



2024

The Parish Church of the Ascension, Hall
Green
CHARITY NUMBER 1133810

Annual Report

Aim and Purposes

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) along with the vicar, Revd. Canon Nejib Boumenjel, share the responsibility of promoting the mission of the church: pastoral, evangelistic, social, and ecumenical in the parish of The Ascension, Hall Green.

Objectives

Our site brings people together for Christian worship, education and fellowship as well as providing multiple opportunities for service to the wider community. Anyone is welcome to worship here and to become part of our parish community.

Our Vision:

At The Church of The Ascension, we seek to be a friendly and welcoming church with a passion for loving service to the local community where people of all ages can experience the love of God, grow in faith and receive the spiritual and pastoral support they need.

Our Mission Statement:

The Church of The Ascension exists to love God, love People and to make disciples of Jesus who will make a difference in our community and beyond.

When planning our activities, we have considered the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit and supplementary guidance on charities for the advancement of religion. We try to enable people to live out their faith as part of our Christian community through:

- Worship, prayer, and education in the gospel.
- Provision of community spaces.
- Mission and outreach work.
- Partnership initiatives with other local charities, hall users, fellow churches and others.
- Pastoral care for people living in the parish; and
- Stewardship of The Ascension's physical, financial and human resources.

This Annual Report is the story of the period between our Annual Parish Meetings on 19th May 2024 and 18th May 2025.

Our People

We acknowledge those continuing to give their time and talents in God's service. We would especially like to thank The Revd. Canon Nejib Boumenjel for his outstanding dedication to God's service as he continues to lead worship, mission and outreach and to give pastoral care to all who need it.

We thank Pauline Price, our churchwarden, for her hard work over the past four years and Clive Jones, for his work, particularly in relation to the churchyard wall. We also acknowledge the vital contributions made by lay readers, our treasurer and PCC secretary, all those who coordinate and undertake aspects of our mission and outreach work and who perform important tasks 'behind the scenes'. We would also like to thank Martine Whitmore, our Parish Administrator, for her contribution to the life of our church.

The number of persons on the 2024 Electoral Roll was 83, three more than last year: 14 are resident within the parish boundary – down from 17 last year, and 69 are non-resident – up from 63 last year.

The past year has sadly seen the passing of more long-standing members of our Church family including Pam Holt and Diane Mallett. Pam was joint founder of the playgroup, a committed member of the Mother's Union and, alongside her late husband Ted, a supporter of Theatre 28 and involved in Fundraising events. Diane was a founding member, alongside her late husband Neville, of the Bereavement Visiting group and organising committee of the Thanksgiving and Remembrance services, also supporting 279 Scouts,

fundraising and a mainstay of the Coffee Shop. We would like to pay tribute to them both and to express our sympathy to their loved ones.

Worship and Prayer

Services are held at 8.30a.m. (second and fourth Sundays), 10am and 4pm on Sundays plus a mid-week service at 10.30am on Wednesdays. We also have occasional services at 6pm.

A service of Holy Communion continues to be held each Sunday afternoon at 4pm, in Arabic on the first three Sundays and English on the fourth and fifth Sundays of the month.

We would like to thank our Director of Music Clive Jones and our small, dedicated choir for their continued contribution to our worship.

Congregations at our services remain smaller than in 2019 although we continue to welcome some new worshippers. Our festival services at Christmas and Easter attract larger congregations.

We enable our community to celebrate and thank God at the milestones of their journey through life. Through baptism we thank God for the gift of life; in marriage public vows are exchanged with God's blessing, and through funeral services friends and family express their grief and give thanks for the life which is now complete, commending the person into God's keeping.

Services of Thanksgiving and Remembrance for those we love who have died are held twice yearly. These are well attended and are important as a public way to remember loved ones, as well as being an expression of pastoral care as we keep in contact with those who have lost loved ones.

On 30th June, we had a service to mark volunteering Sunday, giving thanks for the many volunteers whose work is essential in order for the church to pursue its mission.

