St Andrews Church
Taunton
Reaching lives for change and hope

Reg. charity no: 1196804

Agenda, Minutes and Reports for the

Annual Parish Meeting
&
Annual Parochial Church Meeting

3 May 2026

DIOCESE OF
Bath&Wells
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THE PARISH CHURCH OF ST ANDREW, TAUNTON

[Reg. charity no: 1196804]

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 2026
Sunday 3 May 2026, at 11.00 (approx.), in Church
following the 10am Eucharist

AGENDA

1. Welcome & Prayers
2. Apologies for absence
3. Approval of Minutes of meeting 4 May 2025 *[see below]*
4. Election of Churchwardens
5. Resolution regarding Churchwardens Measure (2001) Sect. 3 *[see below].*

Item 3: MINUTES, 4 May 2025

Vicar, the Revd Robin Lodge in the chair; approx. 20 members attending [not listed].
(The meeting was not live-streamed on Facebook, although the preceding service had been.)

2 Apologies for absence
June Acreman, Alison Aish, Steve Aish, David Budd, Lizzie Budd, Ruth Cook, Lesley Gold, Val Lowman.

3 Meeting of APM 28 April 2024
Minutes had been distributed with the other papers; there were no comments.
The Chair signed the Minutes as a true account of the meeting.

4 Election of Churchwardens
David Budd, having been properly proposed and seconded, and having indicated his willingness to serve, was duly elected [in absentia] unopposed. This is his third consecutive year as Churchwarden. He will now be eligible, if required, to stand for a further three years (nominated and elected annually); this position was stated and agreed at the APM in April 2024.

Robin thanked David for his willingness to serve, supported by the usual team.

Harrison (Harry) Lewis has been helping David with practical repairs and maintenance and offered to act as Assistant Churchwarden. The meeting accepted his offer with thanks; the position will be ratified in due course by the PCC. [It was so ratified by the PCC at their meeting on 20 May 2025.]

Item 5: Resolution regarding Churchwardens Measure (2001).

Background: The Churchwardens Measure states that a churchwarden - elected annually - is disqualified from standing for a seventh successive year. A meeting of the parishioners may by resolution decide that this section shall not apply in relation to the parish concerned.
Proposal*:* The parishioners of St Andrew's Taunton resolve that the 6-year rule shall not apply to Churchwarden elections at St Andrew's. This resolution to take effect from APM 2027.

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING 2026
Sunday 3 May 2026 in Church,
immediately following the Annual Parish Meeting

Papers attached.

AGENDA

1 Apologies for absence
2 Approval of Minutes of meeting 4 May 2025
3 Matters arising
4 Report of Electoral Roll Officer
5 Annual report and accounts for the year ended 31 December 2025 *[separate bundle - Report to be adopted by the meeting]*
6 Annual report on the proceedings of the PCC 2025.
7 Report on the fabric, goods and ornaments of the church, including Inventory *[also includes New St Andrews report this year.]*
8 APCM to receive the following reports for 2025:
   a) New St Andrews - financial summary
   b) Safeguarding
   c) Church Hall (including financial statement)
   d) Choir and music
   e) Fundraising and social
   f) Community outreach
   g) Children and young people (all activities)
   h) Bell-ringing

9 Report on the proceedings of the Taunton Deanery Synod, 2025
10 Election of Deanery Synod members, 2026 - 2029
11 Election of PCC members, 2026/27.
12 Appointment of Independent Examiner to the PCC.
13 Any other business as notified to the Secretary by **Monday 27 April 2026**. (Send to Sue Goodman, suegoodman61@outlook.com, ring 07967 366871, or in person.)
14 Vicar's report (from Rev. Robin Lodge before his retirement) – including St Andrews Church School, LPAs, LWA and Ministry team.

Item 2 – **Minutes of Annual Parochial Church Meeting – Sunday 4 May 2025**

Vicar, the Revd Robin Lodge in the chair; approx. 20 members attending [not listed].
(The meeting was not live-streamed on Facebook, although the preceding service had been.)

1 Apologies for absence - as at APM (above).

2 Minutes of the APCM 28 April 2024
Minutes had been circulated before the meeting, with the other papers; there were no comments; they were **accepted** by the present meeting and signed by the Chair as a true record.

3. Matters arising
One erroneous date was corrected.

4. Electoral Roll report
Full details in Ruth Cook's written report, which had been circulated.
A new Electoral Roll has been drawn up, as is required every 6 years; the number on the Roll as of today's date is 81, but further additions are expected after this meeting. The new Roll is displayed in the narthex.
The ER officer continues to maintain a "members list" of people who wish to keep in touch with life at St Andrews more informally.

5. Annual Report and Accounts for year ended 31 December 2024
Papers had been circulated earlier.
Antony Yeo (Treasurer) gave the following statement to the meeting:

APCM Treasury notes - Accounts to the 31-12-2024
I would again like to thank Assistant Treasurer Lizzie Budd for all her ongoing works for the year. Many hours are spent on the Hall finances and the Diocesan Cashbook software. Additionally, I thank David Bridges of St John's Staplegrove, for acting as our independent examiner. Without their input the figures would not be available for all to see.
As always St Andrews is grateful for all the financial support received, be that via regular giving or one-off donations. The recent uptake of the Parish Giving scheme has been excellent. This also greatly reduces administration works and improves cash flow as the Gift Aid is paid out monthly, not quarterly as previously. Thank you to all who have signed up for this.
Readers of the Financial report will note that we had a deficit of £15,751 for the year [2024]. This basically means we spent more last year than we received via regular giving, legacies and fund raising. I am often suggested to take funds from the reserves, as that is what they are for. However, we are often faced with larger expenditure than income and in such a scenario our reserves will not last indefinitely. We often have relied on legacies in the past, and this makes cash flow planning very hard to predict and manage.
St Andrews (like all of us) is faced with increased costs such as the Parish Share increasing from £50,606.04 in 2023 to £58,197 in 2024. Unavoidable expenses have also increased, and this keeps up the pressure on the financial situation. We will then for this year, 2025, have additional increases again to face.
St Andrews has and does face the same problems financially as so many churches across the Diocese and the country. So again, thank you for people's generosity in meeting so many of these obligations.

Query raised: Will the reduced number on the Electoral Roll lead to any reduction in our Parish Share payments?
Response: The short answer is No. The Parish Share is to "pay for what you get", in the form of diocesan support for ministry. The annual amount for 2025 is known, and a drop in our numbers can have no influence on that figure. Robin also reminded the meeting that St Andrews is fortunate (and unusual in Taunton Deanery) in having a full-time Vicar not shared with other parishes.

Robin added his thanks to Antony Yeo and Lizzie Budd for their valuable, and time-consuming, work on St Andrew's finances.

The Accounts having been accepted by the PCC at their meeting on 25 March 2025, and examined and signed off by David Bridges, our Independent Examiner, the annual meeting **accepted the Accounts**, which were duly signed by the Chair.

6. Annual report on the proceedings of the PCC, 2024
Report previously circulated; no questions or comments from the meeting.
The Chair thanked the PCC Secretary for her work throughout the year.

7 Report on the fabric, goods and ornaments of the church.
The report had been circulated; a short note on New St Andrews work was included. Robin gave a short update on the problems with heating system – Herschels (the supplier) have acknowledged some shortcomings in the system a supplied and improvements should be forthcoming.

The Inventory for 2025 had been partially completed (approx. 80%) and was duly signed by the Vicar, (Churchwarden absent).

8. Reports received
All had been previously circulated.

8 a: New St Andrews report, with financial summary
A note on NSA work is included in the fabric report (item 7, above).
The financial statement was available, showing funds available for the NSA project. This money can be used for purchases or work initiated by the NSA group.

8 b: Safeguarding
Report previously circulated, covering calendar year 2024. There were no queries.
Stephen Grimshaw, Parish Safeguarding Officer, made a plea for those involved to keep their safeguarding training up to date; he will ensure the relevant people always receive notification of updates needed or changes in requirements.

8 c: Church Hall, with financial statement
Manager Cherry Hingston had produced an excellent comprehensive report, showing valuable developments and building on the previous managers' good work. The Hall is now generating income for the PCC, regularly transferring £500 a month to the general fund.

Thanks were also given to Lizzie Budd, Hall Treasurer, for the 2024 Hall financial statement

8 d: Choir & Music

Darren Chalmers, acting Team Leader, co-ordinator and secretary for St Andrews's choir& music, produced the report previously circulated.

The Vicar praised Darren's hard work in this area and thanked him and the choir for their determination to maintain music at St Andrew's. Unfortunately, we still have no regular organist, although the players we have on our rota do excellent work and we are very grateful for their support. The PCC will shortly be starting a new attempt to find a regular organist.

8 e: Fundraising & Social

The fundraising team's report was available. Thanks were given for their continuing work on events large and small, all very much appreciated. Further possible events, such as a sponsored swim (offered by a member of the congregation) were aired.

