



ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

THE PARISH CHURCH OF ST ANDREW,
SERVING CHARVIL, SONNING AND SONNING EYE

SUNDAY 25 MAY 2025

Written Reports for the year ended 31 December 2024



Annual Parochial Church Meeting

St. Andrews Church, Sonning

25th May 2025 at 11.30am

A G E N D A

1. Opening prayers
2. Appointment of Secretary
3. Election of Churchwardens and Deputy Church Wardens
4. Apologies
5. Minutes of 2024 Annual Parochial Church Meeting
6. Matters arising from Minutes
7. Vicar's Report
8. Treasurer's Report and PCC Financial Statements
9. Churchwardens' Report and presentation of Terrier
10. Safeguarding Report
11. Election of members to the PCC
12. Electoral Roll
13. PCC Committee Reports
 - a) Buildings and Maintenance Committee
 - b) Social Committee
14. Other Reports
 - a) Messy Church
 - b) Sunday Club
 - c) Alpha Course
 - d) Sunday at Six
 - e) STAY on Sunday
 - f) STAY on Monday
 - g) Wednesday at 8
 - h) Thursday at 8
 - i) STAY on Friday
 - j) Music at St. Andrew's
 - k) Rendezvous Lunch Club
 - l) Bell ringers
 - m) Friends of St. Andrew's Church
 - n) Stewardship
 - o) Giving outside the Parish
15. Appointment of independent examiner
16. Any other business
17. Closing prayers

**ANNUAL REPORT OF THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL (PCC)
OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL PARISH OF SONNING
For the year ended 31st December 2024
Incumbent: The Revd. Jamie Taylor,
The Vicarage, Thames Street, Sonning, RG4 6UR
Independent Examiner: Banks & Co, Newbury, Berkshire**

Aim and Purpose

To provide:

- Regular public worship that is open to all
- Sacred space for personal prayer and contemplation
- Pastoral work which includes visiting the sick and the bereaved
- The teaching of Christianity through sermons, courses and small groups
- The leadership of religious assemblies in schools
- The promotion of Christianity through the staging of events and meetings, and in the distribution of literature
- Promotion of the mission of the Church through provision of activities for all ages in our Parish
- Support of other charities in the UK and overseas

Objectives and Activities

The PCC is committed to enabling as many people as possible to worship in our parish and to become part of our parish community within Sonning, Sonning Eye and Charvil. The PCC vision is to:

- Serve better those who choose to worship with us and share a journey in faith
- Reach out and draw others to the knowledge and love of God
- Attend to the pastoral needs of those around us (As individuals and as an organisation)
- Preserve our Anglican heritage
- Engage with our local community and find new ways to serve it

When planning our activities for the year, the Incumbent and the PCC have considered the Commission's guidance on public benefit and in particular the specific guidance on charities for the advancement of religion. In particular, we try to enable ordinary people to live out their faith as part of our parish community through:

- Worship – Learning about the Gospel and developing their knowledge and trust in Jesus
- Mission and pastoral care – Giving to others and the provision of pastoral care for people living in the parish
- Buildings and Maintenance - To facilitate this work it is important that we maintain the fabric of our church
- Social – Arranging social events throughout the year

Administrative Information

The Parish of Sonning encompasses the thriving communities of Sonning, Sonning Eye and Charvil, located between Reading and Henley-on-Thames in a beautiful section of the Thames Valley. We have a growing congregation and are welcoming and uplifting, embracing the broad Anglican tradition.

The correspondence address is:

St Andrew's Church Office

Thames Street

Sonning

READING

Berkshire

RG4 6UR

The PCC is a body corporate (PCC Powers Measure 1956, Church Representation Rules 2006) and a charity registered with the Charity Commission. (Registered Charity Number: 1130763)

During the year to 31 December 2024, the following served the Parish:

Incumbent (and Chair)	Revd Jamie Taylor
Licensed Lay Minister	Bob Peters
Youth Minister	Chris West
Youth and Children's Minister	Corinne Robertson (appointed to PCC 19th May 2024)

Churchwardens	Liz Nelson
	Stuart Bowman (resigned 19th May 2024)
	Ruth Jeffery (appointed 19th May 2024)

