



**2024 Annual Reports
presented to the
Annual Parochial Church Meeting
of the
Parish of Widford
on
6th April 2025**

WIDFORD PARISH PCC

AIM AND PURPOSES

St Mary's Church and Church of the Holy Spirit, Widford PCC has the responsibility of cooperating with the incumbent, the Reverend Stephanie Gillingham, in promoting in the parish, the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. The PCC is also responsible for the maintenance of the Widford Parish Centre, Forest Drive, Widford.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

The PCC is committed to encouraging people to worship with us at our different services and to become part of our parish church family. The PCC maintains an overview of worship throughout the parish. Our services and worship put faith into practice through prayer, Bible reading and teaching, music and the sacraments.

When planning our activities for the year, we have considered the Commission's guidance on public benefit and, in particular, the supplementary 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.

Our wardens have led us in managing the fabric of our properties, for which we are very grateful.

OUR PARISH MISSION STATEMENT READS:

We want to grow:

- To be more like Jesus
- Knowing Christ together
- Loving one another
- Serving others
- Being at the heart of our community.

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

TO BE MORE LIKE JESUS

As a community, all our activities are thriving and we are thankful for all the people who are able to help and to help these activities to continue. We have returned to the Common Cup for Holy Communion sharing that with all who come forward to receive prayer. We continue to meet every Wednesday morning at 9.15am at Church of the Holy Spirit. This gives a good start to the day as well as a good time of fellowship and talking to Father God. We have been pleased to pray for people from the community who leave us a prayer card during Café. We also meet for prayer on the first Monday in the month at 7pm. This is an opportunity to pray for ourselves, for parish activities and the needs of the world. We also meet on the third Monday in the month at 7pm just before the PCC meeting. This is an opportunity to pray for the work of our parish before decisions are made.

Prayer: We continue to meet for prayer every Wednesday morning at 9.15am at Church of the Holy Spirit. This gives a good start to the day as well as a good time of fellowship as well as talking to Father God. We would be pleased to anyone who would like to join us. We also meet for prayer on the first Monday in the month at 7.00pm. This is an opportunity to pray for ourselves, for parish activities and the needs of the world. We also meet on the third Monday in the month at 7pm just before the PCC meeting. This is an opportunity to pray for the work of our parish before decisions are made.

Prophecy: Throughout the last year, some 'Words of Knowledge' have been received during services. These are words from God which are relevant and helpful to one or more people but not the church as a whole. This has been encouraging.

We have also received a few prophecies, briefly summarized as follows: We each need to seek and listen to Jesus for His way forward then, full of the Holy Spirit, go forward joyfully in faith in His name.

KNOWING CHRIST TOGETHER

Within the Framework of the Services:

At St. Marys worship has followed our normal pattern. Holy Communion on the first and third Sundays of each month. Morning prayer on the second Sunday and All Age Worship on the fourth Sunday.

At Church of the Holy Spirit: Our Worship pattern follows All Age Café-style Worship on the 1st Sunday each month, Holy Communion on the 3rd Sunday and Praise and Worship on the 2nd and 4th Sundays.

Sadly, St. John's have chosen to leave our South West Chelmsford Church group and although we no longer have a fifth Sunday Service all together in the morning, we have been able to join together in the afternoon of the fifth Sunday from time to time. Consequently, St. Mary's have a morning prayer on the fifth Sunday and CHS have a Café Style Worship.

	Average Attendance	Baptisms	StM 9
St. Mary's	28	Weddings	4
		Wedding Blessings	1
Church of the Holy Spirit	26+2 children	Funerals at St. Mary's Interment of Ashes Funerals Overall	2 0 10
Messy Church	40	Confirmations	1

LOVING ONE ANOTHER

The Pastoral Group

The group, consisting of Revd Stephanie, Shirley, Barbara J., Sheila, Hilary, Gill & Peter, James, Pam, and Jess, (until she moved to Exeter), met just three times.

Bereavement contacts continued – a phone call after each funeral, on-going contact and an anniversary card where appropriate. These contacts seem to be valued.

Caring for one another is an 'every member matter' for the church, but during our meetings we share particular issues of concern, support one another, prayerfully, in our various roles and aim to raise awareness of needs that may have been overlooked.

House Groups:

St. Mary's House Group: This year we have met spasmodically but we continue to support each other both spiritually with prayer and with practical help. For our Christmas celebration we met together at EGO, The Running Mare. We have a couple of church members who join the male members of the group for fellowship, meeting in various hostelrys on weekday afternoons. It is good when believers meet together in Christ. Although our house group hasn't followed the conventional pattern of meeting, we still feel blessed by God and I can report with confidence that we feel a close affinity to one another

Rossendale House Group: We are a lively little group which can become quite noisy at times but we have each benefitted from the various studies we have covered and by the discussions that have followed. We started the year by looking at two books by Ivor Moody; 'Six Songs' and 'Six More Songs' in which he shared his knowledge and Christian thoughts on various hit songs that had spoken to him over the decades. We began each session by listening to the song for that week. Ivor visited our group and we spent a very pleasant time talking and listening to him. We then made our way through sessions 5, 6, 7 and 8 of the Pilgrim Course. Which covered The Creed, The Eucharist, The Bible and The Church and the Kingdom. Finally, we have looked at a delightful book by Paula Gooder, 'Women of the Nativity' which tells of nine well-known Advent and Nativity events as seen from an unknown or little-known woman who would have witnessed them, making the events come alive in a personal way.

Ravensbourne Group: We have met most Tuesday evenings at 7pm and have enjoyed our evenings of fellowship, singing, friendship and fun. We have now finished our adventures through Acts, and now delving into Hebrews. We are thankful for the support and friendship we can give each other and for the many answered prayers.

SERVING OTHERS

Craft Club: Since I have started working for Widford Parish and have re-started craft club back up, it has been busy most weeks. We regularly have up to 15 children each week. The children always enjoy the crafts we do with them. We have something different to do each week, and they get a lot of pleasure out of seeing the end project they have created.

As a church we have made some changes to how craft club is run. I leave the children some activities to do until I get there (I have to collect my own daughter from school) e.g. bead making, colouring, card making or puzzles. But there is always 2 staff on site ready to greet the children until I arrive and I'm not far behind them. I now read the children a short story from the Bible each week linking this to our craft. I take pictures every week of the children holding what they've made looking so proud of themselves, which I add to our craft club WhatsApp group which all the parents are added to. We have a table for the children to sit and do the craft with myself (Stacey) Barbara and Sheila. The parents have a separate table where they can have a chat over a hot or cold drink. I have found this works very well to give the children more independence to try things on their own or

in small groups. I will list some of the crafts that we have made; sewing keyring animals, dream catchers, colouring flower pots, valentine's hearts, daffodils keyrings, bracelets with beads and many more. We meet every Friday in term time 3.30-4.30pm. Thank you to Sheila and Barbara for their help and support.

Youth Group: Youth club has been going well each week since I have started working for the Parish. At first we had 4 young people attending, but in the last month, we have had new children joining each week through word of mouth or friends of friends and some weeks we have had up to 14 young people. The youth enjoy our weekly meet ups; we do our Bible verses first each week as we are building on the young people's knowledge of the Bible and giving them an understanding of how it all began and can support them every day. Rev. Stephanie laminates them and I add these to the young people's keyrings that I made for them, They all have one each.

