



2025 Annual Reports
presented to the
Annual Parochial Church Meeting
of the
Parish of Widford
on
19th April 2026

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 continue to share 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 for prayer. 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 in someone's home. This is an opportunity to prayer 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.

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 and fifth Sundays and All Age Worship on the fourth Sunday.

Church of the Holy Spirit Our worship pattern follows all age café style service on the first Sundays of each month, Holy Communion on the third Sunday and Praise and Worship on the second and fourth and fifth Sundays.

On the fifth Sunday in the month, St. Marys has morning prayer

South West Chelmsford Churches. We remain part of South West Chelmsford churches; St. Michaels, St. Lukes, St. Marys and Church of the Holy Spirit.

	Average Attendance	Baptisms	5
St. Mary's	28+3	Weddings	1
		Memorial Services at St. Mary's	2
Church of the Holy Spirit	23+2 children	Funerals at CHS Interment of Ashes Funerals Overall	1 0 10
Messy Church	35	Confirmations	0

LOVING ONE ANOTHER

The Pastoral Group

As before, there were three meetings during the year. Revd Stephanie Gillingham, Shirley Deering, James Pollock, Hilary Selwood, Sheila Schofield and Pam Myall were included, though every Parishioner plays their part in pastoral care – sharing the wonderful love of Jesus.

The meetings give an opportunity to share concerns and support one another, though we always need to be careful about confidentiality.

Bereavement contacts continued – mostly by phone and, subsequently, a card. For several people this has led to regular involvement in church. Home Communion was taken to a housebound lady, and several people temporarily unable to go out.

House Groups:

St. Mary's House Group: We currently number 7 members. Although we have not met on a regular basis throughout 2025 we continue to be a close group, supporting one another. We have met socially from time to time enjoying a meal and each other's company. The men in the group also meet with other male members of St. Mary's to socialise and grow in fellowship.

Rossendale House Group: In 2025 we studied 'Women of the Nativity' and 'Women of the Holy Week' both by Paula Gooda, Colossians Chs. 1-4, 'We Believe': exploring the Nicene Creed and comparison with the Apostles' Creed and 'The Coming of God' from Stephen Need's book 'I think that's about it', all of which we enjoyed and found interesting. Unfortunately, it turned out to be a sad year for us as two of our beloved members died, Vicky Smith and then Chris Button. We are now just a group of four and they are sorely missed.

Ravensbourne Group: Ravensbourne home group has met most Tuesday evenings at 7pm and has enjoyed our evenings of fellowship, singing, friendship and fun. We have about six members from three different churches and Jess sometimes joins us via video link. This year we have studied Hebrews, James, 1&2 Peter, 1 John & plan to continue to Revelation.

The group works well and we have become quite close to each other as we have opened ourselves up to God.

SERVING OTHERS

Craft Club: Numbers attending craft club have dwindled and so we decided to try a different evening. Tuesday evening has been trialled, but it seems to clash with the after-school activities. This term we will try out Thursday evenings and so please keep this group in your prayers. We enjoy a range of crafts, often using Baker Ross kits. We have received a grant from the County council and this will help with the funding of the group.

Youth Group: always goes well. We follow a programme with a Bible story each week, and a game to link with it. Then we do a range of activities: table tennis, nine square, bouncy castle, cooking, games and the group favourite is hide-n-seek.

Sunday school at CHS – We have a regular few children that always come, which is great and we do different activities around the Bible story each session, which the children feel more confident to discuss and elaborate on, when asked questions or asked to relay what they have learnt in the last few weeks. We have been working through Genesis, and I use the true ways Bible lessons (which is a website online) and I print it all out for the children so that they all have their own packs with all the worksheets etc in.) This website gives lots of Bible lessons with lots of activities and work sheets to work through. Each section lasts us a month then we review and talk about what we have learnt in that month's lessons.

Rainbows- goes very well we are up to 12 girls again after a few left to go up to Brownies. I am doing my leadership qualification which is all going very well. I've been doing eLearning and webinars to go towards my qualification. I'm just waiting for a mentor to be assigned so my work can be signed off and then I can move on to the next part of the qualification. I really enjoy rainbows and so do all the girls involved. We had a day out on the 22nd Feb to celebrate World Thinking Day to meet up with all the other packs which should be great fun for all. I will be doing a first aid course later in the year for Rainbows, which will be useful for all of the activities I am involved in for the church.

Youth Work General- This has been a busy year for me, although I enjoy all of the activities I am involved in and like the routine. I am getting to know people better and that is helpful too.
Thank you: I want to thank everyone I work with for all their support and help in all we do, Barbara and Sheila for craft club, the messy church team, Rev'd Stephanie and Lyn for youth club, Reverend Stephanie, Denise and Janet for Rainbows. We are a brilliant team and I appreciate all of you, thank you.

Summer Holiday Messy Church: In 2025 we decided to hold two messy Churches over the summer holiday continuing our Messy Church theme around the year. These were The Creation and The Conversion of Saul. This proved very successful. A lot of families attended and we had fun together. Thank you to the team who supported this important work.

Bible Trek - The year 2025 saw us meeting term time on Tuesday evenings from 7.30-9.15pm for Bible and social engagement. Bible Trek is unique in the sense that each week it focuses on a particular book or section of the Bible, majors on hearing the account from recordings by David Suchet, sets the words in a historical context and discusses the meaning and implications for us today. We started the year in the New Testament book of Romans following video teaching from Andrew Ollerton, undertook a 'Hope Together' wellbeing course and towards the end of the year, engaged in the Bible Society's Bible Book Club using their resources, working through the short letters of the New Testament. Numbers are typically 11-15, and all are welcome. The Bible is unique in the sense that there's always something to learn, it changes lives, its 66 books embody the truths of life, and engaging with it provides a life-changing experience.

Messy Church: had another busy year with many Bible stories enjoyed with crafts, stories, puppets and drama. We plan the activities the week before the Messy Church and follow the Messy Church format: craft, story and a meal together. The ice cream for desert always goes down a treat. We have a wonderful team of volunteers, to whom we are very grateful because this could not run without them.

Music Group and Media Team (CHS): 2025 saw us lose one of our former members, Chris Button, and we pay tribute to his unique contribution to the group of a person who overcame the challenges of blindness, and we were sad to lose him when he passed away.