Deputy Churchwardens	Sue Peters
	Kevin Wilson (appointed 19th May 2024)

Treasurer	Jerry Wood
-----------	------------

Secretary	Hilary Rennie (re-appointed 19th May 2024)
-----------	--

Other PCC Members (normally 3 year term)	Indra Biddulph (resigned 19th May 2024)
	Helen Craig
	Heather Hexter
	Terry Hunt (resigned 19th May 2024)
	Katherine Karalus (appointed 19th May 2024)
	Nicola Riley
	Jenny Sawyer
	Alison Smyly

The PCC met on 6 occasions during the year and the average attendance at these meetings was 84%.

COMMITTEES

The PCC operates through a number of committees, which meet between the full meetings of the PCC. These are:

Standing and Finance

This is the only committee required by law and has power to transact the business of the PCC between meetings, subject to any directions given by the Council. Members are the Incumbent, the Churchwardens, the Treasurer and the Secretary.

Buildings and Maintenance

This committee attends to matters relating to stewardship of the church buildings and fabric. Chair: Mrs Liz Nelson.

Mission and Pastoral

This committee attends to matters concerning external giving from the Parish. Chair: Revd Jamie Taylor.

Social

This committee is responsible for arranging social events.

Chair: Mrs Sue Peters.

The Parish Magazine

Delivered free to every house in the parish.

Editor: Bob Peters

Advertising and Distribution: Harriet Nelson (*until 31 December 2024*)

Electoral Roll

At the APCM on 28th May 2024 there were 241 people on the Electoral Roll. The total number on the 2025 Electoral Roll is 226. Despite an increase in new individuals and families joining St. Andrew's, there has been a net decrease of the 15 in the 2025 Electoral Roll caused by deaths, members moving away from the area and regular worshippers who haven't completed their Electoral Roll forms.

THE VICAR'S REPORT

I look back on 2024 as a season of consolidation. We have seen steady growth, across all age groups, and the latest national church statistics place us in the 95th percentile of all churches for weekly attendance. This is encouraging but there is no room for complacency. The "Why I am a Christian" sermon series during Lent was much appreciated and I am grateful to those who were willing to stand up and be counted! It was uplifting and inspiring to hear about their various faith journeys, all culminating in Lord Carey's Easter Day conclusion to the series.

Our home groups go from strength to strength and adult and youth Alpha courses continue to contribute so much to our common life. It was good to see 8 Confirmed in November and to baptise young candidates in the Thames earlier in the year.

In my early years in the parish I set myself a goal, after a discussion with the bishop, to bring about new developments in the ministry of music and to work towards becoming a beacon for what can be achieved in a parish church. I especially wanted to involve young people, on the organ and in the choir. I pay tribute to the last two Directors of Music who have done so much to get us to where we are today. The appointment of Richard Meehan has been the culmination of all their efforts, and it is a joy for me to witness what is now being achieved in this important ministry.

Although an aspiration for some years, the four Choral scholarships only came into existence under his leadership, and this is proving to be a mutually beneficial arrangement. Interestingly a parishioner has funded these scholarships and part of the organ scholarship in the last twelve months but wishes to remain anonymous. We now have three former choristers serving as choral scholars in Cathedral choirs, with Noah Toogood at Portsmouth and Joseph May and Celeste Hexter at Llandaff Cathedral. Thanks be to God!

The Parish Office, with Hilary at the helm, is a literal God send to me personally, and to the whole parish. I look back with some amazement at how we managed before having the office, and then I am reminded of the stress of the vicarage phone going at all hours of the day, and of my less than efficient paperwork. Sonia Boyles did her best to keep things on track from her house in Woodley, but this is a much more efficient way of running a busy church.

The Ark continues to facilitate excellent outreach and hospitality. The Rendezvous lunches are flourishing and growing in the numbers attending, and our partnership with Kathy Wright at the Village Hamper is proving to be an excellent arrangement.

Our two excellent youth ministers continue to make a significant difference in the lives of so many young people and children, and much of their work is behind the scenes, mentoring pupils in local schools. The front of house work in the Ark on Sundays and Fridays is a wonderful testimony to what God is doing in the lives of young people. Indeed, STAY on Friday recently welcomed 86 of them!