We play an ice breaker game each week which always gets the youth talking and involved then go on to our other activities, such as board games, 9 square, air hockey, table tennis, our football table or our bouncy castle. We often check in with the youth to see what they would like to do and they always give us their ideas and we like to receive their input.

We have also made pizzas, pancakes and went to a Pudding evening at St Lukes when we were all able to try out deserts from a choice of 19. All our youth really enjoy these activities and we will be doing more of this type of thing in the near future. Myself (Stacey) and Rev. Stephanie are planning some very fun days out when the weather warms up. The youth have given us some good ideas for the future: e.g. dinner at Macdonald's, ninja warriors, rounders and cricket at our local park, Jump Street and crazy golf which we will arrange for them to enjoy. We might meet on a Saturday for these days out. Rev. Alan will be visiting us soon. He is an estate youth worker and he will bring his retro gaming consoles which I think the youth will love. We have lowered the age to 7 years old, giving us a wider age range of young people to work with. This is a trial at present but seems to be going very well. All the youth get on really well and tend to help and encourage each other which is lovely to see. They all have such a laugh together and seem to thrive on each other. We feel confident that the youth feel they can talk to myself (Stacey) or Rev. Stephanie if they ever need to. We meet every Friday in term time 7-8.30pm.

I'm so pleased I was given the opportunity to take this role on as I get a lot of pleasure out of what I do with our young people and I look forward to our meet ups each week and planning what we can do next. Widford Parish and CHS has welcomed myself and my family into the church with open hearts, and everyone is kind and caring. No wonder our craft and youth club is getting bigger each week – just see what God is doing!

Holiday Bible Club: In 2024, our Holiday Bible Club was held at the end of August for children aged 5-11, there was free admission. We met each morning from 10am – 12noon. Our theme for the week was "Deep Sea Divers". We looked at the life, death and resurrection of Jesus using the Book of Mathew. We have a great team of people and enjoyed bible Studies, surprise visits by special guests, crafting and games. We hope the children discovered more about the depth of Jesus' love for them. We learned the following Bible Verse: "You are God's children whom He loves, so try to be like Him" (Ephesians 5v1). Thanks go to the dedicated team who made the week possible.

Bible Trek - The group continues to meet on a Tuesday evening from 7.30pm to 9.15pm, and in 2024 we 'trekked' through the Gospel of Luke followed by the Acts of the Apostles, and as the year drew to a close we returned to the video and discussion format for the Bible Course, which led us through the seismic events that made history in the Old and New Testaments, with up to 15 people meeting during term-time in the Westlands Lounge and in the multi-use area at the back of CHS. New attendees are welcome to 'trek' with us!

Messy Church: Messy Church continues to grow in popularity amongst local families and is a valuable outreach ministry. By the end of 2023 our numbers were still high. During 2024, we focussed on Easter with Easter gardens, learnt about the story of Mary and Martha, introduced Pentecost and also focussed on the Lord's Prayer, concluding with a shared lunch. Thank you to our dedicated team: Jen, Zoe, Pam, Sheila, Stephanie, Shirley, Gill, Peter, Bob and Stacey, and a special thankyou to Jess who was so much a part of Messy Church but has now moved on.

Music Group CHS: In 2024 we integrated Chris, Lisa and Denise, who joined Sheila, Barbara, Roger and Keith. Sunday by Sunday we are challenged to act as lead-worshippers, helping the service leaders and congregation to be inspired in their worship, as are we, by the songs and hymns we are asked to lead. We aren't there to perform, we are with (and serve) the congregation as we too worship. It's a delight to serve in this way!

Live Performances: In 2024 we encouraged people from the community to come and watch two live performances by Artless Theatre Company. The first production was 'If Prison Walls Could Speak' which told the true story of Petr Jasek, a Czech national and Christian Aid worker who in 2015 was imprisoned in Sudan for his work aiding and assisting the persecuted church. This was a highly professional performance, very moving and challenging. We invited them back to perform 'Amos and the Grumpy Owl' for Christmas. This was an inspiring story using many theatre techniques ending with true friendship and the real meaning of Christmas. They were both well attended and well received.

Wednesday Fellowship and Knit and Natter: Mainly because of the longer time spent in friendly chatter at the end of Lunch Club on Wednesdays, the start of our Fellowship has moved on to about 2.30pm.

Over the year, we enjoyed a rich mix of meetings, from services (thanks to Stephanie); singing (with Daniel's accompaniment); history and other stories (recorded and read 'live'- thanks to Shirley and Keith); talks about different countries and family trees (thanks to several visitors and members of Widford congregations); our own members sharing favourite Bible readings, poems and reflections on life and faith.

Then, Elaine led us in some craft work relating to Easter and Christmas; Gill treated us to a hand massage; we had quizzes, HOY, colouring; 'feely' games, Kim's game and – a highlight – listening to Shurig Folk Group, (with our own Sheila).

Many thanks to everyone who supports Fellowship; to Shirley (our birthday rep.); to Sylvia (for bringing the milk week by week); to Jackie (who takes a lead with the washing up); to Sue (who so willingly provides transport and help) and to Keith (who is always ready to step in when we need support). May Our Lord continue to bless Wednesday Fellowship with His Inspiration, Grace, Acceptance, Love and Joy.

Tithe Committee

Committee members.

Peter Wood, Barbara Jones, Pat Brown, Pam Myall, Karen Cooney and Jess Wiseman.

We met In January 2024. Representations had been made prior to the meeting by Stephanie Gillingham, and these were considered.

After some discussion it was suggested that the parish gives to the following charities.

The group proposed that the level of Tithe should be increased to 8.5% of Total Income (approximately £120,000 - excluding income from Lunch Club and Wid Wads) i.e. approximately £10,200. This is in line with the desire of the Tithe Group to gradually reinstate the previous level of Tithe (10% of Total Income).

This was agreed at the PCC.

We gave the following specific amounts away as a church family.

1. Edapal family (4 x £400) £1,600

2. CHESS £1,000

3. Friends International £1,000

4. Tear Fund Toilet Twinning £600

5. Grassroots Trust £1,000

6. CPAS £600

7. South Essex wildlife Trust £600

8. The Mary Wood Trust £1,000

9. Emergency Pot

*Christian Aid. Matching donation from parishioners £97

*Bibles £95

* Roof appeal for St. Lukes £1008 (part of the £5,000 gift that we gave as a church

Total sent: £10,300

Extra, from Fowler Legacy Made for More (formally SYM) £500

Total Sent including legacy gift tithe £10,800

We have received many grateful letters of appreciation for the gifts that were sent, and the money has been put to good use.

World Day of Prayer: In 2024 we celebrated World Day of Prayer with a service at St. Mary's. The focus was Palestine and the theme of the service was 'I beg you, bear with one another in Love' Eph.4 vs1-3. Our service was led by a small group from St. Marys and CHS and was supported by a congregation from both churches and community. Following the service, we share refreshments and a buffet lunch in the Parish Centre. Thanks go to Jess for organising this so well.