Anyone who has walked into the Parish Office will see that the Music Group has a vast repertoire and our purpose is not to perform, but to lead members of our congregation into worship as we worship, week by week. Up to six people are at the front, but even more importantly, our media team (typically Elizabeth, Tammy and Colin) are vital in helping the music and visuals to be accessible. At the start of the year, we also lost Alan D, who had been so instrumental in 'wiring us up' so media could connect to music. Thank-you to you all.

Wednesday Fellowship: We're a small group, most of whom come straight from Lunch Club, but a few join us for 2.30pm. (We have delayed our starting time, because Lunch clubbers who do not stay on for Fellowship, enjoy a chat over their lunchtime cuppa – and we don't want to hurry them!)

I started writing this report in detail, but it became so long and wordy, that a summary seemed wise. . . .

We meet each of the weeks when Lunch Club is served. Sometimes, we invite visitors from outside Widford to speak on a particular subject, lead us in craft, sport (curling), or music. We have enjoyed fascinating and enjoyable times. Widford Parishioners provide inspiring talks, music and help with transport. We are extremely grateful to them. Other sessions have been arranged wholly 'in house'. Quizzes are popular and some games.

Personal experiences shared – e.g. memories of life in World War II near VE Day. It's amazing what talents and stories emerge.

Thinking of memories; we were sad to lose three of our regular members in 2025, Ann Barnett, Vicky Smith and Chris Button. May they rest in peace, with their Saviour.

For more details of this lovely group, do ask, or just come along – at 2.30pm on a Wednesday, at CHS. May God continue to lead and bless us.

World Day of Prayer: This is a global ecumenical movement led by Christian women who welcome you to join in prayer and action for peace and justice. It is celebrated annually on the first Friday in March. Our service in 2025 took place at CHS and the country theme was the Cook Islands – “Wonderfully Made”, based on Psalm 139. The service was put together by Christian women of the Cook Islands and we heard the testimonies of three of these women during the service. We were joined by fellow believers from local churches as we followed through the service that was repeated around the globe from Samoa through Asia, Africa, the Middle East, Europe and the Americas to finish in American Samoa. The service for 2026 will take place at St Mary's and will be focussed on Nigeria – “I will give you rest, come” (Matthew 11:28-30).

Tithe Committee: Our Tithe was distributed as follows:

Ali and Keshule Edapal's Ministry in Northern Kenya - £400 per quarter (£1,600 per annum)
Hugh Pilcher and Jesus Loves the Little Children Ministry in Uganda £200 per quarter (£800 per annum).
Potter's Village in Uganda, gift of £600.
CHESS for the homeless in Chelmsford £1,000.
Grassroots Trust in Kyrgystan £1,000.
TEARFUND £1,000.
Open Doors – support for persecuted Christians £1,000.
South Essex Wildlife Hospital £600.
Christian Aid £500 (+the proceeds from envelopes and the designated Café morning)
EMERGENCY POT £1,200.

[Separate from the Tithe, we are committed to donating £500 each year for 6 years, from the legacy received from John and Eileen Fowler to Made for More, in support of their work in schools.]

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. In 2025 the PCC approved the installation (due Spring 2026) of a large solar photovoltaic installation on the South Facing roof of CHS, which will help cut bills and assist us to offset carbon from our non-electrical heating installations across the Parish.

Hope Café and Soft Play: This year, after 18 months on the team, James Pollock stepped down in the summer term. We're very grateful for his help, good humour, and diligence in consuming any spare sausages. Fortunately, Alan Jones joined the team in September so our staffing levels remain consistent and we keep a great camaraderie amongst all the team.

The cooked breakfast remained very popular with demand often exceeding 50 meals over the 2 mornings. So it with some regret that we decided to stop cooked food in the summer term when we were a little short staffed. However, we have since reintroduced several cooked items which is working well.

Whilst numbers decreased when we stopped the cooked breakfast it does now feel more manageable for the number of staff and covering absences is far less of a challenge. We still have many regular customers and often see newcomers too. Soft Play is the main draw with virtually all customers coming for that.

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 2025 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. Typically, there are 25 to 30 who attend each week. We remember with fondness a number who passed away during the year.

The kitchen team is led by Sheila Schofield assisted by Janet Aldridge, Janet Bird, Denise Blackwood, Karen Cooney, Jeff Gilbert, Maureen McPhee, James Pollock, Linda Stephens and Jess Wiseman. The dining room team is led by Pam Myall assisted by Sandra Kyte, Stacey Ellis, Louise Rutherford and Stephanie. Towards the end of the year Cindy Necker came in early each week to lay the tables. 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: We meet at Widford Village Hall on Thursdays from 10-11.45 am. The Waddlers Team arrive around 9am to set up ready for the arrival of our families. We meet during term times and are closed throughout the school holidays.

We continue to be well supported by mums and grandparents. Some of the children are able to stay with us until they go to school while others have pre-school nurseries to go to especially when mums have to return to work. 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.

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, Easter Eggs and Christmas gifts for the children. Money that 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, bananas and grapes. Zoe's craft activities are as popular as ever. Stephanie has supported us whenever her commitments have allowed. Now Albie is at school, Jodi has joined our team of volunteers. She already knows a lot of the mums and has been a great help to us.

It's always sad when we have to say goodbye to the children going to school. Not only are we saying goodbye to the children, but their mum/grandparent too. This year we have welcomed 3 new babies into our Waddlers family {2 of which were twin girls!} This is always a special time.

My very grateful thanks go to our faithful Waddlers Team. Each one plays an important role in keeping Widford Waddlers going for very nearly 30 years!

BEING AT THE HEART OF THE COMMUNITY

Friends of Essex Churches Ride and Stride: On the second Saturday in September, the Ride and Stride took place. St Mary's Church was open all day, as our team of volunteers waited in readiness to welcome visitors. Paula (with her dog, Copper), Zoe and Pam, walked, calling at lots of local churches. As a result, £160 was given by generous sponsors.

At the Cream Tea at St Mary's in the afternoon, (organised by Barbara Oxlade), as well as a delightful occasion, £71.45 was collected in donations.

To end the day, Stephanie led a peaceful service of Compline.

From the financial proceeds, half (£115.77) has been returned to Widford Parish.

