers have voiced disquiet as there are many residents who do not have internet connection / are not adept with computers and will be left without information they feel they need. Hopefully provision and access can be assisted for them.

**Susan Schwab**

## **Website and Social Media**

During 2025, following the re-opening of Christ Church, our new website and Facebook pages were launched. From a website perspective, when loading the page, the user is presented with a taskbar with a selection of options to navigate the website, as well as an excellent video showcasing our church filmed by drone. The website provides the following pages, each with comprehensive information:

- Home
  - Key Details, Welcome, Service Times, Key Contact Details
- Meet Us
- News
- History
  - Details of our past clergy and fellow Christians who have upheld the Christ Church community from bygone days to the present, as well as history about the church building itself. A comprehensive page with information and images from various local sources.
- Community Hub
  - Provides information alongside a link to the dedicated Community Hub booking website.
- Safeguarding
  - Providing relevant links to various policies and support services.
- Willaston CofE Primary School
  - Information provided by the school, with a link to their website.
- Life Events
  - Providing information and details regarding:
    - Baptism
    - Weddings
    - Funerals
    - Prayer
- Groups
  - Dedicated pages for various groups, each with information (e.g. Programmes):
    - Mother's Union
    - Men's Group
    - Ladies UpLift Group
    - Home Group
- Church Calendar
- Contact Page

From a social media perspective, our Facebook page since launch in July 2025, has 44 followers and recorded 28,346 views across 50 posts, with 83.7% of these views from non-followers. As well as 1,820 engagements (the number of reactions, clicks, comments, shares and saves on our posts). It must be noted that commenting on Willaston Christ Church posts are disabled, in line with our Safeguarding policy.

Both the website and Facebook are continually developing and growing. We hope to build on the success of 2025 and hope to continue to share Church activities and events to a wider audience. As time progresses, our followers are increasing at a steady rate and with the Parish Magazine shortly going digital, 2026 will facilitate the growth of our online presence and will hopefully lead to wider engagement from the community.

**Paddy Bannon**

## **Christ Church Willaston Place of Welcome**

'Places of Welcome' is a national initiative, there are over 900 Places of welcome in England and more than 60 across the Diocese of Chester. Each one is run by local community groups who want people in their neighbourhood to have a place to go for a friendly face, a cup of tea and a conversation. We decided to join the initiative when thinking about developing the outreach of the church and as part of our aim to become a central community hub in Willaston. We were also responding to the 2022 survey carried out by the church with Willaston residents and a smaller survey at the Open day in the summer of 2025. Both included several comments about the need for a space where people could come for conversation and friendship.

In addition, there is a Biblical imperative to love our neighbour and to support the vulnerable in our communities. Loneliness across the North West region has been exasperated since Covid and studies suggest that roughly one-in-twenty people have no close friends, and 15% rarely or never feel loved.

We opened our Place of Welcome at the beginning of October 2025 and have been delighted by the numbers attending and more importantly by the feedback from our visitors. Here are some comments we have received: *'Sorry if I'm early, I can't wait to get here!'*; *'I love coming here to decompress before going to work'*; *'It's lovely to hear people saying my name as I don't hear it very often'*. We have regular visitors but are also seeing new faces most weeks. There is a lovely buzz of conversation and a pleasant, welcoming atmosphere. There are free refreshments and we are open to everyone. We have a great team of volunteers but would love more to help with opening up and getting everything ready for our visitors so please let us know if you can lend a hand.

## **Willaston C of E Primary School**

It has been a happy and successful year for Willaston CofE Primary School. As has been previously reported, they continue to be rated as *'Outstanding'* by OFSTED – no small achievement at this point in time. It is a genuinely lovely school to be associated with and every visit is a pleasure and a joy, thanks in the main to its wonderful leadership in the person of Mr Gary Graham.

There have been an incredible range of activities and experiences going on in school over the last year. It has been a truly busy and rewarding period for the whole school community.

In January, at an INSET Day school hosted a curriculum development morning with our cluster of Church of England Small Schools. This is a strong connection for our church school and really supports faith and Christianity in the pupils and staff.

School recently welcomed their School Improvement Partner, Adrian Francis, for his termly visit, with a focus on phonics, reading and writing. The outcomes were wonderful, and it was great to have the external validation that they continue to provide excellent learning opportunities and maintain high expectations for all.

The school also welcomed Bromborough Gospel Hall who led a series of Easter Bible exhibitions for both Year 5 and Year 6 children. The children immersed themselves in the exhibitions, asking deep and thought-provoking questions.

It is wonderful to be able to host the whole school here in church for various services throughout the year, including Christmas and more recently their Easter service.

Canon Lyndon skilfully put together and led a wonderful service which cleverly explained the facts of Easter in a way ALL children could follow and appreciate. Sharing the gospel with them and entertaining them in a memorable way. It is always brilliant to see the school and church come together as a community, to celebrate such important events in the Christian calendar and to sow seeds of faith in the pupils.

