

Whitefriars Church Rushden (Charity Number 1130312)

Trustees Annual Report 2024

Background

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) of Whitefriars Church, Rushden, has the responsibility of promoting the whole mission of the Church (pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical) in the parish. It became a registered charity in 2009 with the PCC members being registered as its trustees. It has complied with its duty of 'promoting in the ecclesiastical parish the whole mission of the church', and in section 4 of the Charities Act 2006 to have due regard to public benefit, guidance published by the Charity Commission.

Review of activities in 2024

This is an outline summary of the activities of Whitefriars church.

Whitefriars church started and finished 2024 without a Vicar. The church has continued to meet regularly, both on Sundays and in small mid-week groups. This has been enabled by a willing group of volunteers, augmented by visiting clergy with Permission To Officiate at monthly Holy Communion services.

A small group continued to hold monthly worship services in two of the town's residential care homes. These services followed a range of themes, as well as celebrating the major Christian festivals and are well attended by a good proportion of the residents in each home. Additionally, monthly events provided spiritual and pastoral care for a group of retired people living more independently in the town.

The PCC met six times during 2024. Various sub-committees met several times between PCC meetings to look at specific areas of church management. Areas of PCC discussion and action included reviewing various policies and appropriate training for those holding DBS clearances. All the relevant church policies have been reviewed and updated, where required. PCC meetings also included active monitoring of Whitefriars church finances and consideration of issues from the wider church, through reports from Deanery, Diocesan and General Synods, as well as the Rushden Council of Churches.

As our paid youth worker resigned to move away in February, the PCC agreed to a small group of volunteers taking over responsibility for and running the Ignite youth group. With agreement from the PCC several members of Whitefriars engaged with other churches in Rushden to plan and run an Illuminate mission to teenage children in the local community. The LZ7 band was invited to come into 6 local secondary schools to talk to the students who were invited to attend concerts of relevant music and personal testimony from band members. PCC and other church members continue to help run a weekly youth group that resulted from this. Our thanks go to everyone involved in these activities.

In October we were formally told that our church office in Whitefriars School grounds would need to be vacated at the end of March 2025 and demolished - and that we would need to sign licenses so that the school could achieve academy status as part on the Tove Academy. We

took legal advice from Diocesan legal advisors and signed the licences in November after minor amendments were made.

We continue to employ 2 part-time members of staff. Emma Croxon has continued to develop as Children and Families Minister, working both with pre-school children and those in primary school – as well as overseeing age-appropriate children’s ministry within our weekly Sunday services, Sara Owst has continued to provide administrative support for the churchwardens and oversight of H&S procedures, etc.

GDPR

There have been no reported breaches of data, and the church continues to function within the guidelines laid out in the General Data Protection Regulations. The continued use of the ChurchSuite database has been instrumental in enabling safe communications with members of the church within the UK GDPR guidelines.

Safeguarding has always had a high priority within our church. Our Safeguarding Policy is kept updated in line with the guidelines laid down by the National safeguarding Team and the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisors. All members of the church are encouraged to complete a basic safeguarding training programme. All those that have contact with children and/or vulnerable adults hold current DBS certificates and have completed higher levels of safeguarding training that is appropriate to their role within the church. Whitefriars has a designated Parish Safeguarding Officer and an Assistant Safeguarding Officer (who is also a Diocesan Safeguarding Trainer and Recruiter). No major safeguarding issues have been reported.

PCC membership

At the annual meeting in April 2024, the following were either serving or elected:

Vicar	Vacant	
Wardens	Richard Holley Nisha Slater	
Diocesan Synod members	Andrew Presland	(General Synod)
Deanery Synod Representatives	Steve Holman Rosie Benn Richard Holley	
Elected members	Hannah Barker (to 2025) Celia Underwood (to 2025) Ken Owst (to 2025) Ally Gibson (to 2026) Lynda King (to 2026) Steph Chadwick to 2026) Emma Croxon (to 2027) Melvyn Hunter (to 2027) Jeremy Smith (to 2027)	(Treasurer) (PCC Secretary)

Unelected members

Matt Croxon

(Licensed Lay Minister)

Karen Wooley

(Licensed Lay Minister)

PCC committees and groups

Standing and Resources Committee: transacts urgent business as required between PCC meetings, including oversight of Whitefriars church finances, drafting the annual budget, monitoring income and expenditure as well as promoting planned giving.

Bridge Management and Minibus Management: carry out routine checks on the state of the Bridge church office, ensuring that safety checks and routine maintenance are carried out; ensure that the minibus is correctly maintained and insured.

Mission Committee: promotes a range of mission and outreach activities, including mission support, both in this country and overseas. Much of this is promoted to the congregation through the church's weekly notices and within Sunday services.

Each of these sub-committees has a Chair whose responsibilities include ensuring that they meet regularly, that meetings are properly minuted and reports returned to the PCC, management of their budget allocation, ensuring that expenditure is kept within the amounts allocated.

Richard Holley – Churchwarden 2024