There was an encouraging response to my letter about financial giving to God's work in the parish, but we still have some way to go to encourage more committed and realistic giving to fund all that we are now committed to. However, under God, I feel we shall achieve this as we move forward as a church.

Jamie

TREASURER'S REPORT

Financial Review

The PCC ended the year with a total net expenditure (deficit) of £117,595, compared to a total net expenditure (deficit) of £54,668 for the previous year. This deficit included an element of catch up in expenditure and was met from cash funds accumulated during the pandemic and shortly thereafter when maintenance was delayed.

Total income for the year was £343,301. There were grants received of £140,025, which included £113,000 from The Bull Inn Ecclesiastical Trust. Planned donations to the PCC increased over the prior year and the number of planned givers rose slightly. One-off giving in 2024 was £15,287 including specific gifts for Youth work. Investment income of £12,499 was received, mostly from endowments and interest on deposits which declined slightly with less cash on deposit. During the year, the Youth Minister moved and his former house is now let commercially, increasing lettings income.

Expenditure relating to services, mission and running costs increased to £467,152 including £61,465 on repairs to the church building and the churchyard wall, although these repairs were offset by some specific grants.

The Parish Share contribution to the Oxford Diocese was £93,972.

The cost of producing the Parish Magazine was not fully covered by the revenue from advertising. Efforts are in train to increase advertising revenue. The cost of distribution continues to be funded from General Funds.

£4,862 was spent on noise reduction panels for the Ark.

Depreciation for the Ark, the Youth Minister's House and Equipment was £32,750.

Reserves policy

It is PCC policy to maintain a Reserves balance, which equates to at least three months normal Unrestricted payments (if possible) to cover emergency situations that may arise from time to time. Approximately £60,000 has been held in a Designated General Reserve Fund for this. The Reserve increased in 2023 to £61,869, mainly due to an increase in the value of underlying investments. With the increase in expenditure in 2023, albeit including exceptional items for repairs, the Reserves figure is under review.

Jerry Wood - Honorary Treasurer

CHURCHWARDENS' REPORT

Once again, the process of writing the annual report gives us the opportunity to reflect on the previous year, realising what has been achieved, and to look to the future.

Our Music Director Richard has continued to develop both junior and senior choirs, despite saying farewell to our two senior choristers Noah and Amelia. Our Christmas and Easter services were outstanding, and a real testimony to the hard work of the choral team.

Corinne Robertson has taken the families ministry to new heights with record numbers of families coming to Messy Church, the Crib service and to the Easter fun day. Westy and Corinne introduced "give back" days into the school holiday activities and it is great to see the young people litter picking in the village or serving at a charity.

STAY, Sunday Club, Sunday at Six, Messy Church, Rendezvous, Wednesday at Eight, Thursday at Eight and Alpha all continue to be reasons for celebration, with them serving both congregation and the wider community.

We want to thank Jamie, Bob, Westy, Corinne and Hilary our amazing staff team, but also the many other people who volunteer at St Andrews: the Welcome Team, Deputy Wardens, Servers, Bell Ringers, Coffee Makers, PCC and Youth Club Volunteers, making St Andrew's the very special place it is.

Ruth Jeffery and Liz Nelson – Churchwardens

SAFEGUARDING REPORT

As I am sure many of you are aware the last year has been a particularly challenging time for the wider Church of England, as it acknowledges real failures in safeguarding practice in the past. The last year has been a time when the Church and particularly those in the most senior roles of safeguarding seek to listen openly and carefully to the experiences of victims and survivors and commit to learning the lessons that have arisen. I know that press reports surrounding these failures have been painful to follow, and that many of us working so hard in safeguarding have felt dispirited and let down as I am sure many of you also do.

The Wider Church of England is currently setting up a programme of work, to work on the future of Church Safeguarding. This work will include putting in place a single complaints policy which will be used by all dioceses and a shared independent end-stage complaints capacity. There are also plans to develop as soon as possible detailed proposals for an independent scrutiny body, and ensure these are tested robustly with the Church, with victims and survivors and with professionals.

