

**Agenda for the Meeting of Parishioners
and Annual Parochial Church Meeting**
26th April 2026

Annual Meeting of Parishioners

1. Opening prayer.
2. Apologies for absence
3. Minutes of last meeting.
4. Matters arising
5. Election of Churchwardens
6. Election of Deputy Churchwardens

Annual Parochial Church Meeting

1. Minutes of the last Annual Parochial Church Meeting
2. Matters arising.
3. Election of PCC members
4. Election of Deanery Synod representatives
5. Financial Report – including:
 - a) Treasurer's Report
 - b) Appointment of Independent Examiner.
6. Electoral Roll Report
7. Churchwarden's report
8. PCC Report
9. Safeguarding Report
10. Health and Safety Report
11. Reports from other activities
12. Vicar's Report
13. Any other business.
Questions from the congregation.

Aim and Purpose

St Michael's Parochial Church Council (PCC) has the responsibility of co-operating with the incumbent in promoting, in the ecclesiastical parish, the whole mission of the church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. The PCC also has specific responsibility for the maintenance of the church and churchyard of St Michael's, Grimsargh.

Objectives

St Michael's is here to serve God and to make the Christian faith known in our community. In order to achieve this, we aim to be a worshipping community that all can be part of, giving opportunities to be strengthened spiritually, to share in fellowship and have a sense of belonging (to God and to one another), to serve the wider community and to share the Christian message of hope. We seek to enable people to live out their faith as part of the parish community, so that, along with St Michael's Church School, we can "let our light shine" in Grimsargh.

Minutes of last APCM May 18th 2023
held after the Morning Service.

Present: Rev. Andy Williams, Mark Lamberty, Anthony Cowell, Joanna Donnachie, Nellie Cowell, Hazel Cliff, Bernard Mackley, John Cowell, Dawn Desai, Laurence Wood, Penny Thompson, Jenny Perry, Louise Williams, Sally Cowell, Eileen Parker, Marlene Mackley, Stuart Fillingham, Joss Daune, Diane Daune, Janet Wilby, Maureen Wood, Joanne Lander, Keith Lees, Christine Yates, Keith Yates, Kevan Thompson.

Apologies: James Cowell, Anne Halliwell, Jean Burr, Sue Chapman, Jean Harrison, James Lee, Joyce Lee, Pam Taylor, Joan Moon.

Minutes of last meeting.

Minutes were accepted as a true record Proposed Laurence Wood, seconded by Nellie Cowell.

Matters arising.

Election of Church Wardens.

Rev. Andy thanked Anthony and Mark for their continued help and support throughout the year.

Two nominations had been received

Anthony Cowell proposed by Hazel Cliff and Bernard Mackley

Mark Lamberty proposed by John Cowell and Kevan Thompson.

There being no other proposals Anthony and Mark were duly elected. The Archdeacon's Visitation service this year, where the Wardens are admitted to office, will be at St Cuthbert's Church, Lytham on Tuesday the 17th June at 7.30pm.

This concluded the Annual meeting of Parishioners.

Minutes of The Annual Parochial Church meeting held on 18th May 2025.

1. Minutes of the last Annual Parochial Church Meeting.

These were approved as a true record. Proposed by Mark Lamberty and seconded by Bernard Mackley.

2. Matters arising. None raised.

3. Elections of PCC members.

There are 4 vacancies for this year for a 3 year term and 2 vacancies for a 1 year term.

Hazel Cliff proposed by Nellie Cowell and seconded by Anthony Cowell

James Cowell proposed by Bernard Mackley and seconded by Louise Williams

Stuart Fillingham proposed by Sue Chapman and seconded by Nellie Cowell

Bernard Mackley proposed by Laurence Wood and seconded by John Cowell

Penny Thompson proposed by Bernard Mackley and seconded by Marlene Mackley.

There were no other nominations so all were duly elected. The terms of office will be agreed at the next PCC meeting.

4. Financial Report.

a) Treasurer's Report.