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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: During 2025, Radio 2 held a music festival at Hylands Park. We applied, as we usually do, to attend but unfortunately, they felt that Welfare had already been covered and didn't think it necessary for us to attend. This was very disappointing considering the opportunity of witness the festivals have always given us. We have applied to attend the State Fayre festival in Hylands which is being held in June 2026 but are still awaiting to hear from the organisers.

ELECTORAL ROLL

There are currently 52 people on the Electoral Roll, of which 32 are resident in the parish and 20 are non-resident.

DEANERY SYNOD

At the beginning of the year the Revd Simon Pearce was appointed Area Dean following the retirement of Revd Tim Balls.

The following topics were presented during the year: -

Michaela Southworth – CEO of Chelmsford Diocesan Board of Finance. who explained the financial structure of the Family Purse system.

Bishop Guli addressed the Synod “on the matter concerning how lay people can be more supportive in the delivery of Holy Communion where clergy are not available”.

Bishop Guli drew attention to the Diocesan document detailing the regulations around communion by extension and clarified the following points:

- Reserved Sacrament is primarily for use with the sick and housebound
- Communion by extension is only to be occasional, in exceptional circumstances and with the express permission of the Area Bishop. It cannot be a regular event to address the lack of clergy.

Revd Canon Ivor Moody on “Holding and Being: Balancing Mental Health and Ministry”.

Ivor Moody expressed the need for more mental health provision for ordained and lay leaders in the Church of England.

Revd Sharon Quilter is the Diocesan Racial Justice Officer.

After prayerful consideration both Bob W and Hilary S are standing down from Deanery Synod.

Are you willing to serve as a Deanery Synod representative?

CHURCHWARDENS' REPORT

St. Marys (StM): The congregation members continue to be a caring community. Our attendance figures have remained stable at around 28 adults each Sunday, and among them we have a significant number of older members. For some, illness or infirmity have made it difficult for them to attend week by week. Stephanie leads us in our spiritual journey and presides when we have Holy Communion. Her workload means she cannot be with us every week, so we are grateful to those who consistently take lead roles in our services, including service leading, leading prayers and preaching – plus all the supporting roles such as making coffee, welcoming people, sidespersons, and the many practical roles that go to make the St. Mary's community such a special place.

We are required to report here on the 'Fabric' (buildings). The building has not required a great deal of maintenance this year but the 2024 Quinquennial inspection required us to continue some additional regular maintenance and repairs, and we thank those who have helped in the working groups to get the work done, and to those who have cared for our grounds, including for the memorial garden.

During the year we held a number of services and social events including services for the week of prayer for Christian unity, Commemorating 80 years since VE Day, a group joining the Bradwell Pilgrimage, afternoon tea on the day of Ride and Stride, celebrating Animal Welfare Sunday including a pet blessing Service, Harvest Festival with Archdeacon Jonathan, Remembrance Sunday with the scouting community, carols by the camp fire in December and Bishop Guli joining us for a joint service in Advent. From time to time, congregation members set out legendary food to welcome attendees at special services – thank-you to you all.

Significant services took place at Easter, Harvest, Remembrance and Christmas, for which a willing team decorated the church beautifully.

We have teams of helpers who make the church run: sidespersons, cleaners, tea & coffee makers, gardeners, service leaders, Readers, preachers and our very own organist. Thank you all for your service to Christ.

Work was completed in 2025 to gain Chelmsford City Council approval for the planned accessible entrance, but the conditional approval including the new requirement to conduct archaeological investigations has put us back and at the end of 2025, the project is delayed while the implications are understood and managed.

Church of the Holy Spirit (CHS) and Parish Centre: Wardens Barbara and Keith would like to give a huge 'thank-you!' to all who have helped our worshipping community across the Parish to thrive throughout 2025. Your work, sacrifice and commitment has helped us to broaden and deepen our community involvement impact through increased use of CHS and the Parish Centre. Services at CHS continued as usual throughout 2025, some were live-streamed, and our services were augmented by monthly 'Café Church' on first Sundays and occasional joint services with our mission and ministry partners across Southwest Chelmsford Churches.

Due to some congregation members passing away and a handful leaving the congregation, Sunday Service numbers have reduced to an average of around 23 adults, but with many more worshipping in special services such as at Advent and Christmas. Our monthly 'Café Church' services provide a welcoming atmosphere for visitors and members alike to worship in a welcoming, informal atmosphere.

CHS hosted the visiting Artless Theatre Company who presented Amos and the Grumpy Owl, and many families came to see the production, presenting a Christian outreach in a truly professional and artistic way.

Regarding the 'Fabric' (buildings) on which we are required to report, In the vestry, storage was increased, and half-yearly 'walk-arounds' with the caretaker continued to take place to identify and address repair needs. The newly redecorated Prayer Room came into full use during the year. In 2025 we gratefully received a grant contributing c.2.9k towards the budgeted £18k CHS Solar project, which, all being well in 2026, will serve to contribute towards the whole Parish's journey to Net Zero.

In the summer, in place of the Holiday Bible Club, a special summer Messy Church took place to attract and serve families during the summer holidays.

Diocesan and Parish Matters: Your Churchwardens (in 2025, Barbara, in her sixth year and Keith, in his fifth) are required to submit significant levels of information to the Diocese. This took up much time, and information included the Statistics for Mission and the Energy Footprint Tool. Both Churches have achieved Eco Church Silver Status, and throughout the year, weekly eco-tips were typically provided in the Church notice sheet. Each June, your Wardens attend a joint service with others and in front of the Archdeacon, and are solemnly required agree to conduct their duties in accordance with Diocesan Rules. For the first time since CHS and the Parish Centre were built in 1960, the Diocese will require us to conduct a Quinquennial Inspection at CHS as well as at StM, and for CHS the five-yearly cadence will commence towards the end of 2026. We have recently been advised that we will have to change our Parish Architect. In 2025, despite accepting the St M 2024 Quinquennial report on a one-off basis, following our meeting with the DAC secretary in April, the diocese unfortunately did not reimburse or provide a promised contribution towards the costs of the PCC for the 2024 St. Mary's Quinquennial, which is regrettable.

At both Churches and the Parish Centre: The necessary fire inspections, PAT testing and gas safety inspections took place, with any findings addressed, and normal maintenance activities took place. In 2025 the keyholders list was updated and kept on file in the office.