Query raised: Do all funds raised go directly into the main parish finances, or could events support specific projects? The Transfiguration window at the south end is a case in point. It was thought that a fundraising event could be more successful if a specific aim were publicised.

Response: Robin responded that, while fundraising in general is intended for parish funding in general, income from an event could be ring-fenced for a specific purpose if this had been agreed and publicised as such. He thought that work on the church building could be a suitable purpose. In fact, the PCC had discussed fundraising for the Transfiguration window at the January 2025 meeting and were broadly in favour.

Query raised: To buy new chairs for the south aisle?

Response: The New St Andrews group has already discussed this and decided to postpone the purchase.

Query raised: Is there, or should there be, an agreed schedule for using money raised by the fundraising group?

Response: No. A formally planned schedule might obstruct use of funds when unforeseen needs arise.

8 f: Community outreach

Carol Bull's report circulated, covering Tea & Talk, a weekly open-door group which developed from the Warm Room initiative, also supported by St Andrew's.

Comment: Carol wanted to ensure that income from T&T is shown clearly in the annual accounts.

Response: PCC to raise the matter with Treasurer at next meeting.

8 g: Children & Young People

A comprehensive report from Sue Lodge, covering Children@10 (formerly Railway Children) and Messy Church, was circulated. A note about Church Mice was received later from Joy Abnett. Both reports gave thanks to their hardworking assistants, and included a plea for more helpers.

8 h: Bell ringing

Henry Haslam's report previously circulated; there were no comments.

9. Report on proceedings of Taunton Deanery Synod.

Darren Chalmers' comprehensive report previously circulated. There were no questions.

The meeting was informed that Revd Lee Mullen was recently confirmed as Area Dean of Taunton Deanery.

10. Election of PCC members

David Budd, having been elected Churchwarden, remains on the PCC for 2025/26.

The following had been nominated before the meeting:

- Carol Bull
- Sue Goodman (previously a co-opted member
- Lesley Jones

No further nominations having been received, Carol, Sue and Lesley were duly elected unopposed, to serve until 2028. All were in favour.
[The nomination forms showing proposer and seconder are filed with this report.]

Former PCC members Alison Aish, Carol Dimmer and Di Ruff have completed their 3-year terms and now step down.

The Vicar welcomed the new PCC members, and thanked the retiring members for their service

11. Appointment of Independent Examiner to the PCC

David Bridges, from St John the Evangelist, Staplegrove, had agreed to be Independent Examiner for 2025, if confirmed by the APCM.
Proposal: David Bridges to be appointed Independent Examiner for St Andrew's, for 2025.
Proposed: Darren Chalmers / Seconded: Stephen Grimshaw.
Voting: All were in favour, no abstentions

David Bridges is duly appointed. The PCC will send him formal confirmation of the arrangement.
In a reciprocal arrangement, our Treasurer, Antony Yeo, will continue to act as I.E. for Staplegrove.

12. Any other business

None submitted.

13. Vicar's Report

Report on 2024 circulated, covering every aspect of parish life, and thanking the people who ensure continuity.
There were no comments.

Jeremy Harvey, on behalf of the whole St Andrews family, then gave a vote of thanks to Robin and Sue Lodge for their hard work and leadership in maintaining the work and worship of St Andrew's.
The meeting greeted his statement with applause.

The meetings closed at 12.25 with the Grace.

Item 4 – **Report of Electoral Roll Officer**

Electoral Roll 2025

The number on the Roll at the APCM in May 2025 was **81** following the creation of a new Electoral Roll that year.

Since the deadline for the new Roll, twelve existing members submitted their forms and we also welcomed Sally Barrett and David & Naomi Brooks-Daw onto the Roll. Carol Dimmer and Elliot Dommett moved away and so the number on the Roll was **94** at 31st December 2025.

In 2026, we welcomed Peter Willmott into the Roll and Sue Lodge moved away and so the number at this APCM is **94.**

Ruth Cook
Electoral Roll Officer
7th April 2026

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Item 5 – **Annual report and accounts –** see separate document

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Item 6 – **Report on proceedings of PCC, 2025.**

In 2025 we held 7 in-person meetings, all chaired by Rev. Robin Lodge. We started the year with 12 members, including the Vicar, plus the Parish Administrator who attends but does not vote. David Budd, having been elected Churchwarden, remained on the PCC for 2025/26. Stephen Grimshaw, Henry Haslam and Darren Chalmers, as Deanery Synod members, are ex-officio PCC members; Stephen is also a Diocesan Synod member. At the APCM on 4 May 2025, Alison Aish, Carol Dimmer and Di Ruff stepped down, having completed their 3-year terms. Carol Bull, Sue Goodman (previously co-opted) and Lesley Jones were elected to PCC. Thus we ended the year with 11 members plus Lesley Gold (non-voting member).

The Standing Committee of the PCC had 5 members at the start of the year: Rev Robin Lodge, David Budd, Sue Goodman, Stephen Grimshaw and Antony Yeo. Regular SC meetings were discontinued after the meeting of 7 January 2025, although the Standing Committee still exists, and maintains its discretionary spending facility. It was felt that SC discussions were too often simply repeated at PCC meetings. Specific SC issues, if any, could be resolved by Zoom meetings or email correspondence and reported to PCC as such. During the year two such issues were resolved, and minuted at the appropriate PCC meeting.

The PCC received written or verbal reports at each meeting on:

- Finance
- Fabric - site, buildings, and progress of Faculty applications during 2025
- Progress of MAP25

- New St Andrews (when active)
- Church Hall, including PCC approval of new regular lets
- Fundraising, and social events
- Safeguarding
- Eco Church (when needed) following award of Silver status in January 2025
- Vicar's report.

Regular issues covered during 2025

- *Finance continues precarious*. The PCC is very thankful to have Antony Yeo's constant monitoring and advice on budgeting and expenditure and gladly supports him in this stressful volunteer role.
- *Annual strategic planning.* MAP25 had been accepted in November 2024, and we were working through it. In summer 2025, Robin Lodge announced his retirement with a statement to the congregation on 3 August. He will leave on 1 February 2026. Work on MAP25, and a possible MAP26, was then put on hold and planning for the forthcoming vacancy started.
- *Fabric*. Outstanding tasks from the Quinquennial Inspection in 2020 were completed. QI 2025 was started in December and completed on 21 January 2026. Other issues are covered in the Churchwarden's annual report on buildings, goods and ornaments.
- *Scout hut.* Progress towards rationalising the scouts' use of the building having stalled, PCC wished to lease the property to the Scouts at a peppercorn rent. This decision has thrown up even more (and more expensive) legal problems, with no resolution before the end of 2025.
- *Policy reviews* - an ongoing rolling schedule through the year.
- *Safeguarding.* The annual review took place in September; Stephen Grimshaw had prepared a revised and updated Action Plan, which we are working through.
- *Occasional fees* at life events, i.e. payments for organist, verger, choir and bellringers on duty at weddings and funerals in church, are reviewed annually; no change from 2024.

Specific PCC actions included:

- Tony Blackshaw was recommended for Chalice & Patten permission, allowing him to administer the Chalice at the Eucharist. The Bishop's permission was received, to start in March 2025.
- Harrison (Harry) Lewis was approved in the post of Assistant Churchwarden in May.
- Access to and use of the Garden of Remembrance was clarified in July, along with arrangements for access to the north garden from the public road.
- Live-streaming of services was discontinued in September; this was because of various technical difficulties, and an increase in the cost of our broadcasting licence.

At the end of each PCC meeting, we review our work in the light of the St Andrews values outlined in MAP25 – we aim always to be Welcoming, Caring, Growing, Responding and Nurturing.

Sue Goodman, PCC Secretary
April 2026

Item 7 - **Fabric and NSA report**

New St Andrews report for APCM

Our vicar Robin Lodge retired on 1 February 2026 and we are now in vacancy for at least 12 months. The group's work has been put on hold until a new incumbent is in place.
Below is a summary of other NSA work completed in the last 12 months.

Narthex Doors
The folding narthex doors are now in place. The unavoidable wooden strut at floor level has heavy-duty rubber wedges either side for easy and safe passage by all. South West Joinery have looked at the doors recently and will adjust them as they are difficult to open and close.

Chairs
50 plastic stacking chairs have been purchased for use in the south aisle for busy services.

Solar Panels
We have had 4 quotes from Green Flare Solar & Batteries; Antony and I will check their figures to see if we agree. PCC has not yet discussed the quotes. Standing Committee agreed [in December 2025] that we continue to investigate this technology, and authorised payment for an initial survey by Green Flare. Nothing is decided, but NSA may propose to PCC that we invest in solar panels; we would need to apply for grants, fundraise specifically for this project, and apply for a faculty.

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Fabric Report for APCM

Spire lights need replacing and PCC agreed (November 2025) to Richard Councill's quote, from R.E.F. Electrics (Taunton), for LED lights. Bill Perry confirmed that the Ali Perry memorial fund will meet the cost. The equipment has been purchased and Richard is waiting for dry spring weather to proceed.