Eco Church: We continue to work hard to ensure both St. Mary's and CHS are as eco-friendly as possible. Keith encourages us weekly through Churchtalk to improve our eco responsibilities at home. Both Churches are at 'Silver' Eco-Church status.

Hope Café and Soft Play: It has been a steady year at cafe and soft play with just a few changes. We continue to see a good level of attendance with many regular customers whom we now know quite well. We do still get some quieter days but these are much rarer and we are often full.

Most customers come for the Soft Play and take opportunity to have a drink and some food whilst their children play. Whilst many are local, we do have visitors from other Essex towns and further afield. The purchase of 10 new, square tables has increased our seating capacity to 40 (which we have needed once or twice) and also allows us to push tables together for larger groups.

There haven't been any major changes to our menu this year, either in content or pricing. In response to customer requests we do now offer caramel or vanilla syrup in coffees and have oat milk for those with a dairy intolerance. On the food side, the cooked breakfast remains extremely popular and we now stock gluten free bread. Some of the less popular items have been discontinued as these were not cost effective.

I'd like to take this opportunity to encourage church members to come and bring their friends. The cafe and soft play are open from 9am to 12 noon on Mondays and Tuesdays during the school term. I'd also like to thank our regular Monday and Tuesday team members, and for those who are on call for times when we need some extra help!

Lunch Club: At Lunch Club we provide a freshly prepared nourishing meal for the elderly, and naturally this includes an opportunity for friendship and social interaction. Meals are served in the Parish Centre weekly except for a short break at Christmas and the month of August.

For 2024 the price has remained at £3 which covered the cost of the food each week and enabled us to provide the Lunch Club Christmas Dinner without charge and to make a contribution towards energy costs. Typically there are 25 to 35 who attend each week. Cottage pie and beef and dumplings seem to be favourite meals.

The kitchen team is led by Sheila Schofield assisted by Janet Aldridge, Janet Bird, Denise Blackwood, Karen Cooney, Alan Davey, Jeff Gilbert, Maureen McPhee, James Pollock, Linda Stephens and Jess Wiseman. The dining room team is led by Pam Myall assisted by Sandra Kyte, Jess Wiseman, Stacey Ellis, Sue Johns and Stephanie, with occasional help from Loise Rutherford. Sue Johns has also assisted with transport. We are truly grateful to all the helpers without whom the lunches would not be possible. Could you help? To join the rota, we need some additional members of the friendly kitchen team, and if you would like to be considered, please get in touch with Sheila!

Widford Waddlers Baby and Toddler Group: Widford Waddlers Baby and Toddler Group meets at Widford Village Hall on Thursdays from 10-11.45 am. We arrive at 9am to set up ready for the arrival of our families. We meet during term times and are closed throughout school holidays.

We continue to be well supported by mums and grandparents. Children often stay with us until they are old enough to attend infant school.

We provide a range of toys for babies and pre-school children. We have a craft table which is always very popular with the children, and with Zoe's help, they make something to take home based on the theme for the week. This may be Chinese New Year Fans, Children in Need teddies, Harvest scarecrows and Remembrance poppies. The children also make valentines cards, Mothers' Day cards, Easter and Christmas cards. We have a Christmas Party and Summer party which is always a fun time. The children also enjoy taking part in Stephanie's drama sessions at Easter and Christmas.

During the year, we visited Oaklands Park on 2 occasions when our hall was being used for elections. Zoe prepared some crafts for the children to do, the weather was kind and everyone had a lovely time.

Financially, we continue to be self-sufficient by charging a small fee each week, which covers the hall rent as well as Mothers' Day plants and Christmas presents for the children. Money we collect goes into the church account from which the rent is paid.

Sheila does a great job looking after everyone's well-being with refreshments and sweet and savoury treats. Zoe's craft activities are as popular as ever. Stephanie has supported us whenever her commitments have allowed.

My thanks go to those I've mentioned above. As for me, well I still enjoy seeing that our outreach is as popular as ever and getting to hold a new baby is always very special!

BEING AT THE HEART OF THE COMMUNITY

Friends of Essex Churches Ride and Stride: Signposts did not look good for Widford, on the second Saturday in September this year. Barbara O. (Chief of Staff for the regular cream tea) would be away for her daughter's wedding and Paula, a regular participant, was away. However, it was a reasonable day weather-wise. Linda and Geoff, Rosalyn and Tony, Vicky, Shirley, Lynette (with Poppy and Finn) and Valerie welcomed visitors to St Mary's and CHS. Zoe and Pam strode to local churches. Daniel, supported by the team at St Mary's, provided a delicious tea. Revd Stephanie led us in a peaceful Compline

service, to end the day. As a result of donations and sponsorship, £110 was sent to FoEC, and £55 returned for use in our Parish.

Harvests: We enjoyed Harvest services at both churches. We collected for the local food bank and received a generous number of gifts for which the food bank was very grateful.

God Tent: In 2023 it became necessary to replace the leaky God Tent caravan, which was no longer structurally sound for further use at Creamfields. In expectation of another similar event in 2024 the God Tent Team transferred the contents of the van to a loaned enclosed trailer that was intended to be purchased by the PCC for use at Creamfields 2024. The team started to raise funds for the agreed purchase of the loaned trailer. However, the 2024 Creamfields event was cancelled by the organisers, so at the end of 2024 the trailer remains on loan to the PCC, pending a future PCC decision on how or whether to continue with the God Tent ministry, and for the moment, funds raised for the intended purchase of the trailer remain with the PCC. For next year (2025), watch this space.

ELECTORAL ROLL

There are currently 72 people on the Electoral Roll, of which 43 are resident in the parish and 29 are non-resident.

DEANERY SYNOD:

The representatives from Widford Parish for the start of 2024 were Bob and Hilary. Jess is also on the Synod because she has a place on Diocesan Synod. Stephanie is on Synod because she is a Priest.

There was a Deanery day in February at Meadgate, the Orchards. Bishop Adam and Archdeacon Jonathan were among the speakers. Invitations were for any member of the deanery churches to attend. Experiences were shared.

The May meeting reported the feedback from the Deanery day, which emphasised the need to encourage one another.

In the October meeting the Lay chair, Jill Readings, set a challenge - How to encourage volunteers to become leaders? Allowing time to build relationships was thought to be important.

At the December meeting there was a presentation of the work of Mothers Union. There was also a discussion raised especially by Sandon church about the lack of clergy to take Holy Communion.

Revd Simon Pearce has been appointed as Area Dean upon the retirement of the Revd Canon Tim.

CHURCHWARDENS' REPORT

At St. Mary's, we said thank-you to Bob as he stepped down in May from being Churchwarden after his latest three consecutive years serving the Parish in this way. However, without a direct replacement, Bob has still continued to serve on Sundays fulfilling the role during services, for which we are very grateful. We're not sure it will be mentioned elsewhere, but one new innovation at St. Mary's was 'Carols by the campfire' - a less hazardous replacement for the previous fireworks evening of previous years! It was delightful to have families and young people taking part, and if it was as successful as this in a cold, damp December evening, it could well become a regular fixture during each Advent season when the weather may in future be less challenging! Our sidespeople, preachers and service leaders do a sterling job of welcome and worship, and for that we thank them all!