Joanna was asked by Dawn to clarify what was meant by Restricted Funds, Investment funds and the Parish Share.

Joanna explained that **Restricted Funds** were set aside each year to mainly cover any church maintenance.

Joanna also explained that currently the **Church Investments Funds** are with CCLA Investment Company. CCLA are majority owned by the Church of England and used by the Diocese, other

churches and local governments across the country. CCLA seems to provide good capital growth but not as good interest rates that are available elsewhere. Joanna explained that she is currently reviewing and researching how the church funds can be used more efficiently and will present a proposal at the next PCC meeting. Joanna explained that the **Parish Share** is the amount of money that a parish is asked to contribute to pay for mission and ministry, specifically for clergy stipends and their housing. Joanna reported that she, Andy and Anthony had a meeting recently to discuss our Parish Share with a representative from the Blackburn Diocese and agreed an acceptable and reasonable Parish share for this year. Andy and Mark also explained to the meeting on how the formula worked.

(For more information please find a very clear, detailed explanation following this link.

<https://www.blackburn.anglican.org/parish-share-how-it-works-and-what-it>). Andy added that it was important to achieve the Parish Share set this year, otherwise we will not be able to apply for any future grants.

Jenny asked if there were **any Ethical guidelines** followed by the CCLA Investment Company.

Joanna reported that it does comply with ethical investment policies.

Janet asked Joanna to explain about the **School Barchester** Fund. Joanna reported that a percentage of the funds raised from the Christmas Fair and Garden Party contributed towards this fund. Andy and Anthony also explained about how and why the fund is used to support our Aided C.of E. Primary school. As St Michael's is an Aided school we are responsible for 10% of any capital work. Rather than having occasional large bills should any work be done we contribute annually to the Diocesan Barchester Scheme from which the governors can draw to pay our share of any works.

Nellie, on behalf of the parishioners, thanked Joanna for all her hard work as our Treasurer. Joanna's professional skills as an accountant are very much appreciated.

b) Appointment of Independent Examiner

Elizabeth Blake was prepared to continue as our Independent Examiner for 2025. All approved.

5. Electoral Roll Report

Jenny reported that the numbers of parishioners on the Electoral Roll is down from last year to 90. However, Andy added that there were 4 late applications which will increase that to 94.

6. Churchwardens Report.

There were no questions, but Mark updated the meeting about the roof now having been done and the advice given by the Diocese regarding the front window, Andy thanked Mark and Andy for their report.

7. PCC. Report

There were no questions for the Secretary. Andy thanked Penny.

8. Safeguarding Report

There were no questions for the Safeguarding Officer. Andy thanked Jenny for all her hard work.

9. Health and Safety Report

Maureen raised her concern regarding the serving of refreshments after the Sunday services. After some discussion Andy suggested that it should be a matter to discuss in more detail at the next PCC meeting. There were no further questions regarding the Health and safety report. Andy thanked Kevan for his report.

10. Reports from other activities

There were no questions regarding the Reports from other church activities. Andy thanked Nellie, Penny, Bernard, Louise and Jean.

Churches Together: Andy informed the meeting that the next Churches together services will be on:-

Sunday 8th June at St. Wilfred's Longridge.

Sunday 15th June Joint service with Alston Lane. Grimsargh St. Michael's

11. Vicar's report

Anthony thanked Andy for his report.

12. Any other business.

Andy explained how the Parish roll effects the numbers we can have on the PCC. As we are now less than hundred on the Electoral Roll we have the option to reduce to nine members or remain at twelve. Anthony proposed that we stayed at 12 and it was seconded by Mark. It was agreed by the majority.

Questions from the congregation.