Cracked Wall on North Side
A large tree growing outside St Andrew's grounds has cracked the wall between the flats and the North Side of church, where the Garden of Remembrance is situated. The tree is covered by a Tree Protection Order. Alpha Housing who manage the flats have applied to council to have the TPO removed so the tree can be cut down. We have had an on-site meeting with Mark Lidster, Diocesan Church Buildings Adviser, who will help us in the process.

Stained Glass Window Transfiguration of Christ
The project received List B approval in November 2025. Holywell Glass removed the damaged section of window in February 2026; it will be repaired in their workshops and re-fitted after Easter. The cost was met by crowdfunding, using GoFundMe.

Scout Hut
Although our relations with the Scouts have improved considerably, the legal position has not. Sue Goodman and I had a 1.25 hour "free" consultation with the diocesan registrar Chris Jones. He was very helpful and found an old lease, which he is examining to see into whether it can be re-activated without changes, which will not cost much money. We had to keep emphasising that money is a big issue and we were not going to employ an independent surveyor, as well as a solicitor, to complete this exercise of a new lease. He did NOT recommend charging a peppercorn rent. We are still awaiting his report [as of 24 March 2026] but St Andrews is unlikely to proceed legally as the cost estimated at £4,000 is prohibitive.

Free-Standing Microphone on the Altar
This has proved a great success and also has the versatility of being adaptable to make a roving microphone. Thank you to Rob Cromwell who, while on curacy placement at St Andrews, used his sound system expertise to sort all this at significantly less than Audio Visual Sounds' quote. The celebrant has the option of using the free-standing microphone or the headset. The deacon will need the headset to read the gospel in the nave.

Quinquennial Report
Michael Vaughan visited the church twice (December 2025 & January 2026) and we await the finished report. His overall comment was the church was in good repair. One observation was leaves and weeds growing in the gutters and tiles. I have organised a WhatsApp "Gutter Hedgehog group" to help do this more regularly, which is working well. Thank you to Stephen G, David Brooks-Daw, Steve Bull, Dennis Carter and Merv Jones for volunteering. I only need 1 helper each time this is done.

IR heating system
Monitoring in the winter months indicated the Halo heating elements as installed were not satisfactory in our building. Herschel agreed with our figures and upgraded all the heating elements from 7.8kwh to 9.6kwh – at no cost to St Andrews.
A so-far-unidentified fault in the Halo light units frequently trips the switch. Hershel have not yet been able to trace and repair it.

David Budd, Churchwarden
24 March 2026

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Item 8 – **Further reports**

Item 8a – **New St Andrews financial summary** – see next page

Item 8b – **Safeguarding report 2025**

Taunton St Andrew - Safeguarding Report for APCM 3 May 2026

At the end of 2025 all DBS clearances were up to date.

At the end of 2025 training requirements were met for all but one of the posts that required them. That post's needs were met in the new year.

I had no cause for concern to report to Diocesan Safeguarding.

At the time of writing, some training has just fallen due for renewal for Welcomers. I shall pursue it when the PCC receives this year's list at their meeting immediately following the APCM.

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I'd like to take this opportunity to mention some things about safeguarding.
I'm the Safeguarding Officer for the parish. You can find my contact details on the weekly sheet, and you can find them and my photograph on the notice board in the Narthex.
Although there are training requirements for several jobs that are done in the church, you don't need to fill any of those posts to take the training. The Basic and Foundation training are available online and take about an hour each. Even if you don't actually take either test (neither is very onerous) it's worthwhile to read the introductory material.

Stephen Grimshaw
April 2026

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Item 8a – **New St Andrews, financial summary**

NSA Financial Summary Dec. 2025									
	Standing Order	**Cash/ Chq/Trf**	**Other**	**Bank Int**	**Exp**	**Total**	**Statement**		**Notes**
						8,183.66	Carried forward 2024		
31/1/2025	37.00	18.75				55.75	£18.75 Gift Aid reimbursement		
28/2/2025	37.00			50.05		87.05	Notional Interest Q4 2024		
31/3/2025	37.00					37.00			
30/4/2025	37.00	18.75		43.35		99.10	£18.75 Gift Aid reimb, £43.35 Notional interest		
31/5/2025	37.00				-2544.00	-2,507.00	Expenditure - SW Joinery - Narthex doors		
30/6/2025	37.00		55.00		-3180.00	-3,088.00	Expenditure - SW Joinery - Narthex doors £55 donation		
31/7/2025	37.00			27.56	-1116.00	-1,051.44	£27.56 Notional Interest Expenditure - SW Joinery Narthex doors		
31/8/2025	37.00	12.50				49.50	£12.50 Gift Aid reimbursement		
30/9/2025	37.00					37.00			
31/10/2025	37.00			10.77	-183.30	-135.53	Expenditure Ramps for Narthex Doors Income Interest Q3		
30/11/2025	37.00	18.75	861.26		-2541.26	-1,624.25	£18.75 GA transfer from church. £861.26 Go Fund Me campaign for the stained glass window - transferred to church. £1680 reimbursement to E Budd for the new chairs for church		
31/12/2025	32.00		101.45			133.45	£101.45 Go Fund me campaign re stained glass window.		
Total	**439.00**	**68.75**	**1,017.71**	**131.73**	**-9,564.56**	**276.29**	**Agrees to St 31/12/25**		

Notes
The Go Fund me amount of £101.45 will be transferred to church in the new financial year.

Item 8c – **Church Hall report & financial statement**

St Andrew's Church Hall Report for Annual Meeting 2026

Cherry Hingston, Hall Manager

This annual report gives an overview of the hall's activities for 2025.

- Regular Hires – detailing those gained and lost.
- Church Events – usage of the hall by the Church.
- One-off Hires – month by month usage of chargeable events.
- Operations – Hall staff, calendar of maintenance, other.

Regular Hires

During 2025 the regular hall hirers remained consistent, starting and ending the year with thirteen. Regular users hire for a minimum of 1.5 hours per week, however the average number of hours per hirer was 3 hours. Charges increased (from £12ph in 2024) to £14ph for the Main Hall or Kitchen, or £10ph for the Weston Room. Every evening Monday to Friday remained full. Day time was mostly full 3 out of the 5 days too. The average weekly income from regular hires was £600. (See page 4 for full timetable).

We gained these hirers:

- Fit & Fabulous – public Flexercise class - on Tuesday mornings
- Inclusive Pathways – private cooking session - on Tuesday afternoons

We gained and lost these hirers:

- Five Rivers Childcare – private education sessions – on Wednesday afternoon. Remained for a few months, before relocating the session to a permanent setting.
- Wild Yoga – Mum and Baby yoga on a Monday morning. Remained for a couple of months, before relocating with her family to a different part of the country.

We lost this hirer:

- NHS – Fridays in the Weston Room. At the end of the year the group leaders were told to relocate their group to an NHS approved setting. They were sad to leave us.

In addition, the **Weston Room** was used for weekly, but temporary, hires for family contact sessions by FAASS (Family Assessment and Support Services).

Church Events

- Sunday Church Lunches – 3 events took place at the hall over the year.
- Church Fete on the Green – took place on 28th June.

One-off Hires

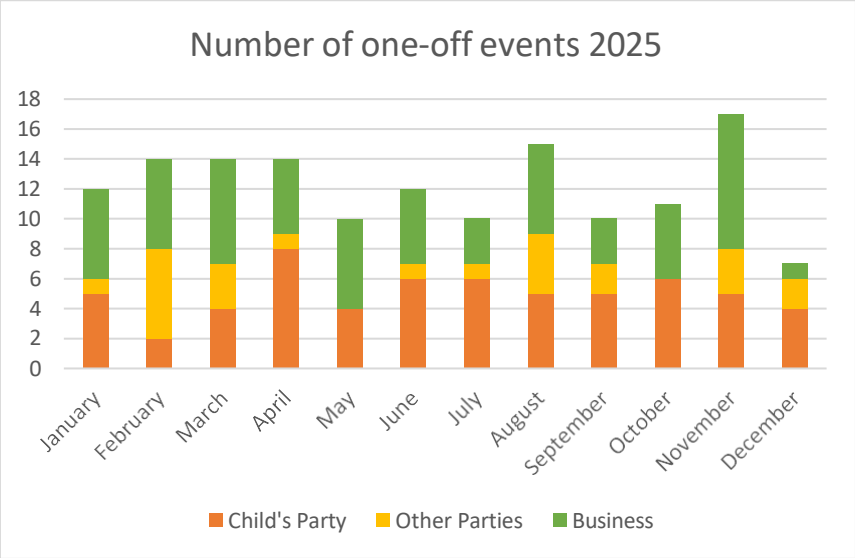
One-off hirers are made of child parties and 'other' parties which include, adult parties, family parties, baby showers, etc. The business hirers include a combination of public events, as well as team meetings, seminars and training sessions.

The charges for the 2025 were:

- Whole premises £25ph
- Main Hall £20ph
- Weston Room £10ph
- Kitchen extra £4ph
- Child Party £78 for 4-hours.

