



## ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

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

SUNDAY 17 MAY 2026

Written Reports for the year ended 31 December 2025



# Annual Meeting of Parishioners and Annual Parochial Church Meeting

St. Andrews Church, Sonning  
17th May 2026 at 11.30am

## A G E N D A

1. Opening prayers

2. Appointment of Secretary

### ANNUAL MEETING OF PARISHIONERS

3. Election of Churchwardens

### ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

4. Apologies

5. Minutes of 2025 Annual Parochial Church Meeting

6. Matters arising from Minutes

7. Treasurer's Report and PCC Financial Statements

8. Churchwardens' Report and presentation of Terrier

9. Safeguarding Report

10. Election of members to the PCC

11. Election of Deanery Synod representatives

12. Electoral Roll

13. PCC Committee Reports

a) Buildings and Maintenance Committee

b) Social Committee

14. Other Reports

a) Messy Church

i) STAY on Friday

b) Sunday Club

j) Music at St. Andrew's

c) Alpha Course

k) Rendezvous Lunch Club

d) Sunday at Six

l) Bell ringers

e) STAY on Sunday

m) Friends of St. Andrew's Church

f) STAY on Monday

n) Stewardship

g) Wednesday at 8

o) Giving outside the Parish

h) Thursday at 8

p) Area Dean's Report

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 2025  
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 2025, the following served the Parish:

Incumbent (and Chair)	Revd Jamie Taylor
Licensed Lay Minister	Bob Peters
Youth Minister	Chris West
Youth & Children's Minister	Corinne Robertson
Verger	Richard Hogg

Churchwardens	Liz Nelson Ruth Jeffery
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Deputy Churchwardens	Sue Peters Kevin Wilson
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Treasurer	Jerry Wood
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Secretary	Hilary Rennie
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Other PCC Members  
(normally 3 year term)

Helen Craig  
Heather Hexter (resigned 25 May 2025)  
Richard Hogg (appointed 25 May 2025)  
Katherine Karalus (resigned 17th March 2025)  
Thanda Mhlanga (appointed 25 May 2025)  
Nicola Riley  
Jenny Sawyer (resigned 25 May 2025)  
Alison Smyly

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. At St Andrew's the membership of the PCC consists of the incumbent (our vicar), churchwardens and members elected by those members of the congregation who are on the electoral role of the church.

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. New members receive initial training into the workings of the PCC.

The PCC met on 5 occasions during the year and the average attendance at these meetings was 86%.

## 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: Ian McCann

### Electoral Roll

At the APCM on 25th May 2025 there were 226 people on the Electoral Roll. The total number on the 2026 Electoral Roll is 221. Despite an increase in new individuals and families joining St. Andrew's, there has been a net decrease of the 5 in the 2026 Electoral Roll caused by deaths and members moving away from the area.

## THE VICAR'S REPORT

During the year ended 31 December 2025 the incumbent of St Andrews Sonning was and still remains Revd. Jamie Taylor.

Jamie is currently unwell and not able to work and he has stepped back from ministry for several months to focus on his health and recovery. He has the full support of Bishop Mary and Bishop Steven in taking the time he needs and prioritising his wellbeing.

For this reason, Jamie was unable to complete a report for this booklet and will not be attending the APCM.

## TREASURER'S REPORT

### Financial Review

The PCC ended the year with a total net income (surplus) of £3,777, compared to a total net expenditure (deficit) of £117,595 for the previous year. This turnaround resulted from significant legacy income of £61,183 and reduced maintenance expenditure, down by £48,868.

Total income for the year was £432,683. There were grants received of £136,583, which included £113,000 from The Bull Inn Ecclesiastical Trust. Planned donations to the PCC increased by £8,988 (9%) over the prior year despite the number of planned givers declining slightly. One-off giving in 2025 was £14,056 including specific gifts for Youth work and to support music. Investment income of £11,283 was received, mostly from endowments and interest on deposits which declined slightly with lower interest rates. A full year of letting income was received for the PCC owned property in Earley, formerly used by the Youth Minister and now let commercially.