The 10.00 a.m. service on 7th July marked the reunion of the Church of the Ascension Youth Club. Rev. Brian McQuillen, a former member of the Club, assisted Canon Nejib during the service.

On 14th July, we gave thanks for the work of The Church of the Ascension Pre-School Playgroup which was about to close its doors. Over 54 years, it welcomed countless children, including the children and grandchildren of many church members, and helped to set them on their way in life.

Sunday School operates at the 10am service on three Sundays a month (apart from August, Bank Holidays and major festivals). We now have 8 children between the ages of 2 and 10 attending our Sunday School. We give thanks for these children and for this opportunity to help them to grow in faith.

Messy Church continues to be an important ministry, guided by the values of being Christ-centred for all ages, creativity, hospitality, and celebration. There were 4 sessions in 2024 and 2 so far in 2025. We also had a session for volunteers on 1st February 2025, to renew the vision for Messy Church and encourage our volunteers. To enable us to continue to grow and develop Messy Church, we need more people to help with setting up, registration, craft activities, serving food and drink etc. If you would like to help or to find out more, please speak to Sarah Barnes, or to the Vicar.

There are fortnightly Monday prayer meetings where we share and pray for those things for which we would like to seek God's guidance, as well as things for which we would like to give thanks. Bible Study also takes place on alternate Mondays. A Home Group is also held on Tuesday evenings in Arabic.

Pastoral Care

Some members of our parish are unable to attend church due to sickness or age. The Vicar and lay pastoral team endeavour to provide pastoral support to those who are sick or otherwise in need. Our continued thanks to the small, dedicated team involved in this vital ministry.

Safeguarding

We marked Safeguarding Sunday in November with a themed service demonstrating that safeguarding is both an integral part of our mission and everyone's responsibility.

The PCC has complied with its duty under Section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 to have due regard to House of Bishops' guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults. In November 2024, the PCC reviewed its Safeguarding Policy; a copy of this can be found on our website <http://www.ascensionhallgreen.uk/>.

Churches Together in Hall Green (CTHG)

The Christian churches in Hall Green continues to work and pray together. CTHG meetings are held 4 times a year with the Ministers meeting in between each CTHG meeting.

CTHG arranged for David Allen to lead a bible study on the Gospel of St Luke on 16th October 2024 at St Peter's Church.

On 27th October 2024, St Peter's Church celebrated its 60th Anniversary with Bishop Michael presiding at a celebration and confirmation service.

As in past years, we participated in the CTHG Lent Course put together by Blair Kessler and Keith Dennis from Hall Green United Community Church based on materials from Roots (www.rootsontheweb.com).

Foodbank

The Church continues to operate a Foodbank out of the Church Hall on Friday afternoons, 52 weeks a year.

We are part of the Sparkhill Foodbank which consists of 4 satellites distribution points plus the main depot in Tyseley. During the last year the volunteers at The Ascension distributed approximately 18 tonnes of food to 1,362 clients who represented 1,920 adults and 1,150 children. This represents a slight increase in numbers from the previous year.

The closure of Waitrose has had a significant impact in the quantity of food donations and the loss of fresh food on a Thursday. As a result, our 'bagging team' was disbanded, and we said goodbye and thank you to Angie Sanford from St Peter's Church, who had been with us since the pandemic

We continue to be grateful to the team of 20 or so volunteers who between them not only serve the clients but fetch and carry the stock from Tyseley.

Charitable Giving

We continue to collect for a number of charities whose aims align with ours, both through designated collections and a box at the back of church.

In May 2024 and May 2025, Clair Ellinor hosted a 'big brekkie' in aid of Christian Aid.

Heritage Open Day

On Saturday 14th September 2024, we held an open morning as part of national Heritage Open Days and Birmingham Heritage Week. Church was open for people to look around and find out about its history, and we also provided refreshments and a display about activities past and present. We had over 40 visitors, including a number with past connections to the Church.