Bob has kindly added the following to our 2024 report for St. Mary's: *"I reported at the end of 2023 that we had a break-in. Repairs to the main door took rather longer than planned, primarily because the lock proved to be a stumbling block but by May the door was fully functional. Other than the above the building has not required any significant maintenance. However, the quinquennial inspection took place in September and Mr John Quinlan accepted our commission to carry out the work for us and the report was completed in October. He also designed an accessible entrance for us and has submitted the plans to Chelmsford City Council on our behalf. Looking ahead we hope that the plan will become a reality in 2025. Please pray for this project.*

We are still waiting for our solicitors to bring us news from the Land Registry Office that our remembrance garden has been placed under the ownership of our 'Incumbent' a technical transfer of control. Following confirmation of the transfer of ownership, we will be able to invite the Bishop to consecrate the area for use as a memorial garden.

Many of our congregation have voluntary roles in the life of St. Mary's and are supportive of one another in so many ways. There is a willingness amongst us to keep St. Mary's spiritual life active and growing. We are witnessing a wider age range of worshippers week by week (the newest being Libby Ward) and this is encouraging for the future. There is a strong sense of family.

Highlights of the year were Easter, Harvest and Christmas services. Socially we held our annual cream tea on Ride and Stride day in September and we joined with CHS on a number of other occasions. During the year Jess Wiseman stepped down from her Youth and Community Worker post and we held a tea party to give her a send-off. Also, Joanne Gullick and Joshua Mignogna were married on 1st July. It was a wonderful ceremony as many of us have known her since she was born.

As for me, well, I retired from my role as a Warden at the [2024] APCM but with Keith and Barbara's encouragement I have continued to support them [for which we are very grateful!] in their roles with practical help at St.Mary's, as like most of us, they are having to spread themselves thinly. "Thank you" to them for serving the parish and to everyone else who gives of themselves to serve our Lord here in Widford."

Thanks Bob! In August Keith joined the St. Mary's congregation typically attending monthly on a second Sunday. In September we completed the St. Mary's quinquennial Inspection and that revealed how well the building had been cared for in the last five years (Thanks Bob and all who help!), but also, the challenges we are likely to face in keeping it that way over the next five years, with perhaps at much as £26,000 of works to be spread over the coming five years (and maybe a tenth of that to be allocated in the first of those), and some work to monitor the building to ensure it remains in good condition during that time.

Across the Parish our ministry, which is both spiritual and practical, continued, and the progress that was made with the various activities showed what a thriving resource we have for the community, none of which would be possible without the dedicated staff and volunteers who are the very heartbeat of our work and ministry of the Parish, so many of whom are represented elsewhere in this report. In the summer we said thank-you and 'a bientôt' to Jess, who before moving to pastures new had served for five productive years as our Youth and Community Worker. In November we were joined by our new Youth and Community Worker Stacey, and the Wardens support Stephanie, who is her line manager.

At the Church of the Holy Spirit, to care for our premises we continued with our six-monthly walk-arounds with our Caretaker Tammy, and that helped us decide what areas of maintenance and development to prioritise. Examples of work done at CHS include the completion of the redecoration of the Prayer Room, the enhancement of storage in the Vestry/Music Room, the replacement of the Artwork on the left-hand side of the nave at the front, the replacement of the soffits and fascias with maintenance free items on the north and South gable ends. A new emergency exit and ramp was implemented in the Beechlands room. The eagle-eyed among you will notice a small cross in the new mortar at the very top of the gable ends - testimony to the love and care put in by the local professionals who undertook the fascia work. Thanks to the Fowler legacy, the new soft surface in the paddock was additionally provided with summer protection by the sun-sails we have now acquired.

Behind the scenes our caretaker and those who clean continue to demonstrate the love and care we have for our facilities at CHS and the Parish Centre - so thanks to all who tidy, care and clean - we appreciate you!

As part of our eco-church journey (both Churches having now achieved Silver status more than a year ago), we have introduced 'eco-tips' in Churchtalk, and outside we have designated an area on the East side of CHS as an unmowed meadow and took part in no-mow May across all our lawns at CHS. With advice from a regional garden centre (which is by Royal Appointment)!, we selected and planted a 'Memory Tree' which it is intended will outlive us all. As I write, the tree is just coming into bud, and in 2024 it reminded us of the seasonal changes, from bud to leaf, from leaf to flower, from berry to gold and finally from fall to the austerity of winter. By the entrances, we are thankful for the love shown to the pots and plants that are tended so diligently, along with the arrangements that enhance the interior of the Church. Inside, our floral team implemented sustainable and reusable artificial flowers occasionally joined by local blooms - another contribution to our eco-journey. These are signs of God's love for all.

As part of our service to the community the PCC agreed to implement a community larder - plans turned to action, and more will follow about this in the 2025 report!

Two very different community productions were performed by the 'Artless' theatre group and were well-attended, separately highlighting the plight of oppressed Christians, and the joy of Christmas.

Late in the year, as part of the Parish's journey to 'Net Zero,' the PCC made a decision in principle to implement a significant solar installation on the south-facing roof of CHS that will help reduce bills but also by contributing clean energy to the grid, help offset our gas and electricity usage across all facilities in the Parish. We hope to progress this project in 2025. As part of our care for the building, the PCC decided to clean and (where necessary) upgrade the carpets - work which is due to take place in 2025. With the support of the Office, a new online diary was implemented, which helps our staff, volunteers remotely keep track of the ever-increasing suite of activities across the Parish, but particularly at CHS and the Parish Centre.

SAFEGUARDING REPORT

The Widford Parish Safeguarding team consists of the Reverend Stephanie Gillingham, Mrs Karen Cooney who provides support for the Safeguarding Officer and oversees the training needs of each individual performing a role within the church and Mrs Barbara Jones who is the current Safeguarding Officer and Safer Recruitment Officer for the parish of Widford.

I can state that since the last Annual Parochial Church Council meeting in 2024, the Parochial Church Council (PCC) of the Parish of Widford has complied with the duty to have due regard to the House of Bishops' Safeguarding Policy and Practice Guidance.

Over the past year Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks have been performed when the three years have expired since the previous one was completed providing the volunteer was still in post. There are currently no outstanding DBS checks. The training needs for each person performing a role within the church are based on the national/Diocesan requirements. These are monitored by Karen Cooney who also advises when any of the courses have reached their three year expiration date and need to be repeated.

In accordance with the Diocesan safer recruitment process all new applicants for volunteer positions and paid employment are taken on using this process to make sure that they are recruited correctly and safely.

In November 2024, a new Youth Worker was safely recruited and is currently running Craft Club and Youth Club with support from safely recruited volunteers and is also part of the Messy Church team and helps with the All-Age Services at CHS. We are currently recruiting one new volunteer who has offered to help with Messy Church.

LYNCHPIN'S REPORT

The purpose of the South-West Chelmsford Churches Lynchpins is to encourage collaboration and supportive relationships between the five churches in our Mission and Ministry Partnership (MMP): St Luke's (Moulsham), St John's (Old Moulsham), St Michael's (Galleywood), CHS (Widford) and St Mary's (Widford). In 2024, we also shared an Ash Wednesday Service at St Michael's, Maundy Thursday at St Mary's and an Easter dawn Service at St Michael's followed by a continental breakfast and an Ascension Day Service at St. Michael's. On the 1st September, we organised a prayer afternoon with Bishop Adam at St. Michael's. People were able to take part in a variety of activities, indoors and outdoors and were also able to prayer with Bishop Adam. Late in 2024 St. John's wrote to the various churches explaining that they would prefer to work along for a period of time and the PCC responded with a letter of encouragement and expressing our sadness at the end of such a long-standing partnership.