Mrs Anita Mitchell and Mrs Christine Smith are the two Foundation Governors. Both are in school regularly, promoting the Christian faith and encouraging staff and pupils to join us in church on a more regular basis. This is a topic which needs God's direction and much prayer as we await our new Incumbent.

The links between church and school are growing ever stronger, but there is much work to be done as we reach out in mission to school pupils and their families.

**Christine Smith**

## **Volunteers**

A dedicated team of volunteers has worked tirelessly to make the church a vibrant and welcoming place of worship. As the church continues to evolve, it aspires to become a lively community hub, actively engaging with the broader village population.

Thanks, should be given to the flower arrangers, cleaners, gardeners, hospitality volunteers, sides persons, the RPG, the fundraising group, finance team, social media and web hosts, school foundation governors, churchwardens, the PCC and PCC Secretary and last but not least, our dedicated and hardworking leader Rev Canon Lyndon Bannon. Their unwavering commitment and expertise have been invaluable to the church's success.

The time and skills employed by this marvellous team on a rotated basis ensures the seamless operation of the church and the smooth delivery of all services throughout the year.

Special thanks also extend to Professor David Speechley and Mrs Christine Smith, our talented organist and pianist. Their weekly dedication and expertise are greatly appreciated.

**Churchwardens**

## Wardens' Report

The churchwardens reiterate as above and extend their thanks to all those who have generously dedicated their time and expertise to maintaining our church and churchyard throughout the year. While it is impossible to name each individual, please be assured that your contributions have not gone unnoticed. Thank you all for your unwavering support!

The churchwardens are grateful to everyone who has contributed to church events throughout the year and eagerly anticipate future occasions that will foster a sense of community and tradition within the parish.

We extend our gratitude to Canon Lyndon Bannon and his wife, Claire, for their unwavering support during the current vacancy period and their invaluable contribution to the life of the church. It is a privilege to acknowledge that for many years and in numerous ways, they have continued to support us.

On October 12th 2025, Canon Lyndon was installed as a Canon of Chester Cathedral. A large number of congregants attended the impressive service in Chester Cathedral. This is a well-deserved and prestigious recognition by the Diocese of his wisdom and commitment. However, we here in Christ Church, Willaston have known of this dedication for a long time. For fifteen years, Canon Lyndon has served this parish with unbroken devotion. He has walked with us through our highest joys and our deepest sorrows, all while serving in a completely voluntary and unpaid capacity. His ministry has been a true gift of grace to this village.

In conclusion, the Churchwardens anticipate the continued growth and prosperity of the church community as the church expands to encompass a new community hub.

### **Churchwardens**

## Parochial Church Council – the P.C.C.

The current PCC comprises of 14 active members and regular meetings have been held at six weekly intervals. Members who have served at any time since 27<sup>th</sup> April 2025 to the date of this report are:

### **Ex officio members:**

- Priest in Charge: Vacant
- Assistant Priest: The Revd. Canon Lyndon Bannon
- Warden: Dr Martin Woodhead (Vice Chair)
- Warden: Mrs Christine Parry
- Deanery Synod: Mrs Vivien Ley
- Deanery Synod: Mrs Helen Heath

### **Elected members:**

- Prof David Speechley
- Mr Paul Spivey
- Mr James Ayliffe
- Prof David Cumberland
- Mr Patrick Bannon
- Mr Christopher Brown-Bolton (Treasurer)

- Mrs Doreen Francey (PCC Secretary)
- Mr Stephen Harrington
- Mr Michael Smith

## Structure, governance, and management

The Parochial Church Council is a corporate body established by the Church of England. The PCC operates under the Parochial Church Council Powers Measure. The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules.

At Christ Church the membership of the PCC comprises our Assistant Priest, Churchwardens, and members elected by those members of the congregation on the electoral roll of the church. The PCC members are responsible for making decisions on all matters of general concern and importance to the parish, including deciding on how the funds of the PCC are to be spent. The full PCC met six weekly during the year, with almost full attendance and dealt with all aspects of parish life.

The PCC is a Registered Charity (Number 1210733) and is answerable to the Charity Commission in terms of behaviour and operational procedures. As a registered charity, this places additional responsibilities with our PCC members, who are all Trustees and in terms of our accounting, as accounts will be produced for the Charity Commission. It is hoped that as a registered charity, more fundraising opportunities will be accessible to ensure that our mission is achievable, and that income is maximised to ensure the safe and appropriate use of and running of the church by the PCC.

## Administrative information

Christ Church is situated on Neston Road, Willaston. It is part of the Diocese of Chester within the Church of England.

The correspondence address is: -

***Christ Church, Neston Road, Willaston, Neston, Cheshire CH64 2TL.***

The PCC is a body corporate (PCC Powers Measure 1956, Church Representation Rules 2011) and is a Registered Charity (Number 1210733) under the Charities Act, 2011.

Approved by the P.C.C. on 26<sup>th</sup> April 2026 and signed on their behalf by:

**Dr Martin Woodhead,  
Vice-Chair, PCC,  
Christ Church.**