In the Oxford diocesan an independent audit has been completed which considered safeguarding in the diocese to be robust. The audit recognised the significant work that has gone into improving our safeguarding provision over the last few years and was clear that the diocese is taking safeguarding seriously, not simply around compliance but also in relation to prevention and culture change. Across the diocese we aim for a culture that understands safeguarding to be our Christian imperative where we are called to take care of the young, the vulnerable, and most in need.

We will continue to listen to and learn from those who have experienced abuse, ensuring that their voices shape our practices and continue to share the message that this is a shared mission, and we will strive to do all we can to bring about positive safeguarding cultures across the diocese.

Here at St Andrews, we continue to take the safeguarding of children, vulnerable adults and all those who visit and worship at St. Andrew's extremely seriously.

Safeguarding is an essential part of our core faith and an integral feature of Christian life in our parish. It remains a standing discussion item at all PCC meetings.

At St Andrews we follow safer recruitment practices for employing staff, and all helpers with our children's and youth activities need to submit to a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check and undertake safeguarding training (appropriate to the position) before they can join our teams.

As a church St Andrews works within Oxford Diocesan Safeguarding practice and policy guidelines. Regular training is attended by all key staff as well as volunteers.

The PCC remains committed to enabling all staff, visitors and congregation to feel safe with safeguarding being everyone's responsibility. Everyone is encouraged to contribute to prompting a safer culture and building good safeguarding practices in St Andrews.

The Parish Safeguarding Officer and the PCC continues to look at and work on developing areas in St Andrews and the local context and parish for improving safeguarding.

There have been no safeguarding allegations or concerns reported since the last AGM.

Nicola Riley

St Andrew's Safeguarding Officer, Senior Social Worker & Childrens Court Guardian.

BUILDINGS & MAINTENANCE COMMITTEE

A great deal has been achieved during the last year to keep our beautiful church and other buildings well maintained and fit for purpose. The 2024 Quinquennial Report on the condition of the church ran to 150 pages of detailed review and was positive overall. However, there is some essential and very costly work that needs to be undertaken during the next few years.

Over the past year new lighting has been installed in the bell tower, including much needed improvements to the spiral staircase lights. The ancient wall leading down from Sonning Lane has been repaired and repointed. The roof gulley on the north side of the church and the wall at the east end of the church have both been repaired and we hope that this will sort out the damp issues in the vicar's vestry. In addition, the east side of the north porch wall was also repointed and made secure. Our wonderful brasses in the floor between the choir stalls have been restored and work to repair the ceramic floor tiles in the church aisles has been completed.

We are very grateful as always for the financial help provided by FoStAC in funding projects such as sorting out the damp issues in the vestry. I would like to thank both Terry Hunt and Keith Nichols for their hard work and great patience in helping with these projects. Without their experience, help and advice our buildings maintenance programme would be far less effective.

The house in Park View Drive, Charvil was refurbished, bringing it up to standard to enable Westy and his family to move in last spring. The West's old home in Elm Drive, Woodley, also required some redecoration and maintenance before it could be tenanted. I would like to thank Charles Hubbard and Mike Judd, whose work on these properties helped me immensely.

Liz Nelson

SOCIAL COMMITTEE

We are proud of the hospitable welcome we offer as a church, this is made possible by many volunteers from the congregation. Thank you to all who help to serve refreshments every Sunday after the 10.30 services, and the monthly Choral Evensong service. A special thank you also goes to the bakers of the delicious home-made cakes served after Choral Evensong. During the year we catered for several events including the Easter Fun Day BBQ, which was a great success, and we are extremely grateful to all those who shopped, cooked, served, set up and helped to clear away. Wine was served after both the All Souls Service and Nine Lessons and Carols, the latter being served with traditional mince pies.

Sue Peters

MESSY CHURCH

On the third Sunday of each month, we welcome families to join us for fun activities and learning, including craft making, teaching and songs, followed by a meal for the children and sometimes for the adults too! We have been blessed by our helpers at Messy Church this year, including young people and adults, alike. Each one of them helps to create the welcoming, creative, and energised space for children and their families to learn about Jesus.

