

**The Parish of Birch with Fallowfield  
Holy Innocents Church**

2 Wilbraham Road – Fallowfield – Manchester M14 6JZ

☎0161 224 0535 [www.holyinnocentsff.org](http://www.holyinnocentsff.org)



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**Sunday March 22<sup>nd</sup> 2026, at 11.30am**

Apologies for absence

**Annual Meeting of Parishioners**

1. Election of Churchwardens

**Annual Parochial Church Meeting**

1. Minutes of the meeting held on Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2025
2. Matters arising
3. Report on changes to the church electoral roll
4. Election of PCC members – 3 vacancies
5. Election of Deanery Synod representatives – 3 vacancies
6. Appointment of independent examiner of the accounts
7. Annual Report on proceedings of the PCC, including financial statements for 2025
  - Annual meeting receives the accounts approved by the PCC on February 24<sup>th</sup> 2026
8. Safeguarding update
9. Annual Report on proceedings of Manchester South and Stretford Deanery Synod
10. Warden's Report, including report on fabric, goods and ornaments of the church
11. Rector's Report
12. Closing remarks

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**Minutes of meetings held on Sunday March 23<sup>rd</sup> 2025, starting at 11.15am**

Apologies for absence

Sarah Peate, Beryl Newton, Betty Ormrod, Kaveh Golab

In attendance

Alan Clarke (chair), Revd Richard Young, Andrew Gait (clerk), Judith Clark, Margaret Beetham, Janet Batsleer, Revd Jane Walker, Anandaraj Sathianathan, B Shilaneef, Faith Escreet, Suzanne Theelen, Barbara Kinch, Assunta Del Priore, Mehrdad Zaferanch, David Neesham, Sue Neesham, Edwina Lau, Joanna Gait, Mohamad Shergh, Lynda Newton, Mehran Manandi, Sajad Zahmatkesh, Hossein Fahkri, Hassan Rahmaninezhad, Mohamad Jeivad Mehdi Zadeh, Hooman Nabi Zadeh, Sina Rahmaninezhad, Mohammad Reza Ahmaddoost, Mahyar Makarinezhad, Rasool Matin, Mohammad Reza Asdollani, Marzieh Ghorbanichoghouri, Somayah Irankhah, Asghar Khodadoost, Peter Jordan, Harry Lowe, Peggy Lowe, Mohamad Farrerhani, Morteza Malekzardek, Rashid Nekoie, Behnam Masoudi, Akbar Ghanbari, Rucha Magare, E. JS. Chuwen, Jenny Daggars, Stuart Jones, Mehdi Jalilvand, Helen Aczel, Younus Darvishi, Hamid Reza Maysani, Hilary Jones, Revd Jan Ainsworth, Revd Canon Michael Ainsworth, Hilary Peate, Andy Peate (arrived at 11.20am), Andrew Dawson, Goli Khatamsaz, Mohammad Abedi, William Godfrey

**Annual Meeting of Parishioners**

1. Election of Churchwardens

The purpose of this meeting is to elect two churchwardens. There were two nominations:

Alan Clarke (nominated by Hilary Jones, seconded by Asghar Khodadoost)  
Hilary Jones (nominated by Lynda Newton, seconded by Asghar Khodadoost)

With no further nominations, Hilary and Alan were appointed by consensus (of the clergy and the lay people) as the two churchwardens.

**Annual Parochial Church Meeting**

1. Minutes of the meetings held on Sunday May 14<sup>th</sup> 2024

The minutes were agreed as an accurate reflection of that meeting (proposed Judith Clark, seconded Barbara Kinch, with all in favour).

2. Matters arising

None.

3. Report on changes to the church electoral roll

There are currently 72 names on the electoral roll following a full revision. There are now 13 (7 fewer than last year) residents and 59 (15 fewer than last year) non-residents on the roll.

#### 4. Election of PCC members – 6 vacancies

There were 6 nominees:

- Janet Batsleer (nominated by Margaret Beetham, seconded by Andrew Dawson)
- William Godfrey (nominated by Hilary Peate, seconded by Faith Escreet)
- Andrew Dawson (nominated by Janet Batsleer, seconded by Margaret Beetham)
- Somaye Irankhah (nominated by Janet Batsleer, seconded by Kurosh Behpour)
- Suzanne Theelen (nominated by Barbara Kinch, seconded by Hilary Peate)
- Assunta Del Priore (nominated by Janet Batsleer, seconded by Margaret Beetham)

With no further nominations, each of the nominees were duly elected.