- a) Laurence – Wanted to highlight his concern about the Health and Safety when serving Refreshments.
- b) Nellie – Asked about the vacancy for a representative to become part of the Deanery Synod. Andy explained about the work of the Deanery Synod and that it would be discussed at the next PCC. There are full elections to the Deanery Synod in 2026.
- c) Anthony reported that members some of the congregation have asked him if fresh bread could be used for Communion once again and if people could go up to the Communion Rail. There was much discussion about these questions including issues about:- mobility, gluten free bread and safe flow of people returning to their own pews. Nellie proposed that these

suggestions were trialled out and this was seconded by Hazel. 19 agreed and 2 against, so this was carried. It will be monitored over the next few weeks.

- d) Maureen - Suggested that when we share the peace that we should return to shaking each other's hands. Alex, Jenny and Dawn agreed so it was put to a vote and was carried.
- e) Anthony thanked everyone for attending the APCM, especially those who had asked so many questions. He felt it had been a very positive meeting.

DATE of NEXT APCM in 2026 TBC at a future PCC meeting .

5. Financial report.

For 2025 the church generated £63,098 of income through regular giving, donations, fees and fund raising activities. This was off set by the annual costs of running the church totalling £55,584 resulting in a profit of £7,514 for the year. Further details are shown in the financial statements accompanying this report.

At the end of 2025 the church has restricted funds of £14,640 set aside for church repair works and holds an investment fund currently valued at £178,889.

The accounts have been independently examined and approved by the PCC.

The Vicar and PCC acknowledge with gratitude all donations, gifts and bequests receive regardless of the sum involved.

Joanna Donnachie

[Copies of the accounts are on the church notice board along with list of bequests]

6. Electoral Roll report.

This year the electoral roll is being refreshed. At the time of writing this report, one person has been removed and two people added giving a total of 91. This number may change between the time of writing and the annual church meeting.

7. Wardens' Report 2024

A Quinquennial Report is due to be produced this year.

Ecclesiastical Insurance Report 5/11/2025

Following the inspection by the Ecclesiastical Insurance reporter, the following matters have been raised by him, with response by our security officer Kevan Thompson 15/11/2025, as follows (with some minor emendation of the text to clarify):

“Below are details of the response of representatives of St Michael’s Church to the issues raised by the Ecclesiastical Risk Management Report

- Application of Forensically Based Security Marking System. Alternatives to Security Marking external metals to be reviewed to comply with insurance Requirements.
- Burst pipes. On-going monitoring of effective ways to prevent burst pipes through effective management of the current heating system. Continual problems exist due to the age of the current system, further advice and support being sought.
- Headstone stability testing. Headstones are check regularly and maintenance work is ongoing. The Assessor identified a number of headstones which did not meet the stability test but did not identify them individually. A quick inspection was carried out on the 16.11.25. All the headstones identified through previous audit were accounted for with several still requiring remedial work. Only one new headstone is perhaps in need of remedial work. (Family of John Rigby second row from the main gate)

However, see note below.

- Lightning Conductor Maintenance. Lightening conductor to be inspected as part of annual audit. Any previous damage has been made good prior to the Assessors inspection. Period testing to be arranged as per recommendations.

Inspection of Fixed Electrical Installation. Fixed electrical testing was completed for the last Quinquennial Report and is due to be revisited during the coming 12 months. All portable appliances are PAT tested as per recommended guidelines by a local approved Electrical company.

Note: new electrical report required, to be commissioned by the PCC.

Fire Risk Assessment. (The Assessor reported that a fire risk assessment had been completed which is incorrect. Advice to be sought for approved providers to carry initial Fire Risk Assessment. So that an action plan can be developed and the H&S policy amended where necessary.)

Note: this response is itself incorrect; there is an existing fire officer's report valid until 31/3/2026. So that a new fire officer's report must be commissioned.

Hot work controls. Contractors to provide details of Hot Working practices when on site to comply with recommendations.

Other Matters

Church Building

Lighting

The light over the piano/ organ needs replacing.

Re-decoration

The lavatory ceiling needs repair and the room needs redecorating. It is some years since the vestry was decorated and this should also be done.