Below shows the chargeable usage of the hall for one-off hires in 2025, which saw an increase from 119 bookings in 2024, to 146 in 2025.

2025				
TOTALS	**Child's Party**	**Other Parties**	**Business**	**Month**
12	5	1	6	January
14	2	6	6	February
14	4	3	7	March
14	8	1	5	April
10	4	0	6	May
12	6	1	5	June
10	6	1	3	July
15	5	4	6	August
10	5	2	3	September
11	6	0	5	October
17	5	3	9	November
7	4	2	1	December
146	60	24	62	



<u>Summary of one-off events:</u>

- In comparison to 2024, we saw a significant increase in BUSINESS hires in 2025, the number of child parties and other parties remained mostly the same.
- The business hires ranged from public events like miniature train play for families, antique fair,

craft workshops, as well as private meetings for various organizations.

- There were also multiple business bookings from:
- Little Glass Bird – Glass fusing workshops.
- IHT Consultancy – use of the building for fire risk assessment training.
- Tutors and Exams – for GCSE exams.

Key Highlights:

- In 2025 there were 20 'dark' days (dark days meaning when the hall was not in use for the whole day). These dark days did not include the 11 days when the hall is closed over the Christmas period. Concluding: the hall was in use of 94% of the available days.
- The Church account received £11,000 from the Hall account during 2025.
- The Hall's account achieved an unspent profit of approx. £3,200 (however, much of this profit will be used for required improvement to update the hall's fire panel and detection system).

Operations

Hall Committee and Hall Staff – Staff and Committee members remained the same for 2025. The working hours for the Hall Manager (Cherry) increased to 36 hours (from 30 hours in 2024) per month from August 2025. The increase in hours was due to the augmented operational requirements. Also, this allows for time to be accrued to cover the Hall Cleaner's annual leave too.

Calendar of Maintenance and Improvements – In 2025 there was an introduction of many new documents and assessments, with the aim of improving the hall's management and operations. Below is the operational calendar, listing the annual actions required for the hall; the (NEW) indicates a new document or assessment completed.

Operational Calendar

Month	Annual Actions	Improvements 2025
January		Install 'entrance' panel
February	Gas Heater Safety Certificate	
March	Hall Risk Assessment (NEW)	Actions from Risk Assessment
April		Purchase new hall phone
May	First Aid Kit	Roof inspection report
June	Kitchen Inventory	Install new 'Hall for Hire' banner
	Fire Extinguishers inspection	New water heater in kitchen
	Fire Risk Assessment by IHT (NEW)	Decoration of Weston Room/MH
July		Install automatic door release
August		FRA actions
September		Install Wet Chemical Extinguisher
October	General Emergency Evacuation Plan (NEW)	Covers on skylights in WR & Toilets
November	COSHH Risk Assessment (NEW)	FRA actions
December	Fire Panel Service (NEW)	Fill pot hole in carpark
	Emergency Lighting Testing (NEW)	
Early January 2026	Portable Appliance Testing	

In additional to these main highlights, small scale maintenance has been completed throughout the year with Sorted By Chris, he has been very helpful in the general and specific improvements to the hall.

The hall saw many improvements during 2025, alongside an increase in income and profit. It has been a busy year! At the very start of 2026 the hall committee had our final meeting with Robin Lodge as Chair. With Robin's departure, I was pleased he retired knowing that the hall had started to achieve the main aim set, which is to be an income stream for the Church. As we look forward to 2026 and embed these operational improvements, we can aim to increase the hall's usage and continue this positive trajectory!

See next pages for a tabulation of regular hires; & annual financial statement.]

REGULAR HIRES - ALL INFORMATION

C=Children
A=Adults

HIRE DAY	MONDAY	MONDAY	MONDAY	MON & FRI	TUES & THUR	TUESDAY	TUESDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	WEDNESDAY	WEDNESDAY	WEDNESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	FRIDA
HIRE TIME	9:15-11:15	9:45-12:15	12:00-15:00	17:45-20:15 /	6:15-7:30	11:00-12:30	13:00-16:00	17:45-20:15	9:10-11:20	13:45-15:15	11:00-15:00	17:15-18:15	18:15-20:55	10:15-11:15	17:45-21:15	8:00-16:00	16:00-2
TOTAL HOURS	**2**	**2.5**	**3**	**5.25**	**2.5**	**1.5**	**3**	**2.5**	**2.2**	**1.5**	**4**	**1**	**2.8**	**1**	**3.5**	**8**	**5**
HOURLY RATE	**14**	**£ 10.00**	**14 (+£10 for**	**£ 14.00**	**£ 14.00**	**£ 14.00**	**£ 14.00**	**£ 14.00**	**£ 14.00**	**£ 12.00**	**£ 10.00**	**£ 14.00**	**£ 14.00**	**£ 14.00**	**£ 14.00**	**£ 10.00**	**£14.0**
TOTAL	£ 28.00	£ 25.00	£ 52.00	£ 73.50	£ 35.00	£ 21.00	£ 42.00	£ 35.00	£ 30.80	£ 18.00	£ 40.00	£ 14.00	£ 39.20	£ 14.00	£ 49.00	£ 80.00	£70.0
MAIN HALL	**MH**	**WR**	**MH & WR**	**MH**	**MH**	**MH**	**WR+Kitchen**	**MH**	**MH**	**MH**	**WR**	**MH**	**MH**	**MH**	**MH**	**WR**	**WR & Kitc**
BUSINESS NAME	Wild Yoga Life (C/A)	The YOU Trust (Private invited	Taunton Home Education	Doryoku Ryn Karate Jutsu - DRKJ Ltd	Power Parents (A)	Fit & Fabulous (A)	Inclusive Pathways Education Ltd	MF Martial Arts (C/A)	Mini Dribblers (C/A)	Adosa (A)	Five Rivers Child Care (C/A)	Workout Wednesday's Fitness Class	Fitness with Carrie (A)	Gentle Exercise - Tai Chi (A)	Saber Combat Academy Ltd	OPCMHT Taunton and West	Sauce Somers
HIRE START DATE	**03/11/2025**	**19/02/2024**	**10/06/2024**	**02/10/2020**	**03/09/2024**	**08/07/2025**	**02/09/2025**	**06/09/2022**	**11/09/2024**	**31/07/2024**	**05/03/2025**	**02/06/2021**	**02/09/2015**	**20/07/2023**	**02/03/2023**	**08/07/2022**	**23/02/**
End date	19/01/2026									29/01/2025	16/07/2025					05/12/2025	

St Andrew's Church Hall Budget 2025

Jan 2025 - Dec 2025

Expenditure	Budget 2024	Amount spent in 2024	Budget 2025	Carry forward to cover OY invoices	Actual Spent	Amount committed	End of Year Balance	Notes
Staff Costs								
Hall Manager & Hall Cleaner Real Living Wage £12.60 per hour from Nov'24	7,500.00	7,889.00	8,600.00		8,961.00		-361.00	Includes PAYE for staff. Reimbursed to church.
Overtime - estimate	500.00	696.00	500.00		434.00		66.00	Overtime for GT cleaner
Premises Costs								
Energy Costs	7,500.00	7,141.00	6,000.00		3,026.00		2,974.00	
Waste Removal - contract with Wasteology 1100L bin collected every fortnight. £68 pm	780.00	757.00	820.00	42.00	1,150.00		-288.00	Includes £370 cleaning resources purchased
Window Cleaner 5 x £18	105.00	54.00	90.00		38.00		52.00	Final inv £21 not out of bank
Water Rates - estimate	200.00	184.00	200.00		189.00		11.00	Annual invoice paid
PAT testing	250.00		150.00	268.00	268.00		150.00	PAT testing due Dec '25. Will be paid in 2026
Electrical works		1,441.00	1,000.00	973.00	1,518.00		455.00	Majority of expenditure due to new lighting
Handyman	500.00	495.00	740.00		1,551.00		-811.00	All work covering church hall maintenance
Gas servicing and Safety certificate	300.00	124.00	300.00		221.00		79.00	MBH service to Reznor heater. Query whether gas safety check has been carried out
Plumbing	300.00	221.00	750.00		1,020.00		-270.00	Includes replacement water heater - £1020