With this gentle welcoming and fun, we are seeing a huge influx in numbers, some months we had upwards of 40 children attending, with very similar numbers of adults. We have joked a few times that we may need to build a bigger Ark!

The community overall has been engaging, lively, and caring, which is a wonderful reason for continued prayer and thanksgiving.

Corinne Robertson

SUNDAY CLUB

During Sunday Club, we have been following the church lectionary; hearing and responding to the same readings that those sat in the church hear on any given 2nd, 4th, and 5th Sunday. Numbers have been steadily increasing, and we have had, on average, about 8-10 children at each session and 2-4 parents and caregivers, in addition to our Sunday Club leaders.

We have been using an online resource called "Lesson Plans that Work," created from the Episcopal Church, to help root and guide our lessons. Christmas and Easter are special points in the year, marked by the Crib Service and making the Easter Garden.

We had a record attendance at the Crib Service, with 96 children and 265 adults, making this service the most well-attended of our Christmas services. This year, we had readers (and audience members!) read passages from Bob Hartman's rhyming bible, and watched the "no rehearsal" style Christmas story unfold with the children dressed up in fancy dress.

All of the gifts and time that is put into and received from Sunday Club could not be done without the volunteers who so willingly give their attention and care to this ministry. I am continually grateful to them and to God for their helping hands, generous hearts, and willingness to be vulnerable in their Faith. They set a beautiful example for the children and to me, and without them, Sunday Club could not function.

Corinne Robertson

ALPHA COURSE

The Alpha Team ran the fourth successful Alpha course in 2024. We met every Tuesday on zoom for 12 weeks to watch the insightful and interesting alpha videos together. We then discussed some questions afterwards. It is the perfect combination of comfort, ease and a relaxed environment for people to be in their own homes, ask any questions and not feel judged.

We saw several people come to faith or renew their faith in Jesus and we baptised new Christians in the Thames. It has also meant people have made new friends and felt more at home in St Andrews church.

Chris West

SUNDAY AT SIX

Sunday at Six meets in the Ark on the last Sunday of each month and in December of 2024 we continued the new tradition of 'Beers & Carols' at the Bull Pub. (Also we don't meet in August as so many people are away).

We've worshipped with Gem and the band, we've had guest worship leader Pete Wilmot. We've seen new leaders grow in hosting and preaching skills. We've had guest preachers including Lindz West of the band LZ7, Debbie Bruwer who is a former Olympic rower and Louise Sheedy share her powerful testimony of loss, heartache and the goodness of God.

The Sunday at Six service is a relaxed environment with modern worship songs, biblical teaching and space for prayer. All ages are welcome.

Chris West

STAY ON SUNDAY

Our weekly Sunday Youth Group meets every Sunday (apart from the 1st Sunday of each month) at 10.30am. It is a highlight for many young people where we meet in the upper room of the Ark twice a month, we play big games in the Ark hall once a month and we meet in the bull for small games and hot chocolate once a month. Each time we have fun, share stories and spend time focussing on our Christian faith. We also watch videos, play games, read scripture, eat snacks and pray.

Chris West

STAY ON MONDAY

Our fortnightly small group on Monday nights meets in the young peoples homes. We get to hang out, play games, watch videos and read stories of how people connect with God across the world. We have continued to use the STIR cards in 2024/25 and these have been so useful in creating a safe space for the young people to explore the Christian faith.

Chris West

WEDNESDAY AT EIGHT

Following on from our second Alpha course, Wednesday at 8 is a fortnightly bible study type group. It meets every other Wednesday on zoom from 8-9pm. Previously we have watched the Bible Project videos on 'Books of the Bible,' we've completed the 'prayer course' by Pete Grieg and we've had socials in each others homes. These sessions have been really enjoyable, packed with fantastic insight, discussion points and angles on things that offer helpful guidance for discussion. We then discuss what's come up then pray to finish. It is another great way to deepen friendships and feel part of the St Andrews church family.

Chris West

THURSDAY AT EIGHT

Thursday @ 8 is open to anyone who is a part of St Andrews Church. We meet weekly in members homes (currently Charvil, Woodley and Sonning) depending on who is available to host. We regularly have between 8 and 12 people.