Tower staircase roof

This is made of stone, which is split so as to allow rain water to pour down the stairs, causing them to be covered in debris. This was first flagged in the quinquennial report of 2016. It is expensive to repair, as it cannot be repaired from within the building, and requires use of a cherry picker or scaffolding.

Churchyard

(Gravestones, see above.

Car Park, to be addressed after contractors finish work)

Perimeter stone wall, south west corner

This is in a state of some disrepair.

Tree, approx. 20' high, opposite main entrance

This is dead and requires removal.

External lighting of the church

Anthony has the renewal of the external lights under review.

Footpaths, some cracking, bump by main entrance requires evening out.

Mark Lamberty

Anthony Cowell March 2026

8. PCC Report

Immediately after the APCM in 2025 the PCC consisted of 15 members, this included four members who were ex officio. Reverend Andy, Anthony Cowell and Mark Lambert as Church Wardens, and Nellie Cowell (our representative to the Deanery Synod).

Joanna our Treasurer is a co-opted member of the council and we are thankful for all her hard work this year with our accounts.

Since the last APCM, the number of Parochial Church Council members reduced by one due to a resignation. During the year there have been 5 PCC meetings held at Grimsargh St. Michaels' Primary school. These were held on Mondays – 7th July, 22nd. September, 17th. November 2025, 19th January and 23rd March in 2026.

Following on from our last APCM, at our July PCC meeting it was agreed that Safety guidelines needed to be followed when serving refreshments after services, fresh bread would be used for future Communion Services and we would go up to the Communal rail.

Since the APCM it was also agreed that we would once again shake hands when we share the peace.

The PCC is grateful to Jenny Perry our Church Safeguarding Officer for her hard work and attention to detail in helping to make sure that St Michaels' is compliant with the Diocese of Blackburn guidelines. All present members of the PCC completed their Safeguarding training in 2025 and all but two have had now had a DBS check. The PCC have recently reviewed the Safeguarding Action Plan which is currently at Level 2 and hope to achieve a Level 3 in the near future.(highest level).

In October 2025 several PCC members attended an Induction Day to find out about the Diocese Renewal Programme. Since November the Agenda for each meeting has been streamlined so that there is more time for the PCC to discuss our Mission review.

However, the PCC meeting continues to routinely cover the following areas on:- Safeguarding updates, Finance, the Diocese Renewal Program, Church building and graveyard updates, Churches Together and Deanery Synod. Other church activities information is distributed with the Agenda before each meeting so that PCC members are kept informed and if necessary can be discussed.

Penny Thompson

9. Safeguarding report

DBS Checks

As a parish we are still registered with and use Thirty-one: Eight to complete DBS checks however no DBS checks have been completed since the last annual church meeting.

DBS checks are required on members of the PCC who are trustees of the church and oversee the activities of the church with children and vulnerable adults. Six DBS checks are in place.

DBS checks are required on the volunteers working with the JIGSAW Club who are either on the rota or who are available to stand in. Two DBS checks are in place.

Training

Safeguarding training provides context to the requirements and ensures we understand the importance of the framework in place.

All PCC members, church wardens and jigsaw club volunteers have completed the required training.

The national safeguarding team are requiring additional training on Domestic Abuse to be completed, and volunteers will be asked to complete this additional training over the coming months.

Some training courses are yet to be completed by the Parish Safeguarding officer.

Parish Safeguarding Policy

We have adopted and continue to use the Church of England, House of Bishops, safeguarding handbook. Copies are available in church and on our website.

Parish dashboard

We continue to complete sections of the parish Safeguarding dashboard with an action plan available for discussion at the next PCC meeting.

Contact information:

There is a safeguarding email address to provide a single inbox relating to emails on this topic and to manage DBS applications: safeguarding.gsm@gmail.com.

There is a parish safeguarding mobile phone number 07841039336.

It is not recommended that the above contact details are used in an emergency or if there is a risk of immediate harm – in these

circumstances contact should be made with the police or social services.