Total expenditure fell to £419,310. Expenditure relating to services, mission and running costs including maintenance fell to £305,770, down £39,028 (-11%) mainly from the reduced maintenance expenditure mentioned above.

The Parish Share contribution to the Oxford Diocese was £97,104.

There was a significant improvement in the financial performance of the Parish Magazine up £11,579 and overall close to break-even as a result of increased revenue from advertising. The cost of distribution continues to be funded from General Funds.

Depreciation for the Ark building and equipment was £22,916. There was a loss on the market value of investments of £9,596 compared to a gain of £6,256 in 2024.

## **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 £85,000 was held in a Designated General Reserve Fund at the end of 2025, meeting the current PCC agreed reserves target.

**Jerry Wood - Honorary Treasurer**

## **CHURCHWARDENS' REPORT**

This report gives us opportunity to reflect on the continued success of St Andrew's in 2025. The choir and musicians led by Richard Meehan, reached new musical heights, especially with the musical programmes for the Easter and Christmas services which were very well attended. The youth and children's programme led by our youth ministers Chris West and Corinne Roberson continues with STAY, the Friday night Youth Club, outreach in local schools, Sunday Club, Messy Church, Alpha courses, evening meetings and a highly successful, week-long, Satellites christian youth camp. The Rendezvous Club continues to provide lively friendship and chat over a delicious meal twice a month and our home groups provide fellowship whilst deepening our faith and biblical knowledge. Our diverse range of services continue to reach a wide congregation including Sunday at Six, Evensong, Wednesday morning communion in The Ark and our new monthly Youth Communion as well as our usual Sunday morning services.

We have been privileged to have had Bob Peters as our Lay Minister at St Andrew's over the past 25 years and in October we celebrated his retirement from this role with Prosecco and cake. We are truly grateful to Bob for all his work in the parish and schools over this time and are delighted that he continues to edit our monthly Parish Magazine. In the autumn we were excited to receive the news that Corinne and Matt Robinson were expecting their first child.

In September we welcomed Izzy Jeffery as our first voluntary intern to help with our youth programme and the impact of her enthusiasm and commitment has already been palpable.

We were delighted to welcome Bishop Mary to a typical Friday evening at St Andrew's in June, so that she could observe the choir practice and Youth Club in full swing, and she followed this by meeting many of our staff and PCC members at the vicarage.

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, who all help in making St Andrew's the very special place it is.

**Ruth Jeffery and Liz Nelson – Churchwardens**

## **SAFEGUARDING REPORT**

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**

The work that has been carried out on the church this year may not be as visible to the public as in previous years, but has been no less essential for the upkeep of our beautiful old church.

A great deal of work has been carried out in partnership with FoStAC to sort out the damp issue in the vicar's vestry. This included refurbishing the roof gully and the repointing of the east wall of the church and taking down the old plaster and replacing it with a more breathable lime

plaster. This coming year the drainage system around the church will be investigated so that all that can be done to reduce to a minimum any damp coming into the church will have been addressed. I would like to thank FoStAC for all their financial support and help on this project. The upgrading of the church electrics continues, with the main fuse boxes upgraded and a better layout achieved.

I was delighted when I learnt that a very kind donor came forward this year to provide the finance to replace the two very basic ovens in The Ark kitchen. The new ovens, which are far superior to the old, were installed just in time for our annual Rendezvous Club Christmas party and so ensured that a wonderful meal could be provided for 70 people.

**Liz Nelson**

### **SOCIAL COMMITTEE**

Thank you to all who volunteer their services to the Social Committee with the social elements of our church life. Serving refreshments after the 10.30am services is appreciated by all and offers the opportunity to meet with friends and welcome visitors and new members of the church. As is Choral Evensong, but with the addition of delicious homemade cakes - a special thank you goes to our talented bakers.

During the year we have catered for the Easter Fun Day BBQ which was a great success as usual, and we are extremely grateful to those who shopped, set up, cooked, served and cleared away.

Refreshments were served for the All Souls Service, also at Nine Lessons and Carols with the addition of mince pies.