During 2025, two additional Parishioners who have since left the worshipping community expressed concerns over the Anglican Church centrally falling away from biblical teaching on certain matters. Though those matters did not reflect the teachings or practice within the Parish, still those parishioners are now worshipping elsewhere, because the Anglican Church (and by implication, in their opinion, the Parish) was no longer focusing on the right things. The well-publicised and current corporate failings of the Anglican Church served to make local ministry challenging. In a small church, losing even one faithful congregation member is regrettable. In parallel with that, the Diocese has become increasingly reluctant to trust Parish matters to its faithful and effective Rectors, who have decades of diligent, effective and trustworthy service behind them and if permitted, plenty to contribute, as we have seen so effectively from Rev. Canon Stephanie, whom we greatly appreciate.

In 2025, concerns were raised to and by your Wardens about the 'demographic gap' in our Parish worshipping community, where we are under-represented in the 20-50 age group that just a generation earlier, formed a central demographic of our worshipping communities. Every person with us in that age range (as in all age ranges) is very much appreciated! Nevertheless, as the average age rises of those who contribute so much to our Parish ministries, concerns grow over the ongoing sustainability of many Parish ministries. Your wardens are constructively engaging with the Rector and Archdeacon over these concerns, but this highlights the importance of personal and community outreach and Messy Church in addressing this balance.

At the end of 2025 we gave a heartfelt thank-you to our Caretaker Tammy Squirrel, who for 16 years served at CHS and the Parish Centre.

In 2025 considerable community resources became available and continued in use due to the hard work of volunteers, whom we sincerely thank. These include Fareshare, the Community Larder (visited by our MP), the community Stab Kit and the Cardiac Arrest Kit that are available to the public outside the Parish Centre.

Retirement of Treasurer: In April 2025 we bade a fond farewell to Peter and Gill Wood, who now worship elsewhere. Until April 2025 Peter served as Parish Treasurer, but no replacement was forthcoming, and the responsibilities therefore revert to your wardens. To ease the workload, the PCC agreed that we should appoint a bookkeeper, and a number of people stepped up to support the bookkeeper in fulfilling her role (for which we give heartfelt thanks and appreciation), and this has resulted in our Parish continuing to have strong financial administration, governance and reporting throughout 2025. We thank Peter for his considerable efforts in providing transitional support. The wardens remain keen for a suitable new treasurer to emerge.

At Easter we met at CHS to join others for the Good Friday Walk of Witness, joining many hundreds of other believers who met in the city centre to celebrate our Lord, the completion of his work on the cross and his resurrection to life.

Over the Christmas period our service attendance at CHS and StM swelled as we welcomed familiar faces and visitors alike.

Barbara and Keith would like to pay tribute to the work of former (and now deputy) warden Bob, without whom so much of our Sunday and other activities at St. Mary's could not continue. In 2025, Keith committed to attend St. Mary's at least once per month (normally on a second Sunday). We would also like to thank our Youth and

Community Worker Stacey, who in November completed her first year in the role. Young people are the Church of today, and Stacey's work remains a vital community and Parish resource not only among our young people, but among others whom she so faithfully serves. Similarly, your wardens would like to thank Stephanie and husband Roger, without whose work we could not have achieved so much in our Parish in 2025. Thanks too to all who volunteer their time, energy and effort to ensure that our Parish remains at the heart of our local community where we can find hope, safety, learning and, with both CHS and StM, be the worshipping and serving heart of the Parish. Thank-you for all you do.

As Churchwardens we remain your lay representatives supporting and serving our Clergy and congregation. Should you have any questions or concerns, you are always welcome to get in touch.

Other Matters: Warden Barbara also serves as our Parish Safeguarding Officer (see report about this that follows) and Warden Keith serves as PCC Lay Chair along with Canon Stephanie as PCC Chair. Together with the PCC they ensure that the Parish meets the requirements of its Statutory Charitable Object, which is promoting in the ecclesiastical parish the whole mission of the Church. Mission Ongoing!

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 2025, 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. We have been fortunate to recruit two new volunteers this year.

There have been concerns for a child in the Parish who visits the church for food and company. Referrals were made to the appropriate organisations. We were able to offer support to the child and their family. This is ongoing.

LYNCHPIN'S REPORT

The purpose of the South-West Chelmsford Churches Lynchpins is to encourage collaboration and supportive relationships between the four churches in our Mission and Ministry Partnership (MMP): St Luke's (Moulsham), St Michael's (Galleywood), CHS (Widford) and St Mary's (Widford). In 2025, we also shared an Ash Wednesday Service at St Mary's, Maundy Thursday at St Michael's and an Easter dawn Service at St Luke's followed by a cooked breakfast and an Ascension Day Service at St. Mary's. In September we met again at St. Michael's for picnic lunch together and then followed by an outdoor service in their copse. Folk from the Methodist Church joined as well making for a good time of fellowship. A Healing Service in November was well attended at Church of the Holy Spirit and people found it beneficial.

RECTOR'S REPORT

This is a Parish which is lively and interesting, with lots going on, but most importantly we can find a wide variety of ways of serving the Lord.

I look forward to prayers with Val on a Wednesday and we would love others to join us, and prayers on the first

Monday in the month. Prayer is so important and there is always too much to pray for. Thank you to those who spend some time talking things through with our God – who knows us and already has the plans, but so longs to hear from us.

Highlights of last year were: our pancake party remains a huge success. Thanks to Roger and his team who cook for us and to everyone who came to join in and enjoy pancakes, quizzes, toppings galore and friendship. Bradwell Pilgrimage; a great opportunity to meet with fellow Christians from all over the diocese. It was well organised, the weather was kind and the company was good.

At Christmas we shared in Christingle with many groups that meet with us. At Church of the Holy Spirit this launched Advent for us and many of our Baptism families and church families attended. We hope that the message of God's light and love fed into their Christmas too.

I continue to visit the schools for assemblies (Harvest, Christmas and Easter) and look forward to the Widford Lodge leavers and Westlands leavers assembly too. I am Chair of Governors at Westlands school and so always look forward to my time in school and their visits to us too.

Messy church is a highlight for me, each month. The team work hard to find relatable crafts to the story and take time to talk to the children about God and Jesus. We hope that the message of God's love for all is clear in the fun and fellowship that we have together.

In our services we continue to be blessed by a number of people who offer to preach and lead worship. We remain very grateful to them for their time in preparation, but also in training. This year we followed the National church 'We Believe' course. It was good to learn more about our faith and to be able to explain what we believe and why.