With 6 new members, terms of office will be decided at the first meeting of the new PCC. One of these vacancies is the Deanery Synod vacancy, so who takes this role will also be decided at the same meeting.

#### 5. Appointment of independent examiner of the accounts

It was agreed that Chris Smail should continue as the independent examiner (proposed by Alan Clarke, seconded by Joanna Gait, with all in favour).

#### 6. Annual Report on proceedings of the PCC, including financial statements for 2024

A written review of the year and the accounts were presented to the meeting.

- Andrew Dawson gave a vote of thanks for making the meeting documents available in advance via the church website
- Margaret Beetham gave a vote of thanks for those who worked on building projects within the church this year to replace the flooring in the nave and sanctuary

#### 7. Financial statements to be received by the meeting

The report was received by the meeting (proposed Hilary Peate, seconded Lynda Newton, with all in favour).

#### 8. Safeguarding: Child Protection Policy & Vulnerable Adults Policy

A written report was presented to the meeting.

#### 9. Annual Report on proceedings of South Manchester and Stretford Deanery Synod

A written report was available on request.

#### 10. Wardens' Report, including report on fabric, goods and ornaments of the church

Hilary Jones and Alan Clarke presented a written report.

#### 11. Rector's Report

Richard Young presented a written report.

Hilary Peate gave a vote of thanks to the churchwardens, clergy and Rector.

Lynda Newton expressed a vote of thanks from Beryl Newton to the audio-visual team for continuing to live-stream services.

The meeting ended at 11.30am with the Grace.

**Holy Innocents Church, 2 Wilbraham Road, Fallowfield, Manchester M14 6JZ**

Annual Report and  
**Financial Statements of the**  
**Parochial Church Council of Birch with Fallowfield**  
for the Year Ended 31 December 2025

Incumbent  
The Revd R M Young (from April 24<sup>th</sup> 2018)  
c/o 2 Wilbraham Road  
Fallowfield  
Manchester

Bank  
NatWest Bank  
699 Wilmslow Road  
Didsbury  
Manchester  
M20 6NW

Central Board of Finance  
80 Cheapside  
London

Independent Examiner  
Mr C Smail

**Annual Report on the proceedings of the Parochial Church Council  
and activities of the Parish**

*Membership of the Parochial Church Council*

The maximum number of elected lay representatives on the PCC is currently nine: each serves for three years, three retire at each APCM, and elections are held to fill the vacancies. We also elected two Deanery Synod representatives at the 2023 APCM to serve until 2026.

Incumbent	The Revd Richard Young		From April 24 <sup>th</sup> 2018
Associate Priest	The Revd Jane Walker		From June 24 <sup>th</sup> 2019
Wardens	Alan Clarke	Lay Chair	From APCM 2021
	Hilary Jones		From APCM 2024
Representatives on the Deanery Synod	Jenny Daggars	Mission community rep	From APCM 2023 until 2026
	Reza Shekar Farush		From APCM 2023 until 2026
	Andrew Dawson		From APCM 2025 until 2026++

PCC Members	William Godfrey		From APCM 2025 until 2028
	Somaye Irankhah		From APCM 2025 until 2028
	Suzanne Theelen	Treasurer	From APCM 2025 until 2028
	Lynda Newton		From APCM 2024 until 2027
	Stuart Jones		From APCM 2024 until 2027
	Kaveh Golab		From APCM 2024 until 2027
	Andrew Gait	PCC Secretary	From APCM 2023 until 2026
	Janet Batsleer		From APCM 2025 until 2026+
	Assunta del Priore		From APCM 2025 until 2026+
	Jack Young	Treasurer	From APCM 2023 until 2025**
	Sue Neesham		From APCM 2023 until 2025***
	Janet Batsleer		From APCM 2022 until 2025
	Barbara Kinch		From APCM 2022 until 2025
	William Godfrey		From APCM 2023 until 2025*

\* It was agreed at the first PCC meeting of 2023-24 that Bill would serve a 2-year term to ensure three members step down each APCM.