You don't need to know lots about the Bible to come along - the purpose is to explore God's word and think about how it applies to our daily lives. Over the last year we have studied The Lord's Prayer and are working our way through Paul's letters. We have great discussions, learning from one other and really encouraging each other in our Faith.

We continue to share prayer requests and pray together (silently or out loud), and we have seen many answered prayers over the last 12 months. Our WhatsApp group is a way to be there for each other practically and emotionally when needed during the week.

We have seen a few members move away to pastures new, Cornwall, Didcot and Chippenham over the last year. We miss them, but feel privileged to have been able to support them through the moving process.

If you would like more information please speak to either Ruth Jeffery or Helen Craig or you can email Helen on helen.craig50@gmail.com

Helen Craig and Ruth Jeffery

STAY ON FRIDAY

Our weekly youth club in the Ark grew in popularity in 2024/25 with a record number of 86 young people one week. Each week we spend time playing a mixture of basketball, football, kubb, skipping, volleyball, wide games, frisbee, cricket, indoor games, pool table, foosball, consoles, baking and more. STAY on Friday also feeds into our STAY Holiday Activities, where we take groups of young people out on trips to trampoline parks, paintballing, theme parks, cinemas, ice skating rinks, rock climbing walls, paddleboarding lakes and pottery painting workshops...to name just a few.

Chris West

MUSIC AT ST. ANDREW'S

This year has been a time of flourishing for the choir as we support the various types of worship in the church. We continue to sing five regular services a month, supporting and enhancing worship of the church,

as well as adding festive flair to the special services, such as the Carol Service and Remembrance.

We have also been able to continue to make links with young instrumentalists, and developing the organ playing and experience our organ scholar, achieved a merit in his Grade VIII organ, in spite of sustaining a broken leg. He has also been regularly supporting our service music from this time last year. The brass groups, established to lend a festive air in our Carol Service and Easter Day service continue to provide a suitably festive lift.

Richard Meehan - Director of Music

RENDEZVOUS LUNCH CLUB

We have had a wonderful year of fabulous lunches provided by Kathy and her team from The Village Hamper. There has been so much conversation, laughter and fun had by everyone who attends the twice monthly lunches on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of every month. Our numbers for each lunch are now averaging at about 38 people which makes for lively sessions and ensures the lunches remain economic to run. I would particularly like to thank Ian and Thelma Hutton-Penman for their tireless help in setting up the tables and generally helping out with the running of the lunches over the past few years; they will be greatly missed by us all, when they move away to be nearer their family in Somerset this summer.

Liz Nelson

BELL RINGERS

We now have 11 members of the Oxford Diocesan Guild. We ring regularly for the 10.30am Sunday morning service and try to ring a quarter peal after the monthly choral evensong. Some of us continue to support Wargrave who are short of ringers and Shiplake who ring for their monthly Sunday afternoon service.

On Easter Saturday afternoon we again opened the tower for tours to see the ringing room and view from the roof.

We rang rounds and call changes on 6th June to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the D-Day landings. We had redesigned our ringing banner to remember D-Day and hung it from the top of the tower during Scarecrow weekend at the end of May.

Some of our ringers helped with the mobile belfry at the Hurst show at the end of June.

In December we hosted the Sonning Deanery Branch of Ringers. We provided welcome hot drinks and mince pies after the practice. We are grateful to ringers from other towers who support our weekly ringing practice and Sunday morning ringing.

Pam Elliston - Tower Captain

THE FRIENDS OF ST ANDREW'S CHURCH (FoStAC)

THE FRIENDS OF ST ANDREW'S CHURCH (FoStAC) exists as a separate Registered Charity (Number 1101944) to support the fabric of our beautiful St. Andrew's Church building by making grants to St. Andrew's Church PCC for specific projects. Since our founding in 2003, we have raised over £536k.

In 2024 we granted nearly £9k to fund the continued work on the vestry wall repairs, including re-leading the gully on the roof above – as covered in the March 2024 edition of The Parish Magazine. Our total income for 2024 was nearly £22k and after event expenses, grants to the PCC and administration costs, we made a surplus of over £8k, helping to restore our depleted reserves.