Fellowship

The Ascension Coffee Shop continues to meet on Wednesdays between 10am and 2. pm. The aim is to provide a low-cost snack and friendship for members of our local community. Our volunteer team has reduced in size in recent times and new volunteers are always very welcome.

Monday Club

The Monday Club programme was a full one in 2024 with all our regular activities, visiting groups, and events. We had summer and Christmas lunches at the Robin Hood Toby Carvery, a Bring and Buy, a cream tea at the end of May, and 'party time' with Christmas cake and nibbles at the end of November. There were some excellent speakers, including our own Jon Meadows about the gold leaf industry and how

and where gold leaf is used - you can even see it here in church! and from charities such as 'Mary's Meals' and Troop Aid. Musical entertainment from the Gilbert and Sullivan Savoyards, and we sang popular songs along with the 'Northern Star Arts Ukulele Group'. There is such a varied programme, and anyone is welcome to come to any of the sessions (or the lunches) to enjoy a relaxed time of fellowship, entertainment and refreshments, whether regularly or not.

Sadly, our dear Armchair Aerobics gentleman, Mike Midgely, died at the end of the 2024. He had been coming to us for many years and will be sadly missed. We have been fortunate in finding Naomi, a very lively lady, to come and put us through our paces.

Average attendance is about a dozen members who come regularly so it is impossible to make a profit without charging 'subs' (£4 per session) above what might be considered 'value for money' for when we don't have 'outside entertainment'. Since we now hold our lunches at The Robin Hood, and no longer have to pay room hire charges, the deficit for 2024 was only just over £100. There are still considerable funds in the bank so we shall continue to use them to cover the shortfall and prevent Monday Club closing altogether. It provides a good mix of entertainment, and the social aspect is appreciated by all who attend.

From this month we shall put the whole of the year's remaining programme in the parish magazine:

12 May - Charity Session – Ukulele Group:	26 May - Bank Holiday - Cream Teas + Bring & Buy:
9 June - Summer Lunch at Robin Hood Carvery:	23 June - Liz Formby – Brainhouse School:
7 July - A sing-along with Geoff Salminen	21 July - Mary Bodfish – 'Skulduggery at Soho' :
4 August – Listening to music; - bring along your own CDs	18 August - Bingo or Beetle
1 Sept – Armchair Exercises	15 Sept – Jill Kashi – 'A thousand years of life at Baddesley Clinton'
29 Sept – Gilbert and Sullivan Savoyards	13 Oct - Dave Matthews – 'My life in the Police Force'
27 Oct - Bring and Buy + Jon Meadows - 'Witness Service'.	10 Nov - Charity Session – Ukulele Group
24 Nov - Party Time and singalong carols	8 Dec - Christmas Lunch – Robin Hood Carvery

Anthea Tinline

Youth Club Reunion

Back in the 1960's, The Church of The Ascension hosted a flourishing Youth Club where lasting friendships (and marriages) were formed. 24 former members met locally over the weekend of 5-7 July 2024, with friends coming from far and wide. Highlights were a 'get together' with a fish and chip supper in the Church Hall, attendance at the 10.00 a.m. service on the Sunday morning and a grand dinner at a local hotel. Many had not been back to The Ascension for over sixty years. As we are all in our late 70's or early 80's and having had such good times, we are planning to reprise our reunion on 4-6 July 2025!

Margaret Hyde

Partnerships

Activities undertaken by other organisations with strong links to The Ascension are described below.

Hall Green Churches Child Contact Centre

The year 2024, and the first three months of 2025, has generally been a successful period for the operation of both Hall Green and North Solihull Child Contact Centres. Hall Green Centre's child contact sessions take place every Saturday from 2pm to 4pm and on alternate Saturdays from 11am to 1pm. Sessions at North Solihull Centre take place on alternate Saturdays from 2pm to 4pm. North Solihull Centre is now in its third year of operation at the Connection Church Centre, Cooks Lane, Kingshurst and this arrangement continues to work well.