RECTOR'S REPORT

2024 has been a full and busy one in our Parish. The café and soft play have become places of real welcome, the cooked breakfast being a huge draw and the opportunity to talk to friends old and new. The team is faithful and hard working. Messy church has adapted to the loss of Jess and arrival of Stacey and other new staff. The numbers are strong and we could be building our church of the future here with good teaching and craft that helps to tell the Bible story.

Sadly, St Johns church decided to leave the South West Chelmsford Churches group, and so our PCC expressed their sadness and wished them well. Worship It has been good to continue to meet together and share worship on special occasions like Ash Wednesday and Maundy Thursday.

The Fellowship often includes a service for special occasions, and it is always a pleasure to join them on a Wednesday. I continue to enjoy taking Baptisms, Weddings and sharing in funerals. They remain good opportunities to share the gospel. We are a busy parish. Our buildings are well used which creates its' own workload in up-keep. I remain very grateful to our wardens, Keith and Barbara, for the work they put in to ensure our buildings look nice and run as economically as possible, and to Tammy who manages to keep us clean and tidy.

None of our activities would happen without the hard work of our group leaders. It has been delightful to get to know Stacey and her family. She is motivating our children and youth work; the numbers have built up again giving us a chance to get to know a lovely group of young people.

We have a God who cares, and that love and care flows out into our community and is making a difference. A big thank you to our PCC members, secretary, Pam, and treasurer, Peter. Peter is stepping down from his role as treasurer, and we are truly grateful for all his hard work in this role. Do consider joining our PCC we would value your input. Come and help us to listen to God as he speaks to his people and leads us onwards.

Thank you
Reverend Stephanie

Treasurer's Report

The Independently examined accounts as agreed by the Parochial Church Council follow.
Please see the Treasurer's Notes to the Accounts following the summary below.

Parish of St Mary Widford - 1128307
Statement of Financial Activities
For the period from 01 January 2024 to 31 December 2024

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds	Total funds	Prior year total funds
Receipts					
Planned giving	51,178.54	—	—	51,178.54	53,306.49
Collections and other giving	7,917.44	—	—	7,917.44	6,007.43
Other voluntary receipts	12,022.90	4,069.70	—	16,092.60	42,969.84
Gift Aid recovered	16,081.03	1,000.00	—	17,081.03	12,643.64
Other receipts	2,292.95	—	—	2,292.95	4,564.44
Activities for generating funds	23,167.05	—	—	23,167.05	23,142.25
Investment Income	6,289.60	535.46	—	6,825.06	3,753.14
Receipts from church activities	13,977.65	—	—	13,977.65	12,597.57
Total income	132,927.16	5,605.16	—	138,532.32	158,984.80
Payments					
Cost of generating funds	1,662.33	—	—	1,662.33	412.77
Missionary and Charitable Giving	20,051.03	2,224.05	—	22,275.08	10,671.00
Parish Share	51,830.52	—	—	51,830.52	51,508.70
Clergy and Staffing costs	8,030.60	—	—	8,030.60	10,248.91
Church Running Expenses	38,229.09	—	—	38,229.09	31,565.36
Hall Running Costs	705.91	—	—	705.91	1,508.78
Church Repairs & Maintenance	9,196.03	—	—	9,196.03	5,917.61
Hall Repairs & Maintenance	313.06	—	—	313.06	256.46
New Building work	416.88	—	—	416.88	7,553.68
Governance Costs	200.00	—	—	200.00	200.00
Total expenditure	130,635.45	2,224.05	—	132,859.50	119,843.27
Net income / (expenditure) resources before transfer	2,291.71	3,381.11	—	5,672.82	39,141.53
Transfers					
Gross transfers between funds - in	12,000.00	—	—	12,000.00	39,671.10
Gross transfers between funds - out	(12,000.00)	—	—	(12,000.00)	(39,671.10)
Other recognised gains / losses					
Net movement in funds	2,291.71	3,381.11	—	5,672.82	39,141.53
Reconciliation of funds					
Total funds brought forward	132,228.00	9,338.43	—	141,566.43	102,424.90
Total funds carried forward	134,519.71	12,719.54	—	147,239.25	141,566.43

Parish of St Mary Widford - 1128307

Statement of Assets as at 31 December 2024

Cash Funds	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total 2024	Total 2023
Cash on Deposit	129,002.91	12,719.54	141,722.45	132,537.66
Cash at Bank	4,500.77	-	4,500.77	8,372.20
Cash in Hand	1,016.03	-	1,016.03	656.57
	<u>134,519.71</u>	<u>12,719.54</u>	<u>147,239.25</u>	<u>141,566.43</u>
Other Monetary Assets				
Income tax recoverable	<u>1,334.00</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,334.00</u>	<u>1,889.00</u>

Approved by the Parochial Church Council and signed on its behalf by:

K O Schfield Date: 17th March 2025

Stephanie GilVigham Date: 17th March 2025

Notes to the Financial Statements

1. The financial statements of the PCC have been prepared in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations 2006 using the Receipts & Payments basis.
2. Assets recognised but not valued in the Statement of Assets and Liabilities include:
Computer for office administration work.
Audio and visual presentation equipment.
Church inventory assets vested in the churchwardens on special trust.
3. During the year the PCC employed a caretaker and a youth worker, neither of whom earned in excess of £40,000.
4. The expenses paid to clergy may include a small immaterial proportion which relates to their function as PCC members. Tammy Squirrell, who is a PCC member and employed as caretaker and Jessica Wiseman, who is also a PCC member and employed as youth worker until July 2024 were paid £11,285 in total (2023: £15,402). No other payments were made to PCC members.

**INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF
WIDFORD PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL**

I report on the accounts for the year ended 31 December 2024, which are set out in this document.

Respective responsibilities of the PCC and the Independent Examiner

As members of the PCC you do not consider that an audit is required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the Act;
- follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioner's section 145(5)(b) of the Act; and
- state whether particular matters have come to my attention

Basis of Independent Examiner's Statement

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the PCC and a comparison of the accounts with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seeking explanations from you concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in a full audit and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the accounts.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

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

Signature:

Mr George Large

166 Beeches Road, Chelmsford

Date: 17th March 2025

The Parochial Church Council of Widford, Essex - Treasurer's Annual Report 2024

The parish has managed to keep its finances balanced this year, which is good news, and has finished the year with a positive balance on the General and CHS Heating fund combined 2023 total was £68,559, and in 2024 the total was £70,148, a positive balance of £1,589.

Income

The total Income for the Parish was £138,532 and a total expenditure of £132,860. This compares with a total income of £158,984. in 2023, and expenditure of £119,843. This income includes all sources of funding and is less than 2023 as this was significantly affected by a sizeable legacy.

Giving and Gift Aid

Our regular giving (Standing Orders, Envelopes, Parish Giving Scheme, and other planned giving) decreased a little from £53,306 to £51,179.