**Sue Peters**

### **MESSY CHURCH**

On the third Sunday of each month we welcome families with young children to join us for fun activities and learning, including craft making, teaching, and singing. This is followed by a freshly cooked meal for the children.

I would like to thank all the helpers at Messy Church, including the young people and adults alike, without whom we would not be able to run this successful monthly gathering. 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 continue to see in excess of 30 children most months, with similar numbers of parents, grandparents and carers attending.

The community overall has been engaging, lively, and caring and is a wonderful part of the St Andrew's children and youth programme.

**Liz Nelson**

### **SUNDAY CLUB**

It continues to be a privilege to create a space for children to learn about and respond to God and we have been encouraged by the number of families attending Sunday Club, including during the online sessions which dominated the spring term.

We use an online resource from Urban Saints called Energize, and we started the year looking at the nature of God, followed by Bible characters in the summer term and ended the year with Christian Commitments: living like Jesus. Christmas and Easter are special points in the year marked by the Crib Service, which was great to be able to do 'live' again, and making the Easter Garden. A huge thank you to the leaders and helpers of Sunday Club who so willingly give of their time.

**Sunday Club Team**

### **ALPHA COURSE**

The Alpha Team ran the fourth successful Alpha course in 2025. 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 is our monthly worship service that meets in the Ark on the last Sunday of each month. We also run the very popular 'Beers & Carols' at the Bull Pub. (Sunday at Six does not meet in August).

Over the past year we have worshipped with Gem, Pete Wilmot and the band. We've also had guest preachers including Pete Humphries, Dan Bright, Ellie Watson and Ben Nicholls. 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 1st Sunday for family service at 10.30am in the church, the 2nd Sunday for the 6pm youth service and the 3rd, 4th & 5th Sunday at 10.30am in the Ark. Our 5th Sunday is the service Sunday where the youth bake cookies and serve the refreshments to the congregation following the service.

**Chris West**

## **STAY ON MONDAY**

Our weekly small group on Monday nights meets in the young peoples homes and the Ark alternately.

We get to be together, play games, watch videos and read stories from the Bible of our faithful God. We've been using the Bible Societies Six Beats One Story resource and this has helped the youth know their bibles better. The week in youth homes is lead by them on topics they choose.

**Chris West**

## **WEDNESDAY AT EIGHT**

Wednesday at 8 is a fortnightly bible study group. It meets every other Wednesday on Zoom from 8-9pm. We have completed the Generosity Course on Mary from the Church of England and we are currently in the Bible Societies resource called The Bible Course. Every few meets we also have socials in each other's homes. It is a lovely welcoming group who embrace new ideas, new thoughts and new people.

**Chris West**

## **THURSDAY AT EIGHT**

Once again, it is great to share about Thursday @ 8. We meet in members' homes mainly in Charvil and Woodley depending on who is available to host. We are very grateful to Terry and Wendy Hunt who host us most weeks and have a wonderful selection of biscuits each week. We regularly have between 8 and 12 people attending and always start with a hot drink and a chat. We follow a course or a book to help steer our discussions. We continued with Paul's letters to the churches which have been very encouraging and started on the Acts of the Apostles. You don't need to know lots about the Bible to come along - the purpose is to explore God's word together and think about how it applies to our daily lives. We ask questions and learn from one another. The group is a wonderful support for its members, and we have a group WhatsApp so that we can be there for each other practically and emotionally when needed during the week.

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. We had our first Pizza social evening, and thanks go to Izzy Jeffery for the home-made pizza, they were delicious. 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](mailto:helen.craig50@gmail.com)

**Helen Craig and Ruth Jeffery**

### **STAY ON FRIDAY**

Our weekly youth club continues into its 7th year of running. We have an amazing team of volunteers and some wonderful young people who attend each week. Throughout the year we spend time playing various sports and activities. These include; basketball, football, hockey, volleyball, wide games, frisbee and cricket. Plus we have lots of indoor games, including a pool table, a foosball table, air hockey, two consoles, cookie baking and table games like chess, connect 4, guess who, taco cat, avocado smash and uno. STAY on Friday also welcomes the year 6's to help with their transition to senior school. The youth club also feeds into our School Holiday Activities, where we take groups of young people out on trips to theme parks, paintballing days, swimming pools, cinemas, ice skating rinks, paddleboarding lakes and dodgeball tournaments.