In the period 1st April 2024 - 31st March 2025 there were 33 family referrals to Hall Green and 9 to North Solihull. There are fluctuations in the number of families using each Centre. Hall Green is now busier with an increase in the number of referrals. North Solihull shows a small reduction in referrals since last year. Because of court delays many of the families using the Centres are staying with us for longer periods of time.

There are currently 33 volunteers at Hall Green (including the Trustees) and 12 at North Solihull.

In the financial year 2024/25, grants were awarded by 'We Are All Making A Difference' Charitable Trust (£1,000), Ministry of Justice (£5,000), Grantham Yorke Trust (£5,000), The Grimmitt Trust (£2,000) and Edward Cadbury Charitable Trust (£3,000). In addition, there was income from donations and registration fees.

At the end of August 2024, we said goodbye to our Referrals Coordinator, Sarah Ali, who was leaving to take up a full-time position. She had been with us since April 2019 and with the rest of the co-ordinator team experienced the trials and tribulations of running the Centres during the pandemic. She made a considerable difference to the running of the Centres and brought us into the 21st century by implementing a digital document retention system and refining our digital data records.

At the beginning of September 2024 we welcomed Clair Dillon, Sarah's replacement. We were fortunate in being able to recruit her before Sarah left and this enabled an orderly transfer of work. Clair has previous experience in a number of employment sectors and has very quickly settled into the position.

Grateful thanks are due to my colleague Co-ordinators - Frances Hooper, Angela Feenan and Clair Dillon for all the work they do. The Centres could not operate without the commitment of our Team Leaders and volunteer support workers; they are a fantastic team - many thanks to them for all they do.

Finally, my personal thanks to my colleague Trustees – Revd Canon Nejib Boumenjel, David Andrews, Frances Hooper and Revd Ian Crockford.

Clive Jones

Hall Green Youth

Hall Green Youth was formed in 2006, building on a long history of interest in youth work through Churches Together in Hall Green. Its mission is to connect with, and meet the needs of young people, with a particular current focus on mental health and wellbeing.

The murder of Leo Ross, a 12 year old boy who attended Christchurch CofE Academy, in January 2025 caused extra anxiety and uncertainty across young people in all of our groups. In the light of this event, we surveyed 33 young people with whom we work to see how they feel about their community, how it has affected them and any support that they feel that they need. A number of the young people that we surveyed said that they feel that the support that we Hall Green Youth provides is needed more than ever.

We supported over 45 young people in 2024 who are vulnerable and / or need support with their emotional wellbeing and helped them to build constructive social networks.

We continue to provide weekly 1-to-1 mentoring for 12 young people with emotional, social and mental health needs identified by pastoral staff in Hall Green Secondary School. This continues to go well, with positive feedback from the young people and the school about how beneficial the mentoring is. In October 2024, we began to provide mentoring for 12 young people at Christchurch CofE Academy, Yardley Wood.

We also run 'Just Chill' youth group weekly in term time. This group has 22 young people on its register and continues to attract young people who have extra needs. Sessions enable them to build their confidence, social skills, and networks by interacting with their peers in a positive environment. Feedback from the young people is that 'Just Chill' makes a real difference to their confidence and self-esteem.

A highlight of 2024 was a residential weekend for 15 young people at the Pioneer Centre. The young people had a great time and did several activities including raft building, abseiling, zip wire, inflatable challenge and laser quest. The annual residential is now an important part of what we do, giving vulnerable young people an opportunity to be away from their family, often for the first time, and to grow and challenge themselves. We are planning another residential in October 2025.

Sarah Barnes

Beechcroft Tennis and Multi Sports Community Club

Beechcroft (now described as Birmingham's Premier Sports Club) facilitates an extensive range of facilities at its premises in Beechcroft Avenue, Hall Green. The leading sports include Tennis, Junior Football, Netball, Touch Tennis and Walking Football. It also facilitates multi-sports camps during school holiday periods at

Dickens Heath School. For more information, please see the [Clubspark / Beechcroft TC / Beechcroft Tennis & Sports Centre | Birmingham Tennis](#)

The Club leases its premises from The Church of the Ascension. The current Lease is for 15 years from 1st July 2014 with rent reviews at 4, 8 and 12 years. Following the 8 year review, the rent is £4,150 per annum. The Club is broadly up to date with the arrangements agreed with the Church for payment of the reviewed rent. The next review is due in 2026.