\*\* Resigned, 07/02/25

\*\*\* Resigned, 18/02/25

+ It was agreed at the first PCC meeting of 2025-26 that Assunta and Janet would fill the vacant one-year terms to ensure three members step down at each APCM

++ It was agreed at the first PCC meeting of 2025-26 that Andrew would fill the vacant Deanery Synod rep role

### ***Committees and working groups***

The standing committee is required by the Church Representation Rules. Other committees and working groups are appointed by the PCC for the purpose of various branches of church work in the parish. Members of the PCC lead the working groups but members of the congregation who are not members of the PCC are welcome to join the groups.

#### *Standing committee:*

This committee has power to transact the business of the Council between its meetings, subject to directions given by the full Council.

#### *Building committee:*

This group takes responsibility for looking after all aspects of the maintenance and development of the church building.

#### *Education and Learning Committee*

The Committee is responsible for organising educational courses and other events or meetings as appropriate.

#### *Music/Worship/Liturgy:*

This group takes responsibility for the musical life and direction of the church, considering how to enrich and extend our current musical traditions and repertoire.

### ***Church attendance***

The average weekly attendance at the Sung Eucharist on Sunday was 70.

### ***Review of the year***

The Revd Richard Young continued as our Rector, supported by Revd Jane Walker, Revd Canon Michael Ainsworth, Revd Canon Alma Servant and Revd Janina Ainsworth.

Sunday Services continued to be live-streamed for those who were not able to attend in person.

At the moment, we have no organised provision for children, as there are only a few who attend services regularly. Resources and activities for children who attend can be provided, and children are invited to take part in suitable ministries as appropriate.

Midweek Eucharists continued to take place on Mondays and Thursdays.

The full PCC met six times during the year with a mean average attendance of 83.5% (range 75-93.8%).

During the year, various projects were completed inside the church, including the replacement of the flooring in both the nave and the sanctuary, and following this, new chairs were acquired to replace the chairs which had served the church since its reordering in the 1980s.

Discussion at the PCC during the year continued around the project on how we plan to heat the building in the future, with the possibility of replacing the boilers with solar panels and heat pumps. There were discussions around safeguarding, stewarding our financial resources, creating a record of roles and responsibilities within the church, and leadership succession planning.

Building on a legacy of work going back many years, we were awarded an Eco Church Silver award this year.

We continue to be involved with our local Mission Community alongside other like-minded local churches and continue to attend South Manchester & Stretford Deanery Synod meetings. A joint Mission Community service on Ascension Day took place at St Clement's Chorlton, and later in the year choir members also joined the Come and Sing choir for a service on All Souls Day.

Close links continue with St James' School with members of the congregation serving on the Governing Body of the Community Federation of Saints (which currently serves two schools: St James, and St Philips, Hulme, with negotiations currently ongoing to add another local school).

The PCC agreed to continue funding for choral scholarships for the academic year 2025-26. Currently we have four singers who support us on a regular basis, one of whom conducts, and other singers in Manchester who we occasionally use as deputies.

We ran a poetry group throughout the year, and local lectures on unsung local historical figures in Manchester from Autumn 2025 through to Spring 2026. The church continues to support peace and justice campaigns, including supporting asylum seekers, Christian Aid, and Fairtrade.

Taban, the charity founded by church members in 2020 with support from the Diocese, continues to grow and extend its reach. Having worked from Holy Innocents for a number of years, the charity workers are now based in Luther King House in the parish.

A Romanian orthodox congregation continue to use the building on Sunday afternoons, as well as for special services at (Orthodox) Christmas and Easter, amongst other times.

The Alteri choir are currently considering their future and so for now they are not using the building for any rehearsals. Orchestras and musical societies continue to regularly use the building for concerts.

In Lent our giving supported Wood Street Mission, and in Advent we donated to the work of Amnesty International.

The church continued to receive income from the mobile phone mast installation.