Fire Extinguisher Maintenance	60.00	70.00	80.00		191.00		-111.00	Service £56 & additional fire extinguisher & Fire blanket
Hall Improvement including decoration	2,000.00	1,780.00	2,050.00	34.00	706.00		1,378.00	
Roof Inspection		0.00	500.00		360.00		140.00	Roof inspection carried out in May '25
Lawn mower service		160.00	180.00		0.00		180.00	
Supplies & Services								
Petty Cash for cleaning and other resources - Cleaner and Hall Manager	550.00	719.00	750.00		1,022.00		-272.00	Cleaning materials and other sundry items purchased through petty cash. Separate budget for cleaning materials in '26
Broadband - Plus net 24 month contract @ £26.97 pm	300.00	316.00	350.00		400.00		-50.00	Final invoice of £62 unexpected
Phone Smarty £5 x 12 = £60	116.00	87.00	260.00		198.00		62.00	New phone purchased. Monthly charges coming from petty cash
Insurance - Ecclesiastical £95.63pm x 8m = £765 presume 4% increase £99.45 x 4 = £398	1,414.00	1,313.00	1,163.00		1,159.00		4.00	On track
Admin & Marketing - website fee £150		343.00	500.00		1,151.00		-651.00	Large overspend due in part to Fire RA not included in original budget £450
Monthly payment to church - £500 pm x 12 = £6,000		1,000.00	6,000.00	1,000.00	11,000.00		-4,000.00	Additional £4,000 paid to church in May as agreed by committee re large bank balance
Total	**22,375.00**	**24,790.00**	**30,983.00**	**2,317.00**	**34,563.00**	**0.00**	**-1,263.00**	Overspend on Budget set

Income	Budget 2024		Budget 2025		Invoiced & Received	Amount committed	End of Year Balance	Notes
Regular Lets	-18,000.00	-22,595.00	-22,000.00		-25,577.00		3,577.00	12 months income.
One Off Lets	-5,000.00	-8,025.00	-9,000.00		-10,083.00		1,083.00	12 months income.
Deposits	0.00	-1,265.00	-1,265.00		-1,193.00		-72.00	No budget line for deposits in 2026 budget
Bank Interest	-70.00	-63.00	-70.00		-119.00		49.00	Int Q4 2024, Q1, Q2 &Q3 2025
Total	**-23,070.00**	**-31,948.00**	**-32,335.00**		**-36,972.00**	**0.00**	**4,637.00**	Additional income over budget

Cash Carry forward from 2024	**8,732.00**
Jan - March amount used for OY invoices	2,317.00
Balance of Carry forward	**6,415.00**

Balance on Spreadsheet			**Bank Balance**	
Opening Balance	8732.32		31/12/2025	7927.66
Total Income	33,758.40			
Total Expenditure	34,563.06			
Total	**7,927.66**		**Total**	**7927.66**

Notes

Bank Balance shows actual income and expenditure in the bank. Budget spreadsheet shows income invoiced but not necessarily received.

Outstanding invoices - Total £2,812 **Figure written off at the end of 2025 - £384.75**

Item 8d – **Choir & Music**

The Choir and Music Report, APCM 3rd May 2026

The Music Ministry at St Andrew’s still goes on and is an integral part of the worship that we offer to Almighty God. 2025 saw no appointment of a Director of Music, however all members of the Choir have stuck together to continue providing sustainable singing. Dedication to this ministry does not go unnoticed.

Therefore, I want to say ‘Thank You’ to each and every member of the Choir for all that they do to continue to support the flourishing of singing at services week by week. Also for their patience with me for the emails with hymns and updates I send out.

We are supported by a small band of organists that come and play for us and ‘Thank You’ to those who have played for us in 2025: Ben Sampler, Paul Burnett, Nathalie Delaney, Sam Baker and Jack Ford. Without people coming to play for us recorded music would have to be in place every week. It is good that Jack Ford (one of Sam’s pupils) comes and plays from time to time and I want to encourage him more in 2026.

I also want to say ‘Thank You’ to our former Vicar, Robin, who in 2025 continued to produce a Music Planner and arrange organists. It is a tough job, as in October 2025 I was given the opportunity to plan the hymns to give me an insight, as when Robin retires in February 2026 the baton for this planning is handed over to myself.

Our Music Group has not been around as much in 2025. However my thanks to Carolyn Tudor who has co-ordinated the group.

Please do keep praying that we can appoint a Director of Music in time, and for the right person to lead the choir.

But ‘Thank You’ Choir and congregation for all you do to support me in the role that I take to keep music going at St Andrews.

Darren Chalmers
Music and Choir Co-Ordinator

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Item 8e – **Fundraising & Social**

Fundraising Group Report, APCM 3rd May 2026

First of all I want to say 'Thank You' to all members of the Fundraising Group for their commitment in being part of a group that works hard continuing to put the 'FUN' into FUNDRAISING!

In 2025 events run by the Fundraising Group raised **£5073.07** and many thanks to all who came and supported the events and also members of the congregation who were always willing to help.

Events held in 2025 were:

- Late Christmas Lunch - £478.92
- Table Top Sale - £161.60
- Spring Lunch - £245.81
- Summer Fete - £1531.50
- Summer Lunch - £308.46
- Harvest Lunch - £346.78
- Christmas Market - £2000.00
- We did use income for 2 new Summer Fete banners

A lot of work and planning goes in to putting on these events and I want to say 'Thank You' to Merv Jones who goes out to local businesses to arrange prizes for the main raffles at the Summer Fete and Christmas Market. He has built up a real rapport with certain businesses that keep supporting us such as Tesco, One Stop, Hollywood Bowl, Odeon, Monkton Elm and others.

Light Up The Spire continues to bring in sponsorship and funds for the Church. Later in the year new flood lights will be in place, funded by the Ali Perry Memorial Fund; I want to say 'Thank You' to Bill and the family for this generous offer. If you would like to remember a loved one, an occasion, etc, in this way do get in touch with Lesley Gold in the Parish Office.

We welcome new members onto the group, so if you have the URGE do have a chat with me or any member of the team for further information.

I look forward to all that 2026 brings with our events that we have planned.

For and on behalf of the Fundraising Team
Darren Chalmers
April 2026

Item 8f – **Community Outreach**

During 2025 about 15 to 20 people attended **Talk & Tea** each Thursday, and this has continued into 2026. We attract several regulars from outside the regular church family, which is very satisfying. We would like to reach out to more people, as feedback has suggested that a slightly later time could be more popular. Going forward (from April 2026) the session will run from 2pm to 4pm and will be called Tea and Chat – see below.

We intend these changes to be advertised by placing some new banners, leaflet-dropping some local streets, and new posters. Many thanks to Sue Goodman and Lesley Gold for all your input and work to put this in place.

We are very lucky to have some charitable friends who often donate cakes and biscuits, which helps with the cost of running this event. I'm also very grateful to all the volunteers and key holders who have been very supportive, both of this event and myself.

Talk & Tea has now changed its name. Many people had thought it was about a learning session, instead of a low key social event which it is intended to be. So it will now be known as **Tea and Chat**, and remains open to all. You can come for the whole session on a regular basis; alternatively, drop in when you have a little time. Please spread the word to your friends and neighbours across the parish.

Carol Bull, April 2026

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Item 8g – **Children & young people**

Children@10

Children@10 provides a group for school-age children during the 10am Sunday Eucharist. We usually welcome between 3 and 10 children each week.

The children remain with their parents in the service until the Collect before the Old Testament reading. They then process to the narthex, taking turns carrying an electric candle. Leaders prepare activities based on the Gospel reading of the day (or, occasionally, another suitable Bible story). Activities include retelling/acting out the story and crafts. The children return to church at Communion for a blessing and then sit together until the end of the service.

During the year we trialled providing percussion instruments for the last hymn. The children enjoyed this, but at times it became distracting, and the final hymn is not always suitable for enthusiastic percussion. The instruments remain available should we decide to use them on appropriate occasions.
We currently have a core team of five leaders, following Sue Lodge's departure in February 2026. Sue led the team with experience from previous children's groups and offered caring, stable leadership. She also provided valued pastoral support to children, parents, and volunteers. Her leaving has created a significant gap, both in practical capacity and in the support she offered.

Nicola Mitra and Nicki Sawyer are trialling a more structured set of weekly themes to help the team plan activities. We have a large range of resource books available in the narthex to support planning, and Nicola has spent a lot of time collating these to make them more accessible.

The children's corner is available in church for pre-school children to use during the 10am Eucharist. Older children also enjoy it after the service. We ask parents and carers to supervise their own children while they are there. There is a wide range of appropriate toys and activities, and the Children@10 leaders also try to ensure that suitable colouring is available in the area.

Highlights

- Consistent weekly provision for children during the 10am Eucharist.
- Good engagement through Gospel-based storytelling, drama, and crafts.
- Children taking an active role by processing out and carrying the candle.

Challenges

- Reduced volunteer capacity following Sue Lodge's departure.
- Ensuring a sustainable rota and cover for holidays/illness.
- Balancing children's participation with keeping the end of the service free from distractions.

Plans for the Coming Year

- Recruit and train additional volunteers to strengthen the rota.
- Build a small bank of ready-to-use session plans to reduce weekly preparation pressure.
- Maintain a welcoming, safe environment and continue to work within safeguarding guidance.

Messy Church

Messy Church has continued to meet every other month throughout the past year, strengthened by our partnership with Rowbarton Methodist Church. We alternate venues between St Andrew's and Rowbarton, welcoming between 20 and 50 participants - adults and children. While attendance varies, feedback remains consistently positive, with families expressing their appreciation for Messy Church.