FoStAC raises these funds primarily through a combination of (1) regular donations – a big thank you to all those who donated during 2024, and (2) fundraising community events, often working in partnership with local organisations. Additionally, we (3) receive legacies and gifts in memory and in some years although not in 2024, we (4) receive grants from other local charities for specific fabric projects.

FoStAC events in 2024 kept its Trustees (Keith Nichols, Sally Wilson, Bob Hine, Keith Hawkins, Rosemarie Rixon, Ian McCann and myself) very busy – I continue to be very grateful on our collective behalf for all their hard work throughout the year in bringing together and delivering such a successful programme of enjoyable events.

In 2024 these included a successful Race Night in Pearson Hall using Sonning Club's bar, an AGM and accompanying Quiz Night in The Ark, a Grand Musical Evening involving Ascot Brass Band, the Choir of Sonning CoE Primary School and former Head Chorister Celeste Hexter in St. Andrew's Church, Sonning Scarecrow Trail refreshments in The Ark, a Garden Tea Party in the Parish kindly hosted by Jill & Richard Brighton, a stall at the 2024 Sonning Show held at Sonning CoE Primary School and our second annual Curry Night at The Village Hamper. We also sold Christmas Cards and Trustee Ian and his son took on the challenge of cycling from Land's End to John O'Groats to raise funds for FoStAC (nearly £1.5k) alongside other deserving charities – thank you Ian.

We continue to offer a varied programme of events year to year working with our partnering organisations in the community, with details on our FoStAC website – www.fostac.org – allied ‘QR Code’ on the right.



If you would like a copy of 2024 Annual Report providing more detail and pictures of our events, please do contact us via the website or speak with one of the Trustees.

Thank you to all those who supported FoStAC in any way during 2024 and I conclude with the words of Phil Sherwood, Head of Sonning CoE Primary School following our Musical Evening, which sums up the wider spirit of what we try and achieve alongside raising money with our events – “For many of the pupils, they had never heard classical music performed by a live brass band, so the experience was a special one for them.”

Magnus Smyly - Chairman

STEWARDSHIP REPORT

Planned giving increased over the prior year.

Cash giving at services has declined as givers switch to standing orders or use the contactless terminal, which, despite some issues from time to time, has proved a worthwhile addition to our ways of giving. We continue to encourage people to use standing order as the preferred method of giving as this provides the treasurer with a better level of certainty when forecasting our income and involves less work for those doing the weekly bankings.

Also if you are able to give under Gift Aid as a UK tax payer this increases the value of your gift by 25% as we are able to claim the relevant tax from HMRC.

If anyone would like a standing order form or a gift aid form to complete please e-mail me at treasurer@sonningparish.org.

Thank you for your continued support throughout the year.

Jerry Wood - Treasurer and Stewardship Co-ordinator

THE PARISH OF SONNING - Giving outside the Parish 2024

It was agreed at the PCC on 18 March 2024 that the list of recipients presented to that meeting would be supported for up to five years.

A range of areas are covered, including Christian outreach, children and families and homelessness. The PCC is also committed to supporting the worldwide church and in view of the continuing situation in the Middle East we are supporting Foundation for Relief and Reconciliation in the Middle East (FRRME), a UK based Christian charity which aims to rebuild lives and restore hope in the Middle East. We are also supporting for the first time a charity in Sierra Leone which helps street children in Free Town and provides medical facilities in this politically unstable country.

At the same time, it was agreed to maintain a small reserve, from which specific requests might be met during the year.

Donations made during 2024 were as follows:

Parish and local	£
Woodley Food bank	1,000
Yeldall Christian Centre	1,000
Sonning School and School House Trust	1,500
Wider/local	
Berkshire Clergy Charity	1,000
Salvation Army	750
Faith Christian Group	750
Parents & Children Together (PACT)	750
Christian Community Action (CCA)	750
International	
Karun Orphanage	2,000
St George's Foundation, Sierra Leone	1,500
Foundation for Relief and Reconciliation in the Middle East (FRRME)	1,500
TOTAL	12,500



THE CHURCH OF ST ANDREW, SERVING
CHARVIL, SONNING AND SONNING EYE