Our general income (including the regular giving and plate collections, Gift aid claims, One off gift aided donation, etc.) from giving by parishioners increased from £86,208, to £92,270 a 7% increase.

Parish Giving Scheme

This now represents 38% of the planned giving.

Fundraising Activities

Our Parish income from fund raising activities (e.g., Car Park Donations and hall hires) has remained stable with £23,167 received in 2024. Thanks to Bob for managing this important source of income.

Bank Interest

Bank interest increased again in 2024, receiving £6,825 in 2024 v. £3,753 in 2023, £616 in 2022 and £79 in 2021.

We will see this fall again in 2025 as interest rates fall back again.

Other receipts from Church activities (Weddings and funerals, youth work, café and soft play and craft club) rose further in 2024 to £8,928 from 2023 to £7,241. This is mainly accounted for by the increased usage of the Café on Monday and Tuesday mornings from £4,042 to £6,014.

Expenditure

Parish Share.

This remained stable to in 2024. £51,830 (2024) v £51,509 (2023)

Giving

We continued to give away a proportion (approximately 8.5%) of our income to good causes as our tithe, maintaining our regular support for Ali and Keshule Edapal and Hugh Pilcher, as well as a number of other charities and good causes. We also made a gift of £5,000 to St. Luke's Church towards the repair of their Hall roof. We also loaned them £5,000, of which £1,300 (plus £325 gift aid = £1625) has been paid off by gifts from our parishioners, leaving £3,375 to be repaid. St Lukes have agreed to repay this in three equal instalments of £1,125, over the next three years 2025, 2026, 2027.

Employed workers

Our financial commitment to having a caretaker and youth worker fell from £15,758 to £13,494. This is explained by the fact that Jess left in July, and we had a few months without a youth worker before Stacey was appointed. It will again increase in 2025 because of the increases to their wages and pension liabilities.

Church Running Expenses

These increased in 2024 from £31,565 in 2023 to £33,229. This did not include the loan we made.

They will probably rise further with the increase in general expenses and increased salaries.

Major Projects

Repairs to the Doors at St. Marys were paid for by our insurers.

St Mary's Maintenance costs (£4,813) was mainly made up of Costs associated with the Architect (£2,845), and expenses at CHS (£2,780) were for the gable end repairs.

Bank Accounts

We now use the Co-operative Bank entirely for our general day to day banking, both for the general fund and other associated expenditure, and another account for the fees account. All payments that need to be manually processed, i.e., not direct debits or standing orders have been made by internet banking which has been a safe and effective way to manage them.

Gift Aid

We have tried very hard to ensure that we claim all the Gift Aid that we can, getting all those who can to sign up for this, and have seen good results as a result. The claiming of Gift Aid is done in three separate ways.

1. Sheila Schofield deals with the Envelopes and plates.
2. Peter Wood deals with deposits direct into the bank account.
3. The Parish Giving Scheme automatically do a Gift Aid claim for those who give this way.

CHS Heating Fund

The PCC decided that it would be prudent to set aside some money (£12,000) for the expected expenditure of a new heating system at CHS.

Appreciation

I would like to thank Bob and Pam who usually count the money ready for paying into the bank, and Barbara Oxlade and Pam who both get involved in banking cash and cheques for us. We have made use of the Local Post Office as well as the Co-operative Bank in town.

Finance Subcommittee

This has met on an irregular basis to enable us to look at the finances prior to the PCC meeting to enable reporting back to the PCC easier. The Subcommittee consists of: Peter Wood (Treasurer), Sheila Schofield, (Stewardship Officer), Barbara Jones and Bob Wiseman (Church wardens). Thank you to them all for their time and commitment and constructive comments and support.

Summary

2024 was a good year for the parish in financial terms. The general fund and the CHS Heating Fund combined ended the year with a balance of £70,148. We should be thankful to God for various income streams that we have as a church and that we are able to look ahead trusting God to provide.

Going forwards

2025 will bring a new challenge for Widford Parish, as I come to the end of my role as Treasurer, and the role is shared amongst others at Widford and a paid bookkeeper. To enable this to work, there needs to be good teamwork, and clearly outlined and understood roles and responsibilities. I pray that this will happen, and that the Parish will be able to continue knowing that God will provide.

Peter Wood 5th March 2025

PCC Fees Account

During the year Revd. Stephanie conducted 4 weddings at St.M and presided over 1 renewal of vows.

Oversaw 1 memorial plaque in St. Mary's churchyard.

Performed 2 funerals at St. Mary's and 10 at the crematorium.

Turnover for the year £5961.00 of this the PCC earned £1641.00.

George Large has examined the figures, there was an anomaly but he is satisfied that after checking the activity on the account the balance is reconciled.

At the time of writing this report George Large has instructed me to distribute monies remaining from 2024 to those creditors to whom it is due: Diocese, PCC and an individual(s).

By the time you read this, those instructions will have been completed

Parish Office

The Office was open most days from 10am-12pm Monday to Friday.

The staffing was covered by: Mondays – Bob W, Tuesdays – Barbara O, Wednesdays – James from beginning of December, Thursdays – Shirley D assisted by Val H. Friday -Barbara J filled the vacancy left by Sylvia who stepped down after many reliable years of service at the office, working on behalf of the Parish.

We are glad to have Barbara J and James on board to maintain full weekly coverage.

Everyone has a different role so that we do not duplicate tasks.

The office administration remains busy but the team appears to be willing to continue. There does seem to be less visitors coming to the office with more and more people using online access to our services. An example of this would be hirers paying deposits online and no longer needing to bring cash to the office but we are here if needed.

Shirley continues to prove that age is not a hindrance to serving others.

Outside of the open hours the office work continues with a low profile.

Thank you to all the above who work alongside me.

Volunteers

Thanks go to our churchwardens, Barbara Jones, Keith Schofield and Bob Wiseman, Peter Wood as the church's Treasurer. and Pam Myall as our PCC Secretary. We would also like to thank Keith Schofield for his role as lay chair and Peter Wood as he steps down for his role as Treasurer. We are truly grateful for the many years of service in this area of our church's life.

We would also like to thank Jess Wiseman as she moved on during the summer as Youth Worker for our parish. The years have been fun and thoughtful with ideas and activities and she will be greatly missed.

Structure, governance and management

The Parochial Church Council is a corporate body established by the Church of England. The PCC operates under the Parochial Church Council Powers Measure. The PCC is a Registered Charity.

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. At Widford St. Mary's and Church of the Holy Spirit, the membership of the PCC consists of the Incumbent, churchwardens, the licensed lay minister and members elected by those members of the congregation who are on the electoral roll of the church. All those who attend our services / members of the congregation are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and stand for election to the PCC.

The full PCC met from January to November in person.

Safeguarding continues to be a high priority. We thank Barbara Jones for the work she has put in as Safeguarding Officer and are grateful to Karen Cooney for taking a lead on safeguarding training.

Administrative information

St. Mary's church is situated in London Road, and Church of the Holy Spirit in Forest Drive. It is part of the Diocese of Chelmsford within the Church of England. The correspondence address is "Widford Parish Office, Forest Drive, Chelmsford, Essex. CM1 2TS". Registered charity number 1128307."