Each session is built around a central theme, with activities designed to engage participants creatively. After the activities, we share a short time of worship, which includes a story or video presentation. The session concludes with a substantial tea, offering sandwiches, sausage rolls, cake, and drinks for all, with tea and coffee available for adults.

A dedicated planning team meets regularly to select themes and organize activities, supported by a catering team that provides the food. Coordination of Messy Church at both venues was managed by Sue Lodge, whose leadership ensured smooth running and continuity. Replacing Sue has proved challenging, given the extensive range of tasks she undertook. As we look ahead to 2026, we are grateful for the commitment of volunteers stepping in to cover various roles across both settings.

Messy Church offers an accessible way for families to explore the Christian message through crafts and fellowship. While we would ideally meet monthly, the current level of preparation required for each session means that bi-monthly meetings are most sustainable at this time.

Highlights

- A vibrant partnership with Rowbarton Methodist Church, providing a broad community reach.
- Strong positive feedback from families.
- A dedicated planning team ensures well-organized activities and the catering team provides delicious food.
- Accessible worship through crafts, storytelling, and fellowship, making the Christian message approachable for all ages.

Challenges

- Replacing Sue Lodge as coordinator has proven difficult due to the wide scope of tasks she managed.
- Meeting monthly remains impractical given the level of preparation required for each session.

Plans for the Coming Year

- Continue nurturing partnerships between St Andrew's and Rowbarton Methodist Church, fostering community and collaboration.
- Maintain a welcoming environment where families can explore faith through creativity and fellowship.

Church Mice

Church Mice continued to meet weekly during term time for pre-school children and their carers at St Andrew's until the end of 2025. This group provided an invaluable resource for local families and was also recommended by social services to those needing support. Sadly, due to ill health, Joy Abnett retired after many years of dedicated leadership, and no successor was found. As a result, Church Mice held its final meeting in December 2025. We are deeply grateful to Joy for her longstanding commitment and to all who supported her over the years.

[St Andrews hopes to be able to resume Church Mice in future, but there are no plans to do so during the Vacancy.]

Thanks

Sincere thanks to all those who have contributed to children's work at St Andrew's during the past year. We are very grateful to the volunteers and leaders who have given their time, commitment, and care in supporting children and families, often quietly and behind the scenes. We also thank parents and carers for their continued trust, and the wider congregation for their prayerful support and encouragement. Together, these ministries play an important role in the life of the church and in sharing God's love with the next generation.

Nicki Sawyer, April 2026

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Item 8h – **Bellringing 2025**

We are usually able to ring four or five of our bells on Sundays – and occasionally all six. We have a practice on Thursday evenings, when there are enough of us available.

Henry Haslam

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Item 9 – **Report on proceedings of Taunton Deanery Synod, 2025**

Taunton Deanery Synod – Report to St Andrew's APCM 3rd May 2026

Taunton Deanery Synod is built up of all Churches within Taunton and meets 3 times a year; in 2025 met in February, July and October. Each meeting is an open meeting which anyone can attend. St Andrew's currently has 3 reps that are elected to Deanery Synod: Stephen Grimshaw, Henry Haslam and myself.

This triennium of the Deanery Synod began in 2023 and continues to the APCM of 2026 when a new Deanery Synod will be elected from Parishes in Taunton. From this year onwards St Andrew's has been allocated 2 lay places on Deanery Synod.

The first meeting of 2025 was on 18th February 2025 at St James' Church. The key item on the agenda for this meeting was around Pastoral Care.
Before the key item of business an update of Deanery News was provided:

- Since the October Meeting in 2024 the Area Dean and Assistant Area Dean had resigned and new appointments were awaited.
- Ed Gregory was welcomed to the meeting as our new Deanery Accompanier. Previous Accompanier Julia Hill had resigned from the role and was thanked for all her help during her time.
- Revd Jamie Fox, Curate at Taunton Minster, had been inducted at the Parishes of Wiveliscombe and the Hills.
- Revd Andy Wadsworth gave an encouraging report to DMPG about progress at the Orchard Grove Church.
- It was also noted that the Deanery Services of Reflection continued in 2025 and St Andrew's hosted the next Service on 9th March 2025.

In October 2024 it was reported that NO nominations for a Lay Member of Diocesan Synod had been received, neither by the due date nor by the meeting. Since then, a nomination form had been received for Mr Stephen Grimshaw. The Lay Dean reported that, as the form had been received more than 6 months after the original deadline, he would consult with the Bishop as to whether the nomination could be accepted. He requested that the House of Laity vote on the nomination subject to this condition. They voted 15 in favour and 1 against.

- *Since the October 2024 meeting and prior to this Synod meeting Richard Carpenter (Lay Dean) had checked with the Diocesan Secretariat and it has been confirmed that the nomination can be accepted and Stephen was duly elected to Diocesan Synod.*

Following the updates and deanery news the Lay Dean introduced the Revd Ann Fulton, Spiritual Care Co-ordinator at St Margaret's Hospice. Ann has led Spiritual Care at St Margaret's Hospice for ten years. She presented the rest of the meeting.

Ann welcomed Simon Helliar-Moore and Louise Tredwin, two local funeral directors, who also contributed to the meeting and presentation.

Synod split into discussion groups using 'Grave Talk' cards and a presentation following this was an opportunity for contributions from the floor. A copy of the talk was available at the meeting.

At the end of the presentation and before the end of Synod Lay Dean Richard thanked Ann for her presentation. Thanks also were given to St James' for hosting and for their hospitality providing refreshments beforehand.

The second meeting of 2025 was on 8th July 2025 at St John's Church, Park Street. This was the annual Deanery Summer Eucharist. The Revd Julia French presided and the Revd Lee Mullen preached. Lee Mullen thanked St John's for hosting the meeting and for refreshments provided.

After the service there were some matters of business:

- It was announced that Shirley Farrington has resigned as Deanery Treasurer due to ill health.
- Revd Caryl Plewes was welcomed to her first Synod meeting. Caryl was ordained on 29th June 2025 and is Curate at The Minster.
- Revd Carmen Cromwell was also ordained as a Distinctive Deacon on 29th June 2025 and will serve at St George's Church, Wilton.
- Revd Dean Hallett had been ordained Priest on 28th June 2025
- Revd Jon Ball has been licensed as minister of the new worshipping community at Orchard Grove, which is being supported under the umbrella of All Saint's Trull.
- At the Archdeacon's Visitation on 17th June, Revd Lee Mullen and Revd Paul Irving had been commissioned as Area Dean and Assistant Area Dean, respectively; also Darren Chalmers was commissioned as Assistant Lay Dean.
- It was announced that Revd Sr Elizabeth Shearcroft will retire on 1st February 2026.
- Susan Culshaw, Lay Rep for All Saint's Halcon had resigned from synod.

- Mary Carson, new Lay Rep for St George's Wilton was welcomed to her first synod meeting.
- The Deanery Prayer Diary is in the process of being updated. Lee Mullen requested that names of new Church Wardens be sent to Ruth Cook (Secretary) so that they can be included in the prayer diary.

The third meeting of 2025 was on 7th October 2025 at St James' Church. The key item for this meeting was Exploring Church School Partnership Working.

The meeting opened with prayers led by the Area Dean, Revd Lee Mullen. He welcomed all to the meeting and reported the appointment of the new Archbishop Designate of Canterbury, the Rt Revd and Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally, DBE, who was Bishop of Crediton in the Diocese of Exeter and then Bishop of London.

The Area Dean reported the death of our former treasurer, Shirley Farrington, in August 2025. She had resigned at our last meeting in July 2025 and Synod needs to find a new treasurer.

Some Deanery News was provided:

- The resignation of the Revd Tobie Osmond, Vicar of the Benefice of St Mary's and St John's, in October 2025 was reported to the wider Synod.
- Ruth Cook reported that the Deanery Services of Reflection will be continuing in 2026 and that the publicity of the services will be reviewed. Each church has its own methods of communication and so letting everyone know of these services has not been easy. Ruth mentioned that the next service would be Sunday 16th November 2025 at 4pm at St John's.
- An update was given about the Deanery Prayer Calendar. Ruth Cook apologised that the Summer edition has not yet been issued due to a difficulty in ascertaining Church Warden details. It will be issued as soon as available.
- From 2026 the calendar will be updated and issued once a year after the Archdeacon's Visitations have been completed.

Revd Justine Woolley spoke about a recent service at a B1 Church in town, where the speaker has caused some concern. She felt it was time to review and re-imagine how churches in Taunton work together. It was mentioned to Synod to report back and discuss in their own churches and that all comments, suggestions and ideas to be reported to Revd Lee Mullen only.

The B1 group is made up of the more evangelical, charismatic, independent churches in town. It is an ecumenical group with a shared doctrine.

Following the updates and concerns raised, Lee Mullen welcomed Ian Robinson, CEO of Oak Partnership, and Cheryl Govier, Assistant Director of Education and Leadership for the Diocese of Bath and Wells.