Stacey has settled well into her role. She is running a number of groups and joining in with café and lunch club. She has a much bigger network of people in the parish to work with and who support her. Please pray for the groups and for Stacey and her team of helpers. It makes a big difference.

The year brings its inevitable sadnesses, and our thoughts and prayers go out to all those whose loved ones have died. May they rest in peace and rise in glory.

I remain forever grateful to Barbara and Keith and all of the PCC members, and to Helen our bookkeeper. Thank you.

Then I look out at the many groups and activities that we are able to offer our community and encourage people to join. We are grateful to the leaders and helpers in these groups and the sharing of God's love in so many different ways. Keep praying, keep loving.

Thank you
Reverend Stephanie

Treasurer's Report **(Position vacant)**

Since April 2025 we have had no treasurer, so as we pay tribute to our former treasurer Peter Wood who now worships elsewhere in Chelmsford, all of the work has had to be restructured among the Finance Group, the Office (ably assisted by Dan), our Bookkeepers Helen and Kerel, (thanks to you all) and the wardens. The figures are presented on the following pages. The short version is that Parish Finances remained stable in 2025, but we will need to remain vigilant to ensure that as a parish we remain financially sustainable. The following pages provide our signed examined statutory financial report and accounts.

Statement of Assets and Liabilities

Widford Parish Church
As at 31 December 2025
Cash Basis

	31 DEC 2025	31 DEC 2024
Fixed Assets		
Tangible Assets		
Loan to St Lukes	2,250.00	3,375.00
Total Tangible Assets	2,250.00	3,375.00
Total Fixed Assets	2,250.00	3,375.00
Current Assets		
Cash at bank and in hand		
Equals Money - GBP	125.28	577.20
PCC Widford Fees	713.00	621.00
Current Widford Parish PCC	9,765.16	4,700.77
Widford Parish PCC Savings	26,368.79	11,229.70
CCLA Widford St Mary PCC	120,492.75	130,492.75
Lunch Club and Cafe Float	20.00	438.83
Total Cash at bank and in hand	157,484.98	148,060.25
Other Debtors	740.00	-
Total Current Assets	158,224.98	148,060.25
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year		
PAYE Payable	(72.60)	-
Suspense	(1.25)	-
Wages Payable - Payroll	0.20	-
Total Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	(73.65)	-
Net Current Assets (Liabilities)	158,298.63	148,060.25
Total Assets less Current Liabilities	160,548.63	151,435.25
Net Assets	160,548.63	151,435.25
Capital and Reserves		
Current Year Earnings	9,113.38	-
Unrestricted Funds	28,049.44	20,942.50
URF General Fund Held (CCLA)	34,053.17	41,820.81
RF Organ (CCLA)	112.31	112.31
RF Benevolent Fund (CCLA)	12,607.23	12,607.23
Allocated CHS Solar	2,893.06	-
Budget Small Funds (CCLA)	-	1,806.83
DF Defibrillator (CCLA)	296.20	296.20
DF Dreams 23 (CCLA)	19,864.63	19,864.63
DF St Mary's Development Fund (CCLA)	39,760.78	39,760.78
DF CHS Heating (CCLA)	12,000.00	12,000.00

Statement of Assets and Liabilities

	31 DEC 2025	31 DEC 2024
DF Deaf Club (CCLA)	237.59	163.12
DF Made for More (CCLA)	1,560.84	2,060.84
Total Capital and Reserves	160,548.63	151,435.25

Statement of Financial Activities

Widford Parish Church

For the year ended 31 December 2025

Cash Basis

2025

Income

Donations	5,298.78
Gift Aid Claimed HMRC	4,782.33
Giving Cash greater than 30 CHS	750.00
Giving Cash less than 30 CHS	4,767.82
Giving Cash less than 30 St Mary's	3,670.30
Giving Electronic less than £30	465.70
Giving Envelopes Non Gift Aided CHS	601.35
Giving Envelopes Non Gift Aided St Mary's	6,070.00
Giving Gift Aided Envelope St Mary's	2,300.00
Giving Gift Aided Envelopes CHS	3,400.00
Giving to Bank Gift Aided	6,515.00
Giving to Bank Non-Gift Aided	540.00
Income from Baptisms	199.06
Income from Cafe inc Soft Play	3,575.91
Income from Car Park & Premise Hire CHS	7,616.00
Income from Car Park & Premise Hire St Mary's	9,392.00
Income from Crafters	280.40
Income from Deaf Family & Community Group	78.51
Income from Funerals	1,923.00
Income from Lunch Club	2,975.49
Income from Weddings	593.00
Income from Widford Waddlers	640.35
Income from Children & Youth Work	347.05
Interest Income	5,876.00
Other Revenue	796.49
Parish Giving Scheme	49,000.48
Sales	2,242.50
Total Income	124,697.52

Direct Costs of Ministry

Clergy Costs	30.00
DBF Costs	1,549.00
Direct Wages	210.00
Expenses from Cafe inc Soft Play	2,446.38
Expenses from Crafters	345.24
Expenses from Deaf Family & Community Group	4.04
Expenses from Lunch Club	2,499.80
Expenses from Widford Waddlers	650.34
Expenses from Children's and Youth Work	1,083.47
Funeral Expenses	657.00

PCC Financial Report – Year Ending 31 December 2025

The Parish of Widford St. Mary with Church of the Holy Spirit (Chelmsford), a Registered Charity (1128307) organised by the Parochial Church Council, whose charitable object is promoting in the ecclesiastical parish the mission of the whole church.

1. Financial Summary

The financial position of Widford Parish remains strong and stable. During 2025 the parish received **total income of £124,698**, reflecting the continued generosity of the congregation and the success of several church activities and community initiatives. Income was drawn from regular giving, Gift Aid, the Parish Giving Scheme, building and car park hire, community activities such as the café and lunch club, occasional offices (baptisms, weddings and funerals), interest on investments, and other sources.

The **largest single source of income** continues to be the **Parish Giving Scheme (£49,000)**, demonstrating the importance of regular planned giving to the ongoing life and ministry of the parish. Additional income was generated through premises hire and car parking (£17,008 combined), community activities including the café and lunch club, and interest from investments (£5,876).