**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, as well as developing the organ playing and experience of our organ scholar Will who will be applying for a University Organ Scholarship shortly. He has also been regularly supporting our service music throughout the 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

The Rendezvous Lunch Club meets twice a month at The Ark on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays to enjoy a tasty two course meal, cooked by Kathy Wright and her team. It is a lovely friendly space where we have time to chat and catch up with friends, whilst enjoying beautifully cooked food.

We regularly have over 35 people attend and our Christmas lunch was a lively event enjoyed by over 70 people.

As well as thanking our wonderful cook Kathy, I would also like to thank Ray Mullen and Rosemary Rixon, who regularly help with the front of house tasks and Hilary Rennie in the church office for managing the bookings

**Liz Nelson**

## BELL RINGERS

We now have 12 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. We rang for four weddings during the year. Some of us continue to support Shiplake who ring for their monthly Sunday afternoon service. During the year some of our ringers again helped with the mobile belfry at the Hurst show at the end of June and others helped with Guild training courses at Radley and Steple Aston.

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 the 8th of May to commemorate the 80th anniversary of VE Day. A quarter peal was rung on Friday 18th July prior to the village commemoration of the 80th anniversary of VE and VJ day.

In October a quarter peal was rung by ringers from several towers in Sonning Deanery.

This was conducted by Becki Shuttleworth, one of our young ringers.

We rang half muffled before the morning service on Remembrance Sunday.

We are grateful to ringers from other towers who support our weekly ringing practice and Sunday morning ringing.

During the year we were pleased that several groups of young people came to visit the tower and see how bells are rung. However to keep the bells ringing in the future we need more people to come and learn to ring. Adults and children from Year 6 and upwards are welcome to come up the tower either on Sunday mornings before the 10.30am service or on Thursday evenings at 7.30pm.

**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 by making grants to St. Andrew's Church PCC for specific projects.

Thank you to all those who supported FoStAC in any way during 2025, whether through regular giving (including Gift Aid where relevant), attending our fundraising community events, or making legacies and gifts in memory. In 2025 we did not receive grants from other local charities for specific building projects, however we still raised a net £10.3k, after taking into account £2.5k which FoStAC granted to complete our funding of work on the vestry wall repairs. In total since our founding in 2003, by 31 December 2025, we had raised over £548k for our church.

I applaud the efforts of my fellow Trustees supporting our FoStAC activities in 2025: Keith Nichols, Sally Wilson, Bob Hine, Keith Hawkins, Rosemarie Rixon, Ian McCann, Tony Walker and myself.

As well as our annual events of Quiz Night, Sonning Show and Garden Tea Party, and thank you to Shirley and Dave Chard for hosting our Garden Tea Party in 2025, we innovated with our first Private Garden Tour and Wine Tasting Evening events. With ongoing decline in sales of Christmas Cards, we transitioned to successfully selling our branded Christmas Puddings.

We continue to offer a varied programme of events year to year working with our partnering organisations in the community.

Full details are on our FoStAC website – [www.fostac.org](http://www.fostac.org) (allied 'QR Code' on the right) – which also includes details on how to join our mailing list or regularly donate to FoStAC.



If you would like a copy of our colourful 2025 Annual Report providing more background on our fundraising work and includes our full accounts, please do contact us via the website or speak with one of the Trustees.

**Magnus Smyly – Chairman for 2025**

### **STEWARDSHIP REPORT**

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](mailto: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 2025**

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 2025 were as follows:

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

## **AREA DEAN'S REPORT FOR SONNING DEANERY**

Once again, it has been a year of significant change in Sonning Deanery. In September 2025, Revd. Julian Bidgood (Barkham) finished serving as Deanery Co-ordinator. We give thanks for his ministry among us, particularly through his support of the many parishes who found themselves in vacancy and his work on our Children and young people's plan which has given us a firm foundation to work from. A thank you was given to Julian before his sabbatical in the summer of 2025. In June 2025, Deanery Synod also said thank you to John Sutton and Lynne Paine who stepped down as Lay Chair and Treasurer respectively. A huge thanks for all they gave to those roles.