A few points that Ian mentioned from the presentation were:

- Within the Oak Partnership, 50% of the Directors need to be Foundation Governors.
- In Bath and Wells Multi Academy Trust (MAT) there is a more liberal requirement regarding Foundation Governors, and Head Teachers need to be sympathetic to Christian values but are not required to be active Christians.
- West Monkton, Ruishton and Stoke St Gregory primary schools are local schools part of the Oak Partnership.
- It was reported that there are several vacancies in governance roles across the Diocese and interest in these roles would be welcomed.
- OFSTED has a legal inspection in each school but in addition to this Church Schools are subject to a SIAMS Inspection which checks that all that happens in the school is underpinned by Christian values and encourages its pupils to flourish.
- An ETHOS Committee is in place in each church school and helps promote the Christian Values across the whole school and its life.

Cheryl Govier reported that within the Taunton Deanery there are 39 schools, of which 15 church schools, and so there is Christian contact with 12,5000 children daily.

Cheryl asked synod to think about the links between Home and Church and School. Discussions happened in groups of what is already happening within the Deanery. Following this Cheryl posed the following question:

> *In what ways can you, as Deanery Synod members, actively use your influence to support the recruitment of foundation governors and strengthen the Church's presence in schools, encourage deeper understanding and support for schools in your context?*

Following this part of business Revd Lee Mullen thanked both Ian and Cheryl for their informative and challenging presentation.

St James' were thanked for hosting the meeting and for the refreshments provided before the meeting.

Lee Mullen also gave a word of thanks to Revd Sr Elizabeth Shearcroft for all her contributions to Synod as this will be her last meeting with us before her retirement on 1st February 2026.

Synod were given the dates for meetings to be held in 2026 with the first one being 10th February 2026 at St Michael's Galmington.

Darren Chalmers, Deanery Synod Rep
April 2026

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Item 14 – Vicar's report to APCM 2026

Vicar's Report

By the time you read this I will have retired, and St Andrew's will be looking towards a new chapter in its life. Nevertheless, I was asked to prepare this report before my departure on 1 February 2026 as all the events to which it refers fell in 2025. It is also my usual opportunity to thank the many people who make up the life of St Andrew's for their faithfulness and hard work and enables me to give an appreciation of where we are as a parish now and a vision for the future as our time together draws to a close.

The year 2025 was characterised by the continued growth of our international families, which have brought an added and valuable dimension to life at St Andrew's. We have continued to develop our buildings with greater use of the South Aisle and Narthex. We have been a major player in MINT with its Easter Cracked and now Life Exhibition events for local primary schools. We have held Lent, Summer and Advent SALT (Sharing & Learning Together) nights to build on our aim to nurture our faith. We have also enjoyed the company of two curates on placement: the Revd Rob Cromwell from St George's Wilton, and the Revd Lucy Davies from St Peter's, Milton in Weston-Super-Mare. Sadly, we have had our losses. With the retirement of Joy Abnett, Church Mice was no longer able to be staffed sustainably and had to close. We also had our bereavements, notably Mary Webster and David Anderson, both long-standing members of the congregation. For a fuller review of the year, please see the Introduction to the Accounts that accompany this document.

With my forthcoming retirement, no Parish Conference took place in 2025, so as to make way for a fresh vision that a new incumbent will inevitably and rightly bring. However, we remain committed to our agreed set of values: welcoming, caring, growing, responding and nurturing. One of the most notable resolutions was to respond to the growing international feel to our congregation, which led to our International Service in June, enjoyed and appreciated by all, and which has brought such a richness to our church family.

Churchwardens are my partners in mission, ministry and management, so it is sad to note once again that we still only have one. David continues with incredible energy and has a great ability to get things done. My departure will mean that he and the PCC will be working with the Archdeacon and Area Dean in guiding the parish through the vacancy and towards the appointment of a new Vicar. I know you will give David your full support, lending a hand when needed, and keeping both him and the PCC in your prayers. Like you, I owe David my heartfelt thanks for his ministry.

Sue Goodman continues to be a particularly effective PCC Secretary, playing a major part in the leadership team not just servicing the PCC, but helping with the day-to-day decision making and fielding the huge amount of paperwork that surrounds the Faculty Jurisdiction procedure necessary to making even quite modest changes to the building. As always, her attention to detail is an important gift to us all. She too will see an increase in administration as the Vacancy proceeds.

Our "Treasury Team" continues to be reliably led by Antony Yeo, assisted by Lizzie Budd as Assistant Treasurer. Lizzie is principally responsible for Gift Aid and managing the Fees Account with Lesley Gold, and the Church Hall accounts. My warmest thanks to all the team for looking after an aspect of church life which can be difficult and sometimes complex to cover.

Lesley Gold is an equally invaluable Administrator and has worked tirelessly through another year. It is a demanding role, but one she never fails to exercise with efficiency and good humour. As one who can quite easily let a detail or two slip from the mind, my bacon has been saved by her on more than one occasion with a timely reminder of a small routine matter which can have much greater consequences if overlooked! Please remember, though, that she needs every ounce of her customary efficiency to achieve all she must do in a relatively short time and be patient with her if she is unable to help you as quickly as you would like. Like all our senior leaders, her role in the Vacancy will be key. Do please support her all you can.

My thanks to Bill Perry for his wisdom and practical help as Parish IT Consultant, helping with technical glitches, especially when a certain vicar, trying to be helpful, turns off a switch that supplies power to both Wi-Fi and sound system!! His calm approach when the problem is discovered shortly before divine worship is to be admired! (And his forgiveness!). The fact that I wrote exactly the same last year suggests that I still have a lot to learn about technology!

Elsewhere on the IT front, my thanks to Esther for keeping an eye on our Facebook and Instagram accounts, now largely managed by Darren Chalmers who can be closer to the action. Esther remains a wonderful support when Facebook behaves strangely! Those of us who are not great users of social media need constant reminders that this is how many people communicate. My thanks to Sue Goodman, Stephen Grimshaw, Ali and Steve Aish for helping with the livestreaming of worship. Due to low demand and the cost of the equipment needed to broadcast better we have now discontinued this service.

Our Church Hall has continued to go from strength to strength during 2025. Cherry Hingston was appointed with the particular focus on developing the Hall as the "commercial" arm of our operation. She is certainly succeeding and recently it was possible to set up a standing order of £600 per month from the Hall account to the main PCC account (an increase of £100 on last year), plus additional surpluses as they arise when not needed for investment in the building. This is good news as it fulfils our aim that the Hall should become a funding stream for the church. On top of this Cherry has improved and streamlined our systems and, along with Lizzie's financial oversight, and the contribution of all members of the committee, has given the Hall Committee meetings a particularly professional feel. My thanks to them all, and to Grace Thistlethwaite our valiant hall cleaner, not to mention her Mum, Anna, as an occasional and unpaid (as far as we know!) team member!

Outside the Hall, my thanks must go to the considerable team that keep the Green looking great with regular mowing and seasonal leaf collecting. We are blessed to have this green space in the middle of a large urban area, used to good effect in many ways, from the Scouts to Easter Cracked and the Summer Fete.

Back over at the church, Ali Aish has taken the lead in looking after our Garden of Remembrance, supported by Joy Abnett and Bill Perry. As I wrote above, with aid of funds raised through Ali Perry's funeral we have been able to make a number of enhancements for this special area, which is stands in memory of many much-loved and missed church members no longer with us. It is lovely that Ali's fund has also been made available to repair and improve the spire lighting, a feature that Ali used so well as a fund raiser.

Ali Aish and the EcoChurch group have helped us to maintain our EcoChurch Silver Award, and be thinking about what working towards Gold might mean, hard as it is to achieve. My thanks to Ali and her working group for their efforts to get us to this place.

During 2025 we consolidated our use of the newly cleared South Aisle and purchased some more plastic chairs for use when additional capacity in church is required. We have also installed folding doors in the Narthex so as to make two independent rooms when needed and to heat them more effectively. At that point, the financial situation and the forthcoming vacancy led to the New St Andrew's Project being paused for the time being.

Besides me, our ministerial team continues to consist of our two licensed Readers, Ruth Cook and Jeremy Harvey, who continue to share in preaching, teaching the faith, assisting and leading worship and in pastoral care. We are blessed to have them. They are also a huge help to me when I want to throw around ideas for our development, or simply for the upcoming season of the Church's year. Finally, despite variable health, it is good to see Tricia Anderson, our Reader Emeritus, whenever she can make it. As noted above, we were sad to lose David during the year and continue to keep Tricia in our prayers.

My thanks too for the help and encouragement of our retired clergy. We now have quite a group with Janet Fulljames, Munna and Nicola Mitra, now joined by Peter Furber who moved to Taunton during the year. His wife,

Jenny, is also a priest, although ill health prevents her from exercising a public ministry. The Church of England relies more than perhaps it ought on retired priests, but they remain a massive powerhouse of experience, wisdom and practical help. I know I speak for us all when I say that our own ones are a great blessing in the life of our parish and I am so grateful that they have made themselves available to support the parish in sustaining our usual pattern of worship during the vacancy, along with others as required.