Safeguarding remains the responsibility of the parish. It is a framework set up to protect young people and those with characteristics of vulnerability. It is an opportunity to demonstrate our commitment to providing a safer church. If you would like to support the work, please speak to Jenny Perry.

10. Health and Safety Report

An annual audit of Health and Safety needs was completed May 2025 by M Lamberty and K Thompson.

A copy of the most recent audit is available upon request.

On going monitoring of the altar windows and water damage to the right-hand side of the North Aisle continues. On-going monitoring of internal wall and walkways continues with any remedial work carried out as and when changes occur.

As far as it is known there has been one recorded accident involving two elderly parishioners who tripped and fell in the car park. A few minor injuries were sustained; the incident was recorded in the accident book.

A number of headstones have been identified which require some remedial work to ensure safety of visitors moving around the church yard. A few have worsened and require immediate attention. A note was made during the last audit which headstones required being made safe

External walkways still require some remedial work to repair cracks or level a raised area near the main gateway.

A Fire Safety Plan is outstanding; this should commence with a Fire Safety Assessment by an external authorised assessor as

recommend by the Diocese. This was recommended to begin from Spring 2025 but still hasn't been completed.

The Health and Safety Policy is overdue for review and will require updating to include any recommendations from the Fire Assessment.

A visit was made by an Assessment Officer from Ecclesiastical Insurance Services as part of their own going monitoring. A report was received with a few of items requiring action, in particular reference was made that some of the headstones failed to pass the stability test. Unfortunately, the Assessment Officer failed to record which head stones were deemed as unsafe.

Monitoring of the building, church yard and carpark continues to ensure maintenance and to safeguard the safety of visitors and all members of St. Michael's Church.

Kevan Thompson (H&S Representative.)

11. Reports from other activities.

a) Deanery Synod Report

The Deanery Synod considers items of concern to the wider church and members then share these ideas with their own PCCs. They are also the group that elects members to the Diocesan Synod (the collection of representatives of the Deaneries throughout the Diocese of Blackburn).

Our meetings include any necessary business but also provide an opportunity for churches to hear from each other about various ministries being offered by churches across the deanery, usually two different parishes each meeting. Each meeting begins or ends with a time of worship.

We met twice in 2025. The first meeting was in May at St Margaret's Ingol, being postponed from an icy January. Revd Steve Haskett introduced the Diocesan Centenary, in 2026, and asked each church to consider holding a Mission Weekend.

Examples of activities some churches had already held were shared.

Our second meeting was held on 21st of November St Martin's Preston where we heard from various speakers on 'Creation Care' which is the fifth mark of mission. We heard about resources to help parishes explore this topic as well as encouragement to be proactive.

No items were passed to us from consideration by Diocesan Synod.

Andy Williams

b) FAF 2025

The "Fundraising and Fellowship" team endeavour to raise funds and social events for our church community.

Fundraising events in 2025 have included:- The Garden Party, the Big Summer Raffle in the Summer, the Lancashire evening in October, The Christmas Fair and Carol Singing during December.

The Garden Party £2,644 and Christmas Fair £ 2,148 are undoubtedly our main fund raising events. They are a lot of hard work to organise and involve many members of our church and local community. The FAF team thank everyone who have stepped up to help and really do appreciate all your time whether it be baking, making, donating, setting up, tidying up, selling burgers, helping on a stall, making tea and a lot more. As a team FAF has been encouraged by all your support in 2025.

In October we had another successful Lancashire evening at the Village Hall £ 735 was raised from the ticket sales, and £291 from the raffle. Rob Mason entertained everyone with traditional Lancashire songs and verse. During the interval Lancashire Hotpot and Apple pie supper was served. A huge thanks to Nellie Cowell for organising this event. On Friday December 12th we had a very enjoyable evening Carol singing at the Plough, Houghton Manor and Silver Birches the evening raised £556.