Direct ministry and activity costs for the year totalled **£63,355**. This includes the **Parish Share (£51,942)**, which represents the parish's contribution to the wider work of the diocese, as well as costs associated with church activities such as the café, lunch club, children and youth work, pastoral support, hospitality, and service-related expenses.

Administrative and operational costs amounted to **£52,229**. These include insurance, utilities, salaries, printing and communications, repairs and maintenance, professional fees, charitable giving, and the general costs associated with maintaining the church buildings and supporting staff and volunteers.

After all income and expenditure, the church recorded an **operating surplus of £9,113** for the year. This represents a positive financial outcome and reflects careful stewardship alongside generous giving and active community engagement.

2. Assets and Financial Position

At the end of 2025, the church held **net assets of £160,549**. This includes **£157,485 held in bank accounts and investments**, alongside a **£2,250** loan to St Luke's due to be paid back at the end of 2026. Current liabilities were minimal, leaving the church in a financially secure position overall.

3. Understanding Our Funds

Of the total funds held, **£71,215 are held as unrestricted funds**, including the general fund and unrestricted reserves held within the CCLA investment account. These funds are available to support the general running, ministry, and mission of the Parish.

The remaining balance is held within a number of **restricted and designated funds**, including funds relating to the organ, benevolent work, building improvements, heating, community initiatives, and other specific projects. These funds have been given or set aside for particular purposes and therefore can only be used where expenditure clearly aligns with the intention of the fund.

4. Faithful and Active Stewardship of Restricted Funds

Restricted and designated funds represent the generosity and trust of those who have given towards particular aspects of the Parish's life and mission. They often support long-term projects, building improvements, ministry initiatives, or community work. As such, these funds must always be used carefully and in accordance with the purpose for which they were given.

At the same time, restricted funds are not intended simply to accumulate. They exist so that the church can carry out the work and ministry they were intended to support. Where legitimate in-year expenditure clearly falls within the scope of a restricted or designated fund, it is both appropriate and responsible to draw on that fund to meet those costs.

Doing so ensures that gifts are actively supporting the purposes for which they were given, while also helping to protect unrestricted funds for the day-to-day ministry and operational needs of the Parish. This approach strengthens the overall financial sustainability of the parish.

More importantly, using restricted funds appropriately honours the intention and generosity of those who gave them. Funds entrusted to the parish for particular purposes are intended to support the life and mission of the parish in practical ways. Where expenditure is clearly valid within the terms of the fund, using those resources is both good financial management and faithful stewardship.

5. Looking Ahead

While the parish currently remains in a strong financial position, it is important to recognise that **giving during the coming year is expected to reduce** following the departure of some regular and substantial givers from the congregation. Regular giving forms the backbone of the parish's income, and changes in the giving base can therefore have a noticeable impact on future finances.

For this reason, careful stewardship and thoughtful financial planning will continue to be important in the year ahead. The PCC will need to monitor income and expenditure closely, while also considering how restricted and designated funds may appropriately support particular areas of work when eligible expenses arise. By doing so, the parish can continue to sustain its ministry and mission while maintaining a responsible and balanced financial position.

Widford Parish has no treasurer. This report was prepared using our financial statements with the assistance of ChatGPT. In the absence of a parish treasurer, the Wardens maintain parochial financial accountability.

APPROVED BY WIDFORD PCC 16TH MARCH 2026

SIGNED: Stephanie Gillingham

STEPHANIE GILLINGHAM

CHAIR

K. Schofield

KETH SCHOFIELD

LAY CHAIR

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO
PARISH OF ST. MARY WIDFORD – 1128307

This report on the Financial Statements of the PCC for the year ended 31 December 2025 is in respect of an examination carried out under Section 145 of the Charities Act 2011.

Respective responsibilities of the trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts; The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 (The Charities Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- Examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act.
- To follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners (under section 145(5)9(b) of the Charities Act); and
- To state whether any particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with general directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seeking explanations from the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair' view, and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

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 Charities Act; and
 - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act have not been met; or
- (2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



C Pardoe FCA
Chartered Accountant
37 Fraser Close
Chelmsford
Essex CM2 0TD

Date: 18 March 2026

PCC Fees Account

The opening Balance 1.1.25 was £621.00

During the year we were less busy than in 2024

In 2025, Stephanie presided over 9 funerals who included Ann Barnett and Vicky Smith.

There was only one Wedding that of Jacob Squirrell and Emily Selvage both of whom have family connections with our churches.

Priority Business Services Ltd have confirmed my figures.

The closing balance stood at £713.00 and we show a surplus of £464.00.

Subject to approval by our auditor Mr. Colin Pardoe any surplus will be transferred to our Current account.

Parish Office

The team consists of: Barbara Oxlade, Shirley Deering, Val Haywood, Barbara Jones and Bob Wiseman. Each member has distinct roles to perform we hope this avoids duplication and therefore means we work as efficiently as possible.

The PCC purchased a new printer in the latter part of the year as the old printer was becoming troublesome and close to the end of its life.

We have noticed a reduction in the number of people coming to the office with their inquiries, this is put down to the growth of online communication. We are the public face of the church and realise the importance of being friendly when interacting with the public. We do our best to support everyone who calls upon us for help.

Volunteers

A big thank you to all people who help our church and parish life to run smoothly by contributing in some way. Far too many to mention by name but you know who you are and you are appreciated.

Thanks go to our churchwardens, Barbara Jones, Keith Schofield and Deputy Warden Bob Wiseman. Thanks to Peter Wood who has now stepped down as the church Treasurer with grateful thanks for his support to Keith and Barbara and the Finance Team in enabling us to set up a successful working arrangement with Helen Armstrong who is now our bookkeeper. This transition has generated a lot of work for people and we are grateful that it is now running smoothly. Thanks to Pam Myall as our PCC Secretary and the PCC Team.

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 in person from January to November excluding April and August.