Our Readers and retired clergy join with me in preparing and planning our SALT (Sharing And Learning Together) courses in Advent, Lent and early Summer, for which I am most grateful. An additional resource has been our Lectio Divina group, which meets twice monthly in between the SALT courses. These are led by David Budd and Nicki Sawyer, and it has been lovely to be able to attend these as a group member without the responsibility of leadership!

I am grateful to Darren Chalmers for his ministry as a Lay Worship Assistant, looking after the Choir and being responsible for downloading and preparing recorded music when there is no organist, sometimes at very short notice following a cancellation! Our supply of organists is slender but faithful. My thanks to Paul Burnett who currently plays on the first and fifth Sundays, and Nathalie Delaney who plays on the second. We enjoy the occasional visits of Sam Baker, who himself has organ pupils, including Jack who has played for us on a number of occasions. The PCC has not ruled out another attempt at appointing a new Director of Music, but members agreed that a vacancy was not the time to do this, due to the importance of the relationship between the DoM and the incumbent.

Of course, our organists are not our only musicians. My thanks to all our splendid Choir whose positivity persists in face of a very different leadership than the one they enjoyed when we had a formal Director of Music. They make a great sound. It is also lovely to see our Band play for the occasional service, ably prepared by Carolyn Tudor.

Behind the scenes, but no less valuable, are the many hours put in by Martyn Trott, our Sacristan. His wisdom and practical approach are invaluable when planning worship and organising the sanctuary. His work is largely unseen and too easily unnoticed – except of course should it for any reason not be done! It is good that we have a number of assistants who have agreed to be trained to lend a hand especially when preparing the church for Sunday worship. My thanks to him and all our servers and Communion assistants for their help in the sanctuary. Meanwhile, Judy Blew has been able to continue being our Verger on occasions, as well as leading the Welcome Team and presiding over that most important of rotas … Sunday Coffee!

Over the last year, the work of our small but dedicated Flower Team has still been able to achieve great things with limited resources, especially at Christmas and Easter, led faithfully by June Acreman. We thank them heartily for their dedication, without which our festivals in particular would be the poorer.

It is good to be able to work with our Lay Pastoral Assistants; Steve and Carol Bull, Darren Chalmers and Sue Lodge, so that everyone in need can be looked after as well as possible. Our Baptism ministry is shared with Steve, who, having chosen this area of work, looks after the families of candidates and helps with the services themselves. Tea & Talk, led by Carol and a small team on a Thursday afternoon, continues to flourish and is a support both to congregation and community. In the Vacancy the team will be managed by Nicola Mitra, who has also kindly agreed to oversee pastoral care.

Our ministry to local nursing homes consists of being ready to offer end of life prayers, and to visit Aspen Court for a short service each month around well-known hymns.

Messy Church is held around five times a year, run jointly with Rowbarton Methodist Church (RMC) alternating on each site. My thanks to Sue Lodge as Messy Church coordinator at this end, and Nicola Lorraine of RMC for making this possible. We continue to reach large numbers of adults and children through this work, as witnessed

by the sheer numbers of new participants each time. In the future, Nicola will coordinate the team at the Methodist end and Nicky Sawyer and Nicola Mitra at ours. My thanks to them all.

In preparation for our departure, our Children's Leader, Sue Lodge, has handed over responsibility for Children@10 to Nicky Sawyer, supported by the rest of our excellent team. Our vision is that the older children are taken aside during the Liturgy of the Word, a time for teaching and learning for us all, and then return to gather around God's table for the "family meal." Younger children can remain and play in the Children's Area, supervised by an accompanying adult. The way children are cared for has changed a lot over the years and we are aware this sometimes causes difference in expectations. As always, our plea is that the children always feel included and that St Andrew's is their church as much as the adults'. Our thanks to Sue for all she has done for the children of St Andrew's over the years, building on the Railway Children started by Ruth Cook not long before we came in 2009.

As Church Mice came to an end in December, our heartfelt thanks went to Joy Abnett and Judith Crayford, along with Di Ruff and Carol Bull, its staff team. In spite of those parents who helped informally with the practicalities of the sessions, it was not possible to staff the operation sustainably as Joy retired. However, we are holding on to the toys, partly to serve our other children, but also in the hope that, one day, Church Mice might return.

My thanks to our Parish Safeguarding Officer, Stephen Grimshaw, who occupies a vital role in helping us protect our children and vulnerable adults. While we may find the constant attention to training and the renewal of DBS checks irksome, they are all there for a purpose. Please, if you are invited to undertake training, do so, not least as a mark of respect for those whom we service. Technically, you need it to operate in your role. It is a requirement of the Bishop, and permissions for certain roles may not be renewed without it.

We continue to be part of MINT (Mission in North Taunton), a federation of ourselves, Rowbarton Methodist, Wellsprings Church and Oakwood Community Church. MINT delivers Easter Cracked and coordinates the presentation of *It's Your Move* books to primary school leavers. My thanks to Mike Chapman and Henry Haslam for representing us on the committee, Henry as Treasurer. A new feature has been the Life Exhibition, presented as a series of interactive "pods" that focus on the life and ministry of Jesus. As with Easter Cracked, over 200 primary school children were able to take part.

Talking of schools, we continue to enjoy close links with St Andrew's School and its membership of the Bath & Wells Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) helping to underpin its Christian identity. There are two Foundation Governors, who have a particular duty to uphold the Christian nature of the school, although currently there are no church members on the governing body.

Of course, Collective Worship in schools continues to be an important ministry and should not be forgotten as part of our children's work. I am grateful to be in partnership with Ruth Cook, my Methodist colleagues, Deborah Kirk and Annie Deche, along with Patrick Weld, who, between us, visit St Andrew's School weekly. Deborah and I also visit Priorswood Primary School as invited. Both schools make use of their parish church for worship at special times in the year. Meanwhile, at Pyrland School (formerly The Taunton Academy), I have continued to be part of the Ethos Committee (as a member of the local clergy, not as a governor), the purpose of which is to develop and monitor its own Christian foundation. We were pleased to host a Carol Service again for their Year 7 in December. I continue to offer help with RE in any school if required. The lay Chaplain, Alison Vercoe, provides an invaluable ministry to staff and students alike, and it is good that the PCC has been able, again, to make a financial contribution to her post.

Turning back to church life, we should also make special mention of our superb Fund Raising Team now under its shared leadership with Darren Chalmers and Karen Cridland. Their oft-stated aim of putting the *fun* into *fun*draising is superbly carried out with a range of events including the Christmas Market, Summer Fete and the occasional Sunday lunch. The Light up the Spire project continues to commemorate anniversaries and special events with sponsorship of its floodlighting. It was great that this year's Christmas Market exceeded the £2000

mark in terms of revenue and certainly rewarded the immense amount of hard work that went into its organisation. My thanks to all who serve on this group for their faithful service.

That is already quite a list, but beyond that there is a veritable army of others, too numerous to mention individually: our welcomers, church and brass cleaners, lesson readers, intercessors, welcomers, coffee and catering helpers, bell ringers including Henry Haslam our Tower Captain, assisted now by Jean Sharp as his deputy, and all the members of the PCC. The list goes on, almost more than I can remember. And so, if anyone has been left out, thank you to you too!

Last, but by no means least, I would like to record a public thank you to my wife, Sue, who alongside her other church roles and a more formal network of support, plays a major – maybe the greatest - part in keeping me sane! Her unstinting encouragement, sharing both the joys and sorrows of public ministry (and there can be plenty of each!), not least waiting for long hours for me to come to rest for more than five minutes at a time, is of immense value to me and something for which I have always been so grateful, and all of this while holding down a challenging full-time job! Her life will change almost as much as mine in my retirement and I know that like me, she will miss everyone and the opportunities she has had to serve. She deserves a good rest, but I suspect God hasn't finished with her yet!

So, what of the future?

The forthcoming Vacancy will inevitably be a time of change, but a time of growth as well. Having spent 16 of my 35½ years of public ministry leading St Andrew's, leaving will be a wrench, but will also hopefully provide an opportunity for a fresh vision and fresh energy. The Archdeacon of Taunton has said that we can expect up to year before my replacement is in post, but I know he will work with Lee Mullen, our Area Dean, as well as David and the PCC to provide the very best he can for the future of our parish. This will need to happen against a challenging financial environment in which there will need to be a reduction of posts in the deanery in the coming years. Do keep them all in your prayers. I have always said that we have a faithful God and I do believe that He gives the Church all the gifts it needs fulfil its calling. Each one of you is a gift from God, saints equipped in his service in this place. So pray too for your own calling and live it out as faithfully and as generously as you can in response to a faithful and generous God.

I hope that, together, we have brought St Andrew's to the good place in which it stands in 2026, notwithstanding the challenges that we undoubtedly face. It has been a real privilege to lead you and to serve God alongside you these last 16 years and I pray with all my heart that God will bless you richly as you go forward together in faith.

Robin Lodge
January 2026

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