*Andrew Gait, PCC Secretary, 24 February 2026*

**Parochial Church Council of Birch with Fallowfield**  
**For the year ended 31 December 2025**  
**Statement of financial activities**

Account	Unassigned	Restricted	Endowment	Total	Prior Year Total
<b>Income</b>					
Planned Giving	28,525			28,525	23,940
Other Giving	2,044			2,044	2,762
Gifts - Designated	450			450	5,000
Tax recoverable on Gift Aid	7,327			7,327	7,746
Other funds generated	548			548	440
Cellnex income	8,075			8,075	5,238
Occasional lettings	1,730			1,730	3,525
Romanians	8,245			8,245	6,375
Income for 3rd Parties		300		300	750
Investment Income	5,934	179		6,113	6,690
<b>Total</b>	<b>62,878</b>	<b>479</b>		<b>63,357</b>	<b>62,466</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>					
St James School	261			261	240
Parish share	24,926			24,926	24,200
Insurance	6,713			6,713	6,034
Utilities	9,090			9,090	10,302
Music	8,768			8,768	8,671
General Running Costs	3,992			3,992	7,459
Maintenance and repairs	3,187	179		3,366	3,043
Gardening	2,560			2,560	1,440
Major building projects	32,575			32,575	12,493
Grants paid out		100		100	550
Events	203			203	1,035
<b>Total</b>	<b>92,275</b>	<b>279</b>		<b>92,554</b>	<b>75,467</b>
<b>Surplus / (Deficit) for year</b>	<b>(29,397)</b>	<b>200</b>		<b>(29,197)</b>	<b>(13,001)</b>
<b>Other Income</b>					
Gain/Loss on Assets	(5,935)	230	(2,373)	(8,078)	10,916
<b>Net movement in funds</b>	<b>(35,332)</b>	<b>430</b>	<b>(2,373)</b>	<b>(37,275)</b>	<b>(2,085)</b>
Total funds brought forward as previously stated	181,160	52,632	78,154	311,946	318,613
Adjustment to accruals basis					(4,582)
Total funds brought forward as restated	181,160	52,632	78,154	311,946	314,031
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>	<b>145,828</b>	<b>53,062</b>	<b>75,781</b>	<b>274,671</b>	<b>311,946</b>

**Parochial Church Council of Birch with Fallowfield**  
**For the year ended 31 December 2025**  
**Balance Sheet**

Account	Unassigned	Restricted	Endowment	Total	Prior Year Total
<b>Fixed assets</b>					
Investments	98,958	52,862	75,781	227,601	265,935
<b>Current assets</b>					
Trade Debtors	270			270	80
<b>Cash at Bank</b>					
Current Account	22,333	200		22,533	26,462
Deposit Account	24,267			24,267	23,216
<b>Total Cash at Bank</b>	<b>46,600</b>	<b>200</b>		<b>46,800</b>	<b>49,678</b>
<b>Total Current assets</b>	<b>46,870</b>	<b>200</b>		<b>47,070</b>	<b>49,758</b>
<b>Current liabilities</b>					
Parish share (paid January)					3,747
					<b>3,747</b>
<b>Total net assets</b>	<b>145,828</b>	<b>53,062</b>	<b>75,781</b>	<b>274,671</b>	<b>311,946</b>
<b>Funds of the Charity</b>	<b>145,828</b>	<b>53,062</b>	<b>75,781</b>	<b>274,671</b>	<b>311,946</b>
					0