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 2025 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 up until April 2025)

Keith Schofield (Lay Chair)

Bob Wiseman

Colin Groves

Jessica (Jess) Wiseman

Karen Cooney

Tamzin (Tammy) Squirrell

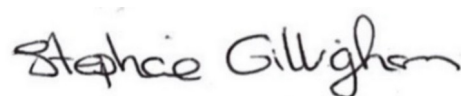
Pat Brown

Pam Myall

Hilary Selwood

James Pollock

Report approved by the PCC on 16th March 2026



and signed on their behalf

by

(Rector and PCC Chair)

The Parish of Widford
ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING
19th April 2026 in St. Mary's, Widford
AGENDA

A. Meeting of Parishioners Election of Churchwardens

B. 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 6th April 2025
- 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) Swift Boxes
 - (ii) Disabled access to St. Mary's
- 17) Any Other Business
- 18) Date for the next APCM -Sunday 18th April, 2027
- 19) Close with prayer

Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Council Meetings of the Parish of Widford

held on Sunday 6th April 2025, at 11.30am, at St Mary's

Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Council Meetings of the Parish of Widford

held on Sunday 6th April 2025, at 11.30am, at St Mary's

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

Revd Stephanie Gillingham, in the chair, explained that, generally, there is a limit of six years of consecutive service for any warden. Barbara Jones had completed her six years, but was willing to continue for another year, and no-one else had come forward to take her place. Stephanie put the following motion to the meeting: Until repealed by a meeting of Parishioners, this meeting agrees to set aside section 3 of the Churchwardens' Measure 2001: Disqualification after six periods of office.

The motion was carried. 20 parishioners voted in favour; 2 voted against and there was one abstention.

B. Meeting of Parishioners Election of Churchwardens.

Barbara Ann Jones had been nominated by Tamzin Squirrell and seconded by Owen Francis. 20 parishioners voted in favour, there were no votes against.

Keith J. Schofield had been nominated by Pam Myall and seconded by Christopher Button. 24 parishioners voted in favour, there were no votes against.

Barbara and Keith were duly elected Churchwardens for the coming year.

C. ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

Present: Revd Stephanie Gillingham (Chair); Keith and Sheila Schofield; Barbara and Alan Jones; Tammy Squirrell; Colin White; Gill and Peter Wood; Pat Brown; Joan Barker; Lynette Hunwicks; Jane and Bob Wiseman; Janet and Bob Pettifer; Janet Hazell; Janet Robinson; Hilary Selwood; James Pollock; Barbara Oxlade; Owen Francis; Lionel Blanks; Roger Gillingham; Eddie Carpenter; Shirley Deering; Su Redman; Zoe Myall; Maureen Hart; Coralie and Daniel Gullick; Pam Myall.

1. Welcome and Prayer Stephanie welcomed everyone and opened the meeting with Prayer.

2. Apologies for Absence had been received from Linda Stephens; Janet Aldridge; Christopher Button; Rosalynnd and Tony Griffiths; Jess Wiseman; Roger and Janet Bird; June Hogarth; Sandra Kyte; Sylvia Skardon; Colin Groves.

3. Notification of Any Other Business There was none.

4. Minutes of the previous APCM, held on Sunday 21st April 2024

The record of item 8 (Finance), line 4, should read – "Peter expressed sincere thanks to Bob for his work in letting out car parking places. This is a great help in our overall financial position." With this correction, the Minutes were accepted as a true record of the meeting. 15 members voted in favour. There were 2 abstentions.

5. Matters Arising None that were not on the agenda.

6. Stephanie's Report (Rector of Widford Benefice) Stephanie expressed thanks, especially to the Wardens and Treasurer, but also to everyone present – each of whom makes a significant contribution to the work of the Parish.

In the coming year, Stephanie proposed that the PCC lead us in using the Travelling Well Together resources, presented to us by Bishop Guli, with a special focus on Romans 8, verse 31 If God is for us, who can be against us?

Stephanie felt that it would be good to concentrate on our working collaboratively, being 'openly honest', thus deepening our relationships and our faith.

7. Electoral Roll Shirley, our Electoral Roll Officer, reported that, in the complete revision this year 52 Electoral Roll forms had been returned. – (a reduction of 20 from the previous roll). It was mentioned that electoral roll forms could be completed at any time, to qualify for voting at the next APCM.

8. Annual Reports were available to be read in the booklet that had been distributed on line, and on paper. Stephanie drew attention to a few of them. There was a correction to the Holiday Bible Club report (on page 4). The last five lines of the report had referred to the HBC in 2023, so should be deleted. In 2024, in the course of the club, we learned the memory verse – Ephesians 5, verse 1 – You are God’s children whom He loves, so try to be like Him.

Live Performances - If Prison Walls could Speak and Amos and the Grumpy Owl had been offered to the Parish as a gift from the church.

Lunch Club Stephanie expressed thanks to Sheila, Pam and all helpers. Lunch club is very popular- and a significant part of our mission. Visitors would be welcome to ‘taste and see’.

Wid Wads Stephanie expressed appreciation for all that Jane, Zoe and Sheila do to serve the Parish - the young children, with their parents/grandparents/carers, at this popular toddler group on Thursdays.

Tithe The new tithes for 2025 had been selected and would appear in Churchtalk.

World Day of Prayer Stephanie thanked Jess for a successful event.

9. Finance Peter presented his Report (5/3/25) which was printed separately from the Annual Reports booklet.

2024 ended on a positive note financially, taking into account that we had been able to support St Luke’s hall roof fund. This was aided by a significant income from interest (£7,000), the car parking revenue (thanks to Bob), a blessing that the Parish Share remained the same.

£12,000 had been put aside for the time when the heating system at CHS needs replacement. (Grants can be applied for if a certain level of funding has been accumulated.)

Peter recommended the Parish Giving Scheme – especially for those who pay tax, because Gift Aid applications are automatically dealt with.

Peter thanked everyone who helps with the counting on Sundays.

All payments were now made by internet banking, so we are grateful to all those who have mastered the system and those who have accepted the role of authorising payments – Sheila, Keith, Barbara and Bob.

After four years as Treasurer, Peter was standing down. He had learned a lot, not least from the challenges.

Peter prayed that we would continue to be committed to God in our pockets.

Helen Armstrong, an external Accountant, would be leading the work on Parish finances – aided by several people within the Parish.

Stephanie gave a warm vote of thanks to Peter for all his work.

At Keith’s prompting, the meeting approved the accounts.

10. Wardens’ Fabric Reports St Mary’s

Keith reported that the Quinquennial Report on St Mary’s recommended the investment of around £26,000-worth of work before the next Quinquennial in 2029 – of this, about £1,800 in 2025. The Architect praised the way the church fabric has been looked after. Keith thanked everyone who contributes with time and money.

CHS Five companies were bidding for the job of installing solar panels on the south-facing roof. This would involve an investment of around £18,000, + £2,000 for extras. Keith was looking into the various possibilities.