Clive Jones

Structure, Governance and Management

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) operates under the Parochial Church Council Powers Measure. The PCC is a Registered Charity (1133810). The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. The membership of the PCC consists of the incumbent, churchwardens, three licensed Readers, members of the Deanery Synod and 9 members elected by members of the congregation who are on the Electoral Roll of the church. All members of the congregation are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and stand for election to the PCC. The PCC had a total of 15 members and met 6 times between June 2024 and April 2025.

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 Church of The Ascension is part of the Hall Green Oversight Area alongside St Peter's and St Michael's. On 4th May 2024, representatives of each of the 3 churches met together to begin the process of considering how we can best collaborate going forward in mission and ministry.

The Ascension is entitled to nominate 3 representatives to sit on the Deanery Synod which provides an important link between the parish and the wider structures of the church. At the APCM on 14th May 2023, Georgina Urwin was elected to represent The Ascension on the Deanery Synod until the next elections in May 2026 and there are currently two vacancies.

The Church of The Ascension Parish Hall is a separate charity (charity number 1187634) with the PCC as its Trustee. As a separate charity, it is required to produce a report of its activities.

Sarah Barnes, PCC Secretary

Financial Review

The General Funds of the Church showed a deficit of income over expenditure of £6,857. This includes a net cost at the beginning of the year of £8,490 on the new water pipe to the Church, so in effect we ran at a small surplus for the year

Income, from regular planned and one-off donations, was £45,190 including £7,862 from Gift Aid. A further £22,000 was received from various investments. In total, receipts to unrestricted funds totalled £76,367

£83,746 was spent from unrestricted funds towards our Christian ministry, including £39,830 towards the Diocesan Parish Share Request, which again was paid in full.

Reserves Policy

The PCC maintains a Reserve Policy; the cash balances held in unrestricted funds more than satisfy the target amount of £56,000. The Policy was reviewed by the PCC on 20th February 2025.

Jon Meadows, Treasurer

Church of the Ascension Annual Property Report, 2024/25

This report covers the period May 2024 to 18th May 2025, the date of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM).

The major project during this time has continued to be work on the listed boundary wall and associated groundworks. Practical completion was in June 2024. However, some of the lime mortar deteriorated rapidly over the winter months. Following an inspection of the wall by the church's architect in March 2025, during the defects liability period, he directed Reynolds, the contractor, to rake out and redo approximately 50% of the mortar/ pointing work. This remedial work will be at the contractor's expense and is likely to be undertaken in June 2025, the last month of the defects liability period. The PCC is very grateful for the considerable time given by Clive Jones over four years to ensure the wall is no longer at risk of collapse.

There is further work required to the boundary walls, particularly replacement of more coping stones should funds become available in the future. The priority now has to be the work required on the church building.

Some loose roof tiles on the church were replaced and guttering cleared in October (£575+VAT). Bulb filaments for three of the four spotlights for the altar and surrounding area of the chancel were sourced and fitted by Fodens. (£107.40+VAT £17.90). The remaining unit was left safe but is beyond repair.

Quotations have been sought for the repair and redecoration of the two pairs of transept doors. Furniture beetle activity (woodworm) was spotted in some of the south transept panelling in October and advice sought. It is being monitored.

The PCC is investigating restoration of the 18th Century sundial on the south wall and has been advised by David Brown (Sun Dial Society).

The Quinquennial inspection was carried out in November by the church architect, Matthew Vaughan. The small urgent repairs have been carried out and other minor matters are in hand. It was recommended that the dampness and damage to plasterwork at the entrance be addressed within twelve months. Attention was also drawn to the need to make the west gallery safe for users by the addition of hand rails and other measures at an estimated cost of £10,000.