Signed on behalf of all the trustees:-

Signature	Print Name	Date of approval
	Andrew Gait	#####
	S Theelan	#####

**Parochial Church Council of Birch with Fallowfield**  
**For the year ended 31 December 2025**  
**Charity Funds**

Fund names	Fund balances brought forward	Income	Expenditure	Transfers	Gains and losses	Fund balances carried forward	Description
	£	£	£	£	£	£	
<b>Endowment Funds</b>							Funds, the capital of which must be maintained; only the income arising from the investment of the endowments may be used.
Miss D Atkins Curate Fund	71,373				(2,115)	69,258	A bequest, the income is for general purposes and is credited to the General Fund.
Miss Maude Yeardye Fund	6,451				(258)	6,193	A bequest, the income is to maintain the church building.
Lancaster Road Fund	330					330	A bequest, the income is for general purposes and is credited to the General Fund.
<b>Total Endowment Funds</b>	<b>78,154</b>				<b>(2,373)</b>	<b>75,781</b>	
<b>Restricted Funds</b>							Funds received by the PCC with a specific restriction on their future use.
Youth Centre Charity Investment Fund	37,221				(468)	36,753	Funds arising from disposal of assets the capital to be used in future for similar work, but the income is for general purposes and is credited to the General Fund.
Holy Innocents School Fund	15,411				698	16,109	
Miss Maude Yeardye Income Fund		179	179				Income from the Miss Maude Yeardye Fund restricted to the maintenance of the church building.
Grants		300	100			200	Funding received to support individual members of the congregation
<b>Total Restricted Funds</b>	<b>52,632</b>	<b>479</b>	<b>279</b>		<b>230</b>	<b>52,862</b>	
<b>General Fund</b>	<b>181,160</b>	<b>62,878</b>	<b>92,275</b>		<b>(5,935)</b>	<b>145,828</b>	The funds of the PCC that are not subject to any restrictions regarding their use, available for the general purposes of the PCC.
<b>Total Funds</b>	<b>311,946</b>	<b>63,357</b>	<b>92,554</b>		<b>(8,078)</b>	<b>274,471</b>	

# Independent Examiner's Report

## Independent Examiners Report to the members of Birch with Fallowfield PCC

I report on the financial statements of Birch with Fallowfield PCC ("the charity") for the year ended 31 December 2025 consisting of the attached Statement of Financial Activities and Balance Sheet.

### Respective Responsibilities of the PCC and the Independent Examiner

The PCC are the charity's trustees and as such are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 (the Charities Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the financial statements under section 145 of the Charities Act;
- to follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145 (5) (b) of the Charities Act); and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

### Basis of Independent Examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the financial statements presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the financial statements and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the financial statements present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

### Independent Examiner's statement

In connection with my examination no matter has come to my attention, apart from the matter mentioned above:

- (1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements
  - to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; and
  - to prepare financial statements which accord with the accounting records and to comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act have not been met: or
- (2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the financial statements to be reached.



Chris Smail FCA DChA  
2 Bamford Grove, Didsbury, M20 2FF

2 March 2026

# Birch with Fallowfield Safeguarding Report

## February 2026

In our work we follow National Policies on Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults, the Diocesan Safeguarding Children' Policy and the Safe Church Policy. The policy statements were reviewed by the PCC at the meeting on 24/2/26 . Safeguarding information including contact details for the P.S.C. are displayed on the church web site, a church near you and on the noticeboard. We also display details for ChildLine and Silver Lines.

We continue to use the parish dashboard to help the PCC to keep track of safeguarding requirements and make sure that we are up to date with local and national requirements. Safeguarding is a standing item at PCC meetings.

There have been two safeguarding issues this last year. One has been resolved with support from the diocese and another is ongoing.

As a general reminder anyone with any concerns about safeguarding should speak to the Rector or Parish Safeguarding Co-ordinator who will then follow the recommended diocesan procedures. In no circumstances should a member of congregation question anyone independently as this can affect further actions.

Lynda Newton

Safeguarding Co-ordinator

February 2026

## **Deanery Synod Report – March 2026**

A year ago the Manchester South and Stretford Deanery was in hiatus following the departure of Nick Watson as Area Dean. Eventually Peter Matthews became acting Area Dean – he has just taken on the permanent position and will be licensed later this month.

We attended two meetings in the year. In July we met at St Nicholas Burnage and discussed the Diocesan strategy, in small groups. Then in October we met at St Michael and All Angels in Wythenshawe and heard a presentation on Safeguarding.

Our next meeting is on March 25<sup>th</sup> with the main topic being clergy wellbeing.

RICHARD YOUNG

13<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2026

## Wardens' Report, 2025

2025 was an exceptionally busy year for the wardens. The Terrier and Inventory are just getting their breath back. (They are available for inspection on request.)

In January, after preparatory work by Reza Shekar Farush and his team, the new flooring of the sanctuary was installed. This was followed by the removal of the old carpet tiles (which headed to allotments, gardens and lofts across Greater Manchester and beyond!) the cleaning and repairing of the sub floors and then the mammoth fitting of the new carpet. Further teams of people then re-worked the old chairs to make them identical, and to ensure that everyone was on a sound chair until the next excitement: the arrival of the new chairs.