Alan Jones expressed concern at the lack of children in our services, and the advancing age of our congregations. Are we putting enough emphasis on changing visitors into regular members?

Keith made the point that it is up to each one of us to invite folk/share our faith.

Joan made a plea for a real revival, prayer for souls to be saved. She questioned whether food needs to be involved in so many occasions – (Do we need Café Church?)

Keith shared the view that we need to help people to feel they Belong, then, when they come to Believe, they will Behave as Christians.

There is always room for us to do better.

Barbara Jones introduced herself in her role as Safeguarding Officer for the Parish. Her work has included making sure that anyone who works regularly with children should have a DBS certificate and anyone who wishes to help out is safely recruited.

11. Deanery Synod Bob, Hilary, Stephanie (as Rector) and Jess (as Diocesan Synod member) were our representatives. 2024 was a good year, with a highlight being the Deanery Day.

12. Lynchpins St John's Moulsham had withdrawn from the South West Chelmsford Mission and Ministry Partnership. The Archdeacon was supporting that Parish, especially, because they had lost two priests in charge within three years. At the time of our meeting, they had an interim minister.

Alan asked what is the purpose of the MMPs? Stephanie explained that Bishop Stephen had been concerned about priests becoming isolated and recommended groups of parishes joining for mutual support and effective working. Stephanie meets David Cattle regularly, for prayer, and also Suzanne (who hopes to ease back into her role in St Luke's).

13. Election to Lynchpins For 2025, Shirley was nominated by Pam Myall and seconded by Archie Gibbons, Tamzin Squirrell was nominated by Pam Myall and seconded by Roger Gillingham. Both were accepted as lynchpins.

Jess Wiseman was away – she had expressed a willingness to continue as a Lynchpin if no-one else wanted to accept our third lay position, (but would

normally be unable to attend weekday meetings). The meeting agreed that Jess, or another church member could be co-opted to this role.

14. Election of PCC Members Pat Brown had held a place on PCC for three years, but was willing to continue. She was nominated by Pam Myall and seconded by Joan Barker. James Pollock had been co-opted onto PCC in 2024. He was nominated by Sheila Schofield and seconded by Pam Myall.

These were the only nominations. Both Pat and James were elected unanimously. [Peter Wood resigned from PCC].

15. Appointment of Independent Examiner After many years, George Large had retired from being our Independent Examiner.

Keith had spoken with a local accountant, Colin Pardoe, who would be willing to take on this role for the 2025 accounts. He would charge between £300 - £600. (Keith believed this would be reasonable for our church).

All members of the meeting agreed to appoint Colin Pardoe.

Bob informed the meeting that George Large had agreed to examine the Fees Account again for this year.

16. Any Items for Discussion i) Eco discussion Both churches had achieved Silver Award status. Should we go for Gold? What would this require? Stephanie suggested that we would need to think in a bigger scale; perhaps invite speakers to share what is going on in other areas; consider what banks are approved etc. Tammy thought that we would need to establish that we purchase our energy from a company that supports eco projects in developing countries. (Linda Percival (Diocesan Eco Adviser) had contacted Bob, on Jess' recommendation.)

ii) Disabled Access to St Mary's Bob reflected that this was a long-term project. Revised drawings had been submitted to the Council. Next, they would have to go to the DAC for a faculty recommendation; then, to the Chancellor in London for approval. Keith added that the Council insisted on Archaeological investigation of the ground under the proposed development. So, there would need to be an interval in the groundworks. (The comment was heard "Huge steps to go to no steps").

17. Any Other Business No Mow May In the interests of the environment, the grass around CHS is not cut in May. Keith proposed the cutting of a 'No Mow Maze' in June – for children to have some fun.

The Bradwell Pilgrimage on 5th July 2025, between 10.30am – 3.15pm. Stephanie and the Lynchpins encouraged us to make a note of the date. It is a very special occasion, lifts would be available and it is Free!

18. Date for the next APCM Sunday 19th April 2026, at CHS.

19. Stephanie thanked all members for staying on after our service. Barbara Jones closed the meeting with Prayer at about 12.30pm.

Leadership in Widford Parish: We are developing teams – do let us know if you would like to join one. As at the end of 2025, 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: Vacancy

Deanery Synod: Bob Wiseman, Jess Wiseman and Hilary Selwood

South West Chelmsford Lynchpins: Tammy Squirrell, Shirley Deering and Chris Button (now deceased)

Licensed Lay Minister: Roger Gillingham

Licensed Lay Preacher: Keith Schofield, Jen Gaskin, Pam Myall, Jess Wiseman

Preachers: Zoe Myall, Bob Wiseman

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

Caretaker: Tammy Squirrell (until December 15th 2025)

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

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

Children's work: Stacey Ellis, Tammy Squirrell, Pam Myall

Churchtalk: Barbara Oxlade, Jess Wiseman and Bob Wiseman

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

Friday Afternoon St. Mary's Open Church Working Group Coordinator: Bob Wiseman

Gift Aid: Sheila Schofield and Hilary Selwood

Messy Church Team: Stacey Ellis, Pam Myall, Shirley Deering, Sheila Schofield, Jen Gaskin, Zoe Myall, Barbara Jones, Cindy Necker, Clare, James and Gill Pollock, Lynette Hunwicks, Denise Blackwood and Stephanie Gillingham

Mission and Evangelism Team: Stephanie Gillingham

Music and Hymn Choice: Hymn Choice by Service Leader and Music by Dan Gullick at St. Mary's. Keith Schofield, Sheila Schofield, Barbara Jones, Denise Blackwood, Chris Button, Lisa Quilter, and Roger Gillingham

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

Prayer Chain: Barbara Jones

Prayer Ministry Coordinator: Stephanie Gillingham

Prophecy: Pat Brown

Quiz Masters: Bob Wiseman

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

Sound and Visuals: 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: Jess Wiseman (Website, FB) and Keith Schofield (FB)

Wednesday Lunch Club: Sheila Schofield & Pam Myall

Wid-Wads Team: Jane Wiseman, Sheila Schofield, Zoe Myall 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 Necker and Janet Alldridge at Church of the Holy Spirit and Shirley Deering, Janet Bird, Jackie Dickens, Linda Stephens, Denise, Jane Wiseman, Denise Blackwood and Paula Groves at St. Marys.



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