Also in December, James Cowell organised the very popular Christmas Quiz and raised £911 and he also organised our popular Easter Egg Hunt. We also very much appreciate the Primary School staff and children supporting our Garden Party. It's always such a delight to have the children perform a variety of displays and dances so enthusiastically. This makes this traditional afternoon very special and memorable. Year 2 also raised £83 before Christmas by making and selling Christmas decorations.

We continue to sell the tea towels illustrated by Liz Emmott, Hazel Taylor and Diane Tomlinson these have been much admired and continue to sell well, we raised another £ 135. FAF is also thankful to David Hindle, who has kindly donated all the proceeds from the sales of his book sold via church £100 has been raised over 2025. Sue had an idea about using a Diary and asking for donations of £1 .00 / day of the year. This has so far made £ £128. Other miscellaneous raised funds include, FAF pens £.8.00, Walk book £5.00, church book £20 Easter chicks £34, FAF account £187. We have paid out the Lottery Licence fee to allow us to organise the Big Raffle.

The total raised through FAF events and sales in 2025 = £9,192. (Information from the FAF minutes February 2026). We have had two delicious lunches at the Cross Keys, Inglewhite and they were a time for us to gather in camaraderie and fellowship. Look out for our Parish Lunches this year.

The FAF group was initially the idea of our dear friend Jayne Woollam. We will always miss her presence at our meetings and in daily lives. We are resolute to carry on providing social and fundraising events and to do our best in her memory.

Penny Thompson

c) Food Bank

A very big thank you to all who have supported the food bank over the last twelve months. There have been some very generous

donations from both members of the congregation and others within the parish.

All donations to the food bank are taken to the Salvation Army in Preston for distribution to those in need, and the need for donations is as great as ever.

Thank you to the volunteers who take the items to the Salvation Army on a regular basis.

Below is a letter of thanks from the Salvation Army

Bernard Mackley

Dear Friends,

We would like to say an extremely big thank you for your help and support this year with our Annual Christmas Appeal & Emergency Food Provision.

This year we helped 300 families with toy/gift hampers. We provided toys for 315 0-10 year olds, and gifts for 308 10-19 year olds. A total of 623 children. On average each child was given about 15 items making the total around 9,500 toys/gifts that were given out.

The food bank was also extremely busy in December which saw us giving out 1300 bags of food & toiletries to people in need.

Without all the wonderful donations we received we would have been unable to help as many families as we did. Your giving enabled The Salvation Army, Preston, to serve others across the city and beyond.

Thank you all once again, and may we wish you all a very Happy New Year!

Kind Regards,
Chloe Grice, Community Worker

d) Mothers' Union

We enjoyed a variety of speakers during the year. Gemma from Safenet came to tell us of the amazing work they do with abused women. We support them by collecting toiletries and other much needed essentials. Dot Little and Ruth, along with Fred led us on a journey they enjoyed along the Lancashire Coastal Path. Lisa Gray (Linda Fisk's daughter) told us about her work in a young persons' secure unit for boys aged 13 to 18. Diane Daune (one of our new members) gave us an insight into her life so far and her work at Ellel Ministries International and we had a fireman to give us advise us about fire safety in the home.

We met in church for Evensong in September and Holy Communion in December and joined with members around the world for our Wave of Prayer

We always enjoy our meals together. In January we met in The Plough for our AGM and our usual fish and chips, on Ascension Day we celebrated our 95th birthday party at the Ribchester Arms and in November we were at The Cross Keys, Whitechapel for our Christmas meal.

As a part of Preston Deanery Mothers Union we joined with other branches for our Deanery Festival. During that service we were presented with our Bronze Award certificate. That certificate is awarded in recognition of practical action to highlight the issue of domestic abuse. We are now working towards our Silver Award.

We also met with the deanery for our Quiet Hour, which was ably led by one of our members, Janet Wilby.

We are always delighted to welcome new members.

Nellie Cowell

e) Craft & Chat Group

The Craft & Chat Group continues to meet on the first Wednesday afternoon of the month from 2pm-4pm.