PCC members who have served at any time from 1 January 2024 until the date this report was approved are:

Rector: Reverend Canon Stephanie Gillingham

Church Wardens:

Barbara Jones

Keith Schofield

Bob Wiseman

Deanery Synod Reps.

Robert (Bob) Wiseman

Hilary Selwood

Jess Wiseman

Licenced Lay Minister: Roger Gillingham

PCC Members:

Barbara Jones

Peter Wood (Treasurer)

Keith Schofield (Lay Chair)

Bob Wiseman

Colin Groves

Jessica (Jess) Wiseman

Karen Cooney

Tamzin (Tammy) Squirrell

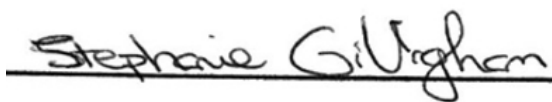
Pat Brown

Pam Myall

Hilary Selwood

Report approved by the PCC on 17th March 2025

and signed on their behalf by Stephanie Gillingham .

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Stephanie Gillingham", written over a horizontal line.

The Parish of Widford
ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING
6th April 2024 in St. Mary's, Widford

A. An Extraordinary Meeting to opt out of the maximum continuous years of service for a Church Warden in our Parish.

B. Meeting of Parishioners Election of Churchwardens

C. Annual Meeting Agenda

- 1) Welcome and Prayer
- 2) Apologies for Absence
- 3) Notification of Any Other Business items (to be taken at the end.)
- 4) Minutes of previous APCM held on Sunday 21st April 2024
- 5) Matters Arising
- 6) Stephanie's Report (Rector to Widford Benefice)
- 7) Electoral Roll
- 8) Annual Reports
- 9) Finance
- 10) Wardens' - Fabric Report
- 11) Deanery Synod Report
- 12) Lynchpins Report
- 13) Election of a Lynchpin Member
- 14) Election of PCC Members
- 15) Appointment of Independent Examiner
- 16) Any items for discussion:
 - (i) Eco discussion
 - (ii) Disabled access to St. Mary's
- 17) Any Other Business
- 18) Date for the next APCM –Sunday 19th April 2026
- 19) Close with prayer

Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meetings of the Parish of Widford held on Sunday 21st April 2024, at 11.40am, at CHS

A. Meeting of Parishioners

Rev'd Stephanie Gillingham opened the meeting with prayer. She read the nominations for the positions of Warden.

Barbara Jones was proposed by Lynette Hunwicks and seconded by Sheila Schofield.

Keith Schofield was proposed by Pam Myall and seconded by Lynette Hunwicks.

There were no other nominations. Keith and Barbara were elected unanimously.

Bob Wiseman had decided not to stand again as a Warden, though the meeting gratefully acknowledged that he was prepared to complete the various projects that were under way. Sincere thanks were expressed to all the wardens for their contributions.

The Meeting closed with prayer at 11.45am.

B. Annual Parochial Church Meeting opened at 11.50am.

Present: Rev'd Stephanie Gillingham (Chair); Peter Wood; Barbara and Alan Jones; Janet Aldridge; Joan Barker; Janet and Roger Bird; Denise Blackwood; Lionel Blanks; Pat Brown; Chris Button; Eddie Carpenter; Shirley Deering; Jen Gaskin; Colin Groves; Jeni Gymer; Valerie Hayward, Lynette Hunwicks; Elizabeth Olatunji; Janet Pettifer; Gillian Pollock; Janet Robinson; Hilary Selwood; Vicky Smith; Tammy Squirrel; Bob Wiseman; Jess Wiseman; Pam Myall.

Welcome and Prayer. Stephanie welcomed church members and opened the meeting with prayer.

1. Apologies for Absence had been received from Keith and Sheila Schofield; Daniel and Coralie Gullick; Zoe Myall; Barbara Oxlade; Jane Wiseman; Gill Wood; Robert Pettifer; James Pollock; Ann Sharp; Sylvia Skardon.
2. Notification of Any Other Business. There was none.
3. Minutes of the APCM held on 4th June 2023 (already approved by PCC) was accepted as a true record.
4. Matters Arising. It was noted that the proposed date for the APCM 2024 had been changed. Stephanie explained that PCC had decided on a return to the earlier annual meeting, (by the end of April). Later meetings had been accepted by the Diocese for several years, in view of covid restrictions.
5. Stephanie's Report Stephanie invited the meeting to remember people, especially significant to church members, who had died during the past year.

Joyce Dines, Peter Whybrow, Kathleen Wiseman and Carl Quilter were named. Stephanie had received a message from Lisa, thanking parishioners for their support in her bereavement and commending the service of Celebration and Thanksgiving for the life of Carl (held on 19th April), which had made a deep impression on members of her family.

We would hold these families – and others known to us individually – in our prayers.

A Diocesan initiative urged parishes to have a real Awareness of Grace – a thankful attitude in which we notice what we have rather than what we lack. God always provides for work in His will. We can rejoice in two beautiful buildings, to which people are pleased to come.

Many groups are flourishing.

St Luke's joining our team is a blessing.

Stephanie expressed thanks for all God has given us and for everyone who does so much to show God's love in the Parish and beyond.

6. Electoral Roll Thanks were expressed to Shirley, our Electoral Roll Officer. There had been two additions to the Roll – making a total of 72. Shirley gave notice that a complete revision would be needed in 2025.
7. Annual Reports Stephanie made a brief review of the reports.

Prophecy - With gratitude for a whole paragraph report.

Craft Club - has grown a lot. Stephanie thanked Jess, Zoe and Peter.

Youth Group - It is good (and unusual!) to have a flourishing Youth Group.

Bible Trek - proving popular still.

Messy Church - an opportunity to share God's word and His love, enjoy crafts, and share a meal together. It is open to all. Stephanie invited folk to come, take part, and help if they wish.

Wednesday Fellowship and Knit & Natter Chris B. questioned why the title of the group includes Knit & Natter. Pam explained that the evening K & N group closed, so it was decided to combine it with the Fellowship – and sometimes, meetings are centred on knitting/craft and chat.

Eco - CHS and St Mary's have both qualified for a silver award. Gill P. asked whether we have a plaque. It had been agreed to send for this – but not yet actioned.

Hope Café - Stephanie encouraged members to visit on a Monday or Tuesday. Anyone willing to help should speak to Dan.

Lunch Club – Thanks were expressed to Sheila, Pam and all who help. More helpers in the kitchen would be very welcome.

Widford Waddlers - another thriving group, thanks to Jane, Sheila, Zoe and Nelia.

God Tent - would not be needed at Hylands Park this year, because Creamfields festival had been cancelled.

Chris B. expressed concern about an apparent lack of communication in some areas.

8. Finance. A full report was included in the Annual Reports, but at Chris' request, Peter outlined some of them. A few members of the meeting had not heard of the Parish Giving Scheme, so Peter offered information. He also urged members to consider including a legacy to the Parish in their wills.

Peter expressed Sincere thanks to Bob for dealing with the car parking, a great help in our overall financial position.

Bob proposed a vote of thanks for all the work undertaken by Peter as our Treasurer. This was passed unanimously.

9. Wardens' Fabric Reports

St Mary's Bob had given a full report. He had received notification that Baker's were intending to come to repair the main door on 25th April. He had also circulated initial plans for improved access to St Mary's, to members of PCC.