PCC were already aware of the need to repair some high level stonework and balusters, the redecoration of the Victorian guttering and re-nailing of some slipped roof tiles. These need to be scheduled together as all require scaffolding. The budget estimate in May 2022 was £148,000 and costs for both materials and labour will have increased over time. Without additional funding or support the church does not have the resources to progress this work.

The five yearly lightening conductor inspection was carried out in August 2024 by J Lacey (steeplejacks) and certified as satisfactory. The annual roof alarm service was completed on 13th September.

Churchyard

The six replacement trees have now been planted at a cost of £5,973, excluding VAT. They are smaller species chosen for colour and for their benefits to wildlife. They will require careful watering and aftercare until they become fully established.

The "No Mow May" initiative for two small areas and the identification by volunteers of forty three plant species in June 2024 showed the value of the churchyard as a wildlife habitat as well as a valued resource for the local community.

Pauline Price

The Church of the Ascension Parish Hall Charity Hall Green, Birmingham - Charity No. 1187634

Report of the Trustees for the Period 1st January 2024 – 31st December 2024

This is the fifth Annual Report of the Church of the Ascension Parish Hall Charity which was registered by the Charity Commission in January 2020.

Structure, Government and Management

The Parochial Church Council of The Church of The Ascension, Hall Green (charity number 1133810) is the Managing Trustee of the Church of The Ascension Parish Hall Charity, Hall Green, Birmingham. The PCC manages and administers the Parish Hall Charity, making decisions about the activities of the Hall Charity in accordance with its constitution.

Objects and Activities

The object of the Charity is to further the religious and other charitable work of the Church of England in the parish.

In 2024, the Charity sought to benefit:

1. Those in need by reason of age (elders), disability, ill health and financial hardship. For example, through the Food Bank for those in food poverty.
2. Those suffering hardships through family separation. The Child Contact Centre provided a neutral and safe venue for non-resident parents to have contact with their children.
3. The community through recreation and leisure facilities; for example, for children and young people through the uniformed organisations and karate classes, for adults through Hall Green Choral Society, Hall Green Arts Society, Acocks Green Folk Dancing Society and Barn Dance Fitness.

Most of these activities are operated by volunteers and included some organisations which are charities in the own right, while the remainder are operated on a private or commercial basis for the community.

The closure of The Church of the Ascension Pre-School Playgroup in July 2024 has had a significant impact on use of the Chatterton Hall and on resultant income. Other possible long term lettings have been explored since Playgroup ceased and some additional lettings have been made, but significant capacity for additional day- time lettings remains.

Financial Review

Income from Hall Lettings was £46,838, approximately £2,000 less than the previous year. This is more than accounted for by the closure of the Playgroup in July 2024.

Expenditure remained much the same as the previous year resulting in a deficit of £2,093 for the year. As a result, the Charity is in deficit to the tune of £14,575. The deficit is underwritten by the General Funds of The Church of The Ascension, Hall Green.

Property Report

Church Hall and Coffee Lounge

The redecoration of the church office and the 1:1 room has been completed using funds donated in memory of David Chellingworth. They are now lighter and more attractive rooms. The updating of the kitchen area is still under consideration. The heating controls for the boiler had to be replaced at a cost of £285 + £57 VAT.

In March an urgent repair was carried out by ABRS Roofing (£2,200+VAT). Some ridge tiles and the “arts and crafts style” bonnet tiles were re-nailed and reset on two of the hip lines.

Chatterton Hall and 93b School Road

Minor repairs only have been carried out this year and we are grateful that Richard Hyde and Behzad have kindly given their time and expertise.

General

Patrol Alarms carried out their routine service of the intercom and door pad entry systems in October. Warmingtons Heating and Plumbing carried out Gas Safety inspections on all five boilers in November. Fire Safety inspections were carried out in October 2024 and April 2025. All fire extinguishers across the site were checked in December 2024.

The insurance for the church and halls has been renewed with Ecclesiastical Insurance (Parish Plus). The premium for 2024/5 was £6,653.74 including tax.