Throughout the year we have knitted or crocheted a huge number of Trauma Teddies, hearts and tiny teddies in support of the Mothers Union Action and Outreach projects and elephants for Milly's Smiles Children's Cancer Charity. The Trauma Teddies get distributed to children of patients in hospitals and children accessing the family visitor centres at prisons in the area. The tiny teddies go to the baby bereavement service, and the hearts go to patients and families of those in ICU at hospitals across Lancashire.

A number of small blankets have also been made for babies in the Women's Refuges in the Preston area as part of our donations for the Mother's Union Rise Up Campaign, raising awareness of domestic abuse.

Alongside our crafting for these charities, we have completed a range of projects for ourselves and shared our knowledge and skills to encourage each other. If you would like to come along, learn, share or develop your crafting skills we would love for you to join us!

Louise Williams

f) Friday Coffee Morning

Our Friday Coffee Morning continues to be very popular.

We are grateful to the Grimsargh Club for allowing us to use their premises. Right in the middle of the village, it is in the heart of the community and allows a welcoming presence for us.

We have a regular core of customers but also regularly welcome newcomers or occasional visitors. An average of 30 people, both men and women, parishioners, friends from Alston Lane church, other friends, neighbours and other villagers make up a happy, sociable and welcoming group .

The vicar comes along and takes the opportunity to chat to everyone. Everyone is made aware of services and activities at St

Michael's and Christian Festivals are marked with a card or small gift.

The coffee morning is staffed by volunteers and is self-sustaining. Any profit that is made is paid into the church general fund.

Jean Harrison

g) Jigsaw Club

The club for children aged 3 years and over continued to run on the second and fourth Sundays during term time. I am grateful for the adult volunteers who find creative ways to teach our children about the Christian faith. The Club usually meet in the cabin on the car park unless it is very cold when the church kitchen is used.

It is good that as a church we get to hear what they have been learning about and see any crafts that they have made to help them understand.

During the year we lost 2 volunteers which means that the rota is a little tight. The volunteers have completed all their Safeguarding training but there is now a requirement for them to complete the Domestic Abuse training by the end of 2026..

Andy Williams

h) Churches Together in Longridge and District

Andy and I have attended regular meetings of the Churches Together in Longridge and District at St Wilfrid's church in Longridge this year as Father Tony was the chairman.

We met with the CTLD group for services on three occasions and with Alston Lane for four.

We had outdoor services with Alston Lane round the war memorial on Remembrance Sunday and on the village green for the Blessing of the Crib at Christmas.

We took part in the World Day of Prayer service and helped with the Lent Lunches.

Nellie Cowell

i) Prayer Group

We launched our new Prayer Group early in 2025. It was heartening to see that 11 people turned up at the first meeting. During the year numbers have fluctuated between 5 and 11 but there have always been faithful people to engage with the Bible and pray for the growth of the church.

The format is very simple; we open in prayer, think about some passages of scripture, and then pray for the growth of our church.

New members are always welcome. We meet on the second Saturday each month at 10.30am in church for up to an hour.

Andy Williams

j) Parish Magazine.

200 copies of the magazine are printed for ten months of the year (December / January and August / September are combined).We use Longridge St Lawrence with St Paul's church as the printers and charge 70p per copy which is £7 for the year.

Twelve distributors deliver to houses in the village and surrounding areas and three copies are posted.

We are very grateful to the distributors for their loyalty in getting them out in all weathers and a special thank you to Betty Sweetman who was still delivering so faithfully in her 94th year and

who never really gave up but was being 'helped out ' as her health was failing .

We are grateful for the support of the 34 businesses who advertise in the magazine, which helps with the cost of printing.

Thank you to those who write the regular reports for us, to Bernard Mackley who puts it all together, to Ruth Buckley who designs the front covers and to James Cowell who sorts out all the adverts and helps me to deliver to the distributors.