Stephanie expressed grateful thanks (and gave a card), on behalf of all members of our congregations, to Bob for all that he has done and continues to do.

CHS Barbara presented Keith's report and noted that the new lights in CHS are more effective and cheaper to run; that the soffits and fascias were in the process of being replaced; that the Memory (*Ballerina*) Tree in the front garden, was establishing – intended as a prompt to remember those who have died.

Barbara also mentioned that there are plans to change the curtain behind the altar, which is placed centrally again.

10. Deanery Synod Stephanie had prepared the report. There was no need for an election of representatives this year, since Hilary Selwood and Bob Wiseman had been elected in 2023, for three years. Jess is also a member of this Synod, because she is a member of Diocesan Synod.

11. Lynchpins Stephanie explained the role of Lynchpins – helping to coordinate and cooperate with the other members of South West Chelmsford Churches.

Our existing lay members of Lynchpins were willing to continue.

Shirley Deering was proposed by Pam Myall and seconded by Ann Sharp. Jess Wiseman was proposed by Pam Myall and seconded by Colin Groves. Tammy Squirrell was proposed by Barbara Jones and seconded by Pam Myall. Shirley, Jess and Tammy were elected unanimously.

12. Election for PCC. All PCC members were prepared to continue, but it had been three years since Peter had been voted on and we have the tradition to appoint for three years at a time.

Peter Wood was proposed by Pam Myall and seconded by Sheila Schofield. He was re-elected unanimously.

13. Appointment of Independent Examiner George Large had expressed willingness to examine our Church Accounts and Fees Account again for 2024. Everyone present confirmed our wish for him to do so.

14. Items for Discussion. At the Walk of Witness on Good Friday, leaders of *Christians Together in Chelmsford* had shared their hope that the Prayer walking initiative, started in 2023 should continue. They had suggested a special focus in June. Stephanie shared that we have prayer cards for the roads not yet covered in our Parish and asked the meeting to indicate whether we would be prepared to participate in this initiative. There was overall agreement.

15. Any Other Business

Chris asked about Christian Aid Week. Shirley confirmed that a Bring and Buy Sale would be held, in conjunction with the Hope Café, on Monday 13th May. Donations should be brought on the day.

Widford Parish Benevolent Fund Peter informed the meeting that there are some resources to support those in need in our Parish. Several gifts were made in 2023, (including blazers for pupils going up to Hylands School). If church members are aware of anyone in particular need, we should contact Stephanie, Barbara or Peter.

Fareshare. A small team collect near-sell-by-date food from Tesco and Bookers (free). This is placed on tables in the Parish Centre for collection by anyone, and some is delivered to families. Apart from helping the recipients, some good relationships are being established with the staff in the businesses who give the food.

16. Date for the next APCM to be discussed by PCC.

17. Peter closed the meeting with Prayer at 12.45pm

All members of the PCC wished to record their sincere thanks to Lynette Hunwicks, for her work in collating the reports which were presented to the Annual Meeting.

Leadership in Widford Parish: We are developing teams – do let us know if you would like to join one. As at the end of 2024, our teams were as follows:

Wardens: Barbara Jones, Keith Schofield

Deputy Warden Robert (Bob) Wiseman. At Church of the Holy Spirit, Tammy Squirrell deputises for the Wardens.

Treasurer:

Deanery Synod: Bob Wiseman. Jess Wiseman and Hilary Selwood

South West Chelmsford Lynchpins: Tammy Squirrell, Shirley Deering and Jessica (Jess) Wiseman

Licensed Lay Minister: Roger Gillingham

Licensed Lay Preacher: Keith Schofield, Bob Wiseman, Jen Gaskin, Pam Myall, Gill Wood, Peter Wood, Jess Wiseman

Preachers: Zoe Myall

All Age Service Leaders: Pam Myall and Jess Wiseman at St. Mary's and Stephanie, Barbara Jones and Stacey Ellis.

Caretaker: Tammy Squirrel

Office Volunteers: Barbara Oxlade, Bob Wiseman Shirley Deering, Valerie Hayward, James Pollock and Barbara Jones

Baptism /Thanksgiving home visiting team: Pam Myall and Jane Wiseman and Gill Wood

Children's work: Stacy Ellis, Tammy Squirrel, Pam Myall, and Gill Wood

Churchtalk: James Pollock

Flower Arranging: Reg & Daphne Blowers, Sylvia Skardon, Shirley Deering, Janet Bird at St. Marys, Sandra Kyte, Barbara Jones at Church of the Holy Spirit

Friday Afternoon St. Marys Open Church Working Group Coordinator: Bob Wiseman

Gift Aid: Sheila Schofield

Home Communion Assistants: Pam Myall, Shirley Dearing, Gill Wood and Peter Wood, Hilary Selwood

Home Groups Co-ordinator: Tammy Squirrell

Messy Church Team: Stacey Ellis, Gill Wood, Pam Myall, Shirley Deering, Sheila Schofield, Jen Gaskin, Zoe Myall, Barbara Jones, and Stephanie Gillingham

Mission and Evangelism Team: Stephanie Gillingham

Music and Hymn Choice: Service Leader and Dan Gullick at St. Mary's. Keith Schofield, Sheila Schofield, Barbara Jones, Jen Gaskin, Roger Gillingham and Stephanie Gillingham at CHS.

Pastoral Team Coordinator/Pastoral Care Team: Pam Myall & Stephanie, Shirley Deering, Peter Wood, Gill Wood, Hilary Selwood Sheila Schofield and James Pollock.

Prayer Chain: Barbara Jones

Prayer Ministry Coordinator: Stephanie Gillingham

Prophecy: Pat Brown

Quiz Masters: Bob Wiseman and Alan Jones

Safe-guarding: Barbara Jones, Karen Cooney and Stephanie Gillingham.

Sound and Visuals: Alan Davey, Tammy Squirrell, Colin White & Elizabeth Olatunji at CHS and Daniel Gullick at St. Mary's.

Sunday Children's: Tammy Squirrell and Stacey Ellis at CHS and Pam Myall at St. Mary's.

Website and Other Media: Peter Wood

Wednesday Lunch Club: Sheila Schofield & Pam Myall

Wid-Wads Team: Jane Wiseman, Sheila Schofield, Zoe Myall, Nellia Spratley and Stephanie Gillingham.

Wednesday Fellowship/Knit and Natter Leadership Team: Pam Myall and Shirley Deering.

Youthwork: Stacey Ellis

Refreshments Teams: Jen Gaskin, Janet Alldridge, Lynette Hunwicks, Lisa Quilter and Barbara Jones at CHS. Jackie Dickens, Linda Stephens, Shirley Deering, Janet Bird, Janet Robinson and Janet Hazel at St. Mary's.

Church Cleaning Teams: Barbara Jones, Elizabeth Olatunji, Sheila Schofield, James & Jill Pollock, Roger Gillingham, Jen Gaskin, Lisa Quilter, Lynette Hunwicks, Cindy and Janet Alldridge at Church of the Holy Spirit and Shirley Deering, Janet Bird, Jackie Dickens, Linda Stephens, Denise, Jane Wiseman and Paula Groves at St. Marys.



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