A question we have occasionally been asked, is why – unlike images found on other church websites, apparently – we have pictures of our furnishings and our space, but very few of people. Many of our members, both new and regular, are concerned about their image being seen, due to well founded concerns for their safety and that of their families. So we rarely take or publish photos of people. But we hope that our space is bright and clear enough for people to be able to imagine themselves in it, and feel that it is a living place of prayer.

Both current wardens remain actively involved in the liturgical life of the church: in producing the weekly service sheets and in setting up the church week by week and season by season to be a fitting and welcoming place for anyone who comes in. These roles just happen to be part of the particular ministry journeys of the two people involved. Any new warden needs to know it's all in hand and happening, while not necessarily doing it themselves! Volunteers to learn and train up for either of these roles are always welcome. This year, as part of a paper saving exercise, we experimented with re-usable leaflets with inserts for the Easter season and then the long green Sundays after Trinity. It wasn't as labour saving as we hoped, but did reduce the amount of paper and toner used. Constructive feedback is always welcome too.

Our Sunday, weekday and festival Eucharists are the work of many people. The wardens' thanks for their ministry and care go as ever, to Richard and Jane, who along with Michael, Alma and Jan presided and preached over the year. And while each of them has their own particular characteristics and idiosyncrasies, they are all genuinely holy, impressively learned, largely harmless and usually entirely well-meaning. We ask for God's blessing on their continued ministries.

Particular thanks should go to Andy Gait, for his role as both organist and as PCC secretary, a role he has held for many years, as wardens come and go around him. We would also like to thank all the PCC members, Deanery Synod Representatives, sidespeople teams, coffee teams, readers and prayer leaders, chalice administrators, indeed anyone whose name hits a rota, and to Asghar for being the ultimate rota compliance person (resistance is truly futile!).

We would like to thank people who have had good ideas and followed them through: encouraging the yearning of people far and wide to come and sit somewhere on a Saturday and learn something, mending and repairing things, making things work better...

A current work is the Book of the Church, a support, training and information guide designed to enable anyone interested to take on a role or ministry with the necessary information to do so. It is taking a while to put together, but is gradually taking shape. How to present the information in an accessible way has shown that these will vary according to user, so an appendix to this report shows the 'who does what' version.

*Hilary Jones, Alan Clarke, March 2026.*

## Rector's Report 2026

As I sit down to write this report I have been reflecting on how eight years have gone by since my licensing to Holy Innocents. At the time it seemed to some in my family (and maybe to some of you) as a reckless, even foolish project. And yet I feel enormously grateful for the many ways in which being your Rector has enriched my life.

This week it seems that spring has burst upon us. There is new life everywhere. And as I look back on this past year, this calls to mind those initiatives which started out as a small and perhaps doubtful idea (I too can be sceptical) which are now full of life. Our history lectures and poetry group are collaborative spaces which are life-giving in creative and joyful ways. And I also think of our 11:30 discussion group where I see shared learning and passionate debate.

This is not to pass over those things that continue to be done faithfully and to a very high standard: our music, liturgy, reading, serving and intercessions, the welcome team and those who help with the upkeep of our building. Thank you to all who help in so many ways.

Thanks also to our wardens, Hilary and Alan, who steps down this year after serving for longer than anyone can recall: Alan assures me he will still be at my side (and my colleagues) in the sanctuary.

And thank you to Suzanne who as Treasurer has completely overhauled our accounting, so that everything is now in its place and nothing moves without an invoice.

This year has ended with terrible events unfolding in Iran, where many of our congregation have family and friends. We hope and pray for an end to violence and a peaceful transition to more just and open government.

Looking to the future, I am musing on my eventual retirement. I am 63 and when Sheenagh chooses to retire, perhaps as early as a couple of years from now, it would be natural for me to do the same.

And in that mindset the main area of unfinished business I would like to see addressed is our governance and leadership. We have done some work on this in the PCC this year, looking at roles and what is involved, trying to record them in our Book of the Church. Behind this, however, I am more and more of the view that good things will follow if we can adapt the way the church is led alongside change in our community and the culture within which we live. Such change I believe will be cultural as well as structural. I invite you to join me in this journey – let's discuss what it might mean.

With my best wishes and prayers,

Richard