Nellie Cowell

12. Vicar's Report

I think that it is fair to say that 2025 was something of a mixed year at St Michael's. There were disappointments & opportunities along with frustrations & joys. The fact that we are still here, serving the Lord with joy, offering our gifts in His service, and making a difference in our community speak volumes about the resilience and hope that fills our worship and mission.

The year started with some sadnesses with the death of two valued members of the church Doris and Jayne, as well as Rev Geoffrey Loxham – a previous vicar. I know that the death of Jayne coming so unexpectedly and suddenly affected us all profoundly. She was such a key part of our church in so many ways that her death will no doubt continue to affect us for some time to come. The way the church came together, with the community, to give thanks for her life and the ministry of Geoffrey show the value of being the village church with its many connections.

It has, however, been heartening to see a variety of people stepping up to fill some of the gaps that had been left; from new leadership in FAF and our Garden Party and Christmas Fair, to a variety church members leading two services when I was on holiday, to new leaders of our Bible Study. There will still be a gap

in terms of regular preaching and service leading until others can be identified and called into new opportunities for ministry among us. If you wish to explore new areas in your volunteering please speak to me – anything can be tried by anyone.

We also held a stewardship campaign focussing on our financial needs as a church. It does make it difficult to budget for mission and growth when we rely on our FAF activities as much as we do just to pay our regular bills. My hope had been that church members would have seen the need and that our regular pledged giving would increase so that our FAF activities could be more missional and less financial. Sadly, the response was not as great as hoped and we will still rely on the unpredictability of income from fundraising to 'keep the show on the road'. Don't get me wrong I am grateful for those who give generously but we need more people to do so in a regular, committed way. We cannot afford to get complacent because we have investments – they can only be spent once and when those funds are gone, they can't be easily replaced. If you want to know more then please have a chat with me.

Our church – the people who make it up – make being Vicar here so special. It is good to have someone to share worship with and see how our gifts complement each other. Working alongside Anthony and Mark as Churchwardens has also been a blessing. It is good to see each of them taking leading roles in line with their gifts as well as working together for the good of the church in Grimsargh. In fact one of the blessings has been working alongside so many gifted people who all give of who they are in so many ways. We would not be the church we are and called to be without all those individuals who work and minister together for the glory of our Lord.

It has been heartening that we are still seeing new people on Sunday mornings, we need to increase that and find meaningful way of drawing them into a living faith in Jesus.

Having a connection with our church school is a blessing and a privilege. It has been great to be able to be part of the school's Key Stage worship regular and well as sharing the faith and life of the church with visits to both church and school, and in one case a day at the cathedral. Children always ask the best (and unexpected!) questions, but their curiosity and explorations of faith is a joy to share in. As usual the children have led some memorable and thoughtful worship for special times of the year in our church.

Working alongside Helen Smith to develop the RE and worship of the school has been very encouraging. It is good to see her, Mr Booth, and the staff seeing the benefits of working together in bringing out the best in the children and truly being a church school.

We do need to build on this connection, especially with the parents. It is great to be able to invite children to our Jigsaw Club, but you will be aware that attendance is patchy. The fact is that children can't come without their parents being prepared to bring them. Our double challenge is to encourage more families to be part of our worship and explore new ways of engaging with children and families.

This year we have begun our journey on the Diocesan Renewal Programme. This is a 12 – 18 month guided exploration of how we might grow as a church – in numbers, spiritual commitment and local service. The Diocese pays for everything and aided by the enthusiasm of Joss Daune and Stuart Fillingham we are sharing the lessons learned with the PCC so that we can make plans for the future. If you can think of new ways that we can grow, or would like to know more about this programme, please speak to myself or Joss and Stuart.

This year we need to;

pray more about how we grow as a church – in size and faith,
put our Renewal Programme learning into practice,

continue to plan for future improvements to our building fabric and heating,
make more of our school connections to help our engagement with young people.

If there any ideas on how we can do things better as a church to engage with the village, please let me know. We are in a good place at the moment but we need to meet our challenges head on and respond well to the opportunities that the Lord provides.

Blessings
Andy