The Bishop of Reading asked Revd. Laura Wheatley Downs (Crowthorne) to serve as Area Dean from September 2025, and she has been working alongside Leigh Welham (Secretary), Anthony Pollock (Treasurer) Anna Pearce, David Horrocks, John Sutton, Revd. Gemma Donnell (Parish of Finchampstead and California) and Revd. Mark Gould (Twyford and Ruscombe) who have served as members of the Deanery Standing Committee and Mission and Pastoral Committee. Revd Mark Gould was licensed as Associate Area Dean on 1st March 2026. Behind the scenes,

advocating for deanery is Peter Wells. Special thanks also go to him for all his work managing our Parish Share allocations.

Over the last year, the remaining three incumbent vacancies have all been filled. It has been an absolute delight to welcome Fr. Sam Tanna-Korn (St. Paul's and Woosehill) Revd. David Chislett (Wargrave and Knowl-Hill) and Revd. Peter Hyson (Owlsmoor). It has also been wonderful to welcome other priests into the parish – Revd. Cathryn Howse as Associate minister in the parish of Finchampstead and California, Revd. Andrea Platt as Associate priest at All Saints and Revd. Robert Wynford-Harris (PTO).

This year, we have also said farewell to Revd Julian McAllen who left the parish of Finchampstead and California in the summer. And farewell and good luck to Revd. John Castle in Sandhurst who has taken up a new role at St. John the Baptist, Aldenham. He had joyfully served his community for 21 years, and we have been enriched as a deanery through his ministry. We wish him all the best!

Sadly, Revd. David Webster died in February. He had continued to minister to those at Suffolk Lodge which was his home toward the end of his life. We give God thanks for his years of faithful service.

One of the most significant beginnings within the Deanery has been the first phase of work on our Deanery plan which has taken up the majority of our time at Synod since September 2025. During this time Synod has been discerning where our deanery priorities lie. A consultation has also taken place in Deanery Chapter and explored through conversations across parishes. The Deanery has reflected on: signs of God at work, parish treasures, anxieties, priorities, community needs, required resources, and hopes for the deanery's future.

Out of this work have emerged some exciting key priorities to focus on as a Deanery which will be discussed at our next Synod AGM, alongside our vision and values.

Our next step will be to encourage those with a gifting, passion or skill in our priority areas and other key offices who would like to facilitate informal deanery clusters which meet a few times a year where others who are also interested in collaborating and sharing learning, encouragement and prayer about a particular area can gather together. e.g. safeguarding, churchwardens, children and young people. This already works successfully amongst our Treasurers and our Green team- a huge thankyou to all those involved in that.

We are also in the process of looking for a new Deanery Secretary. This is an important role within the life of the Synod. Leigh has been a fantastic secretary, but serves in so many other places- if you want to know more about what the role entails, please do speak with her. We're also looking for a new Lay chair. Again, an important role that enable the voice of the faithful members of our churches to be represented, and to ensure balance in how we work together as clergy and as laity. Please do speak with Laura if you'd like to find out more.

This next year, I would encourage anyone who has a heart to see our churches work together to grow God's Kingdom through any of the roles above or below, to sign up to be a deanery representative over the next 3 years at your APCM. And don't worry, if synod isn't for you- there are plenty of other ways to be involved! I look forward to seeing what God does through us.

Grace and peace,  
Revd Laura Wheatley Downs

#### Supporting

Clergy, individuals and churches to serve their parishes and communities by meeting together, sharing resources and engaging in mission.

#### Discerning

Deanery Synod is a place where encouragements, concerns and missional ideas from individual parishes can be shared and potentially considered by the diocesan synod, which can then be considered at General Synod. At each of these stages, those involved are seeking to serve God, and grow God's Church.

#### Connecting

People together from different churches across the area in worship, mission and governance. Parishes with deanery, diocesan and national initiatives and vice-verse through the sharing information.



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