



Showing and Sharing God's Love

**Annual Report
and
Financial Statement
of the Parochial Church Council
for the year ended 31 December 2025**

Incumbent

The Revd Richard Wise
The Rectory
10 Stoke Park Road
Bishopstoke

Independent Examiner

Stephen Collyer

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

St Mary's Church is situated in Church Road, Bishopstoke, and St Paul's Church is in Fair Oak Road, Bishopstoke. Together the two churches serve the Parish of Bishopstoke. The Parish is part of the Diocese of Winchester within the Church of England. The address for correspondence is: The Rector, 10 Stoke Park Road, Bishopstoke. SO50 6DA.

PCC members who have served from 1 January 2025 until the date this report was approved are:

Clergy

The Revd Richard Wise

Chair

Church warden

Cherry Challis

Also Vice Chair

Ex-officio

Margaret Ward (LLM)

Representatives on the Deanery Synod (Ex-officio Members)

Ann Brown

Michael Thornton

From APCM 2025

Elected Members

Sibongile Armstrong

Pamela Boyes

Until APCM 2025

Karen Caws

Julia Clarke

From APCM 2025

Jenny Holden-Warren

From APCM 2025

Carla Hollinghurst

also Treasurer from January 2025

Lynda Mumford

Jeanette Neale

Shirley Smeal

Until APCM 2025

Louise Unsworth

From APCM 2025

Structure, governance and management

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. All Church attendees are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and stand for election to the PCC. Licensed Lay Ministers (LLMs) are ex-officio.

Objectives and Activities

Bishopstoke PCC has the responsibility of co-operating with the Incumbent in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish the whole mission of the Church: pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. It also has maintenance responsibilities for St Mary's Church, Church Road, Bishopstoke; St Paul's Church, Fair Oak Road, Bishopstoke; and the Church Room, Stoke Park Road, Bishopstoke.

Other committees may meet and report back to full meetings of the PCC. Membership of these committees is not necessarily restricted to PCC members.

Standing Committee is required by law and consists of the Incumbent, Church wardens and the Officers of the PCC. It sets the agenda for PCC meetings and has the power to transact the business of the PCC between its meetings, subject to any directions given by the Council.

Church membership, attendance and occasional offices

	2023	2024	2025
Electoral Roll	86 (15 not resident in parish)	90 (15 not resident in parish)	77 (16 not resident in parish)
Worshipping Community	108 (19 under 18)	121 (21 under 18)	114 (18 under 18)
Usual Sunday Attendance (adults)	49	55	56
Usual Sunday Attendance (children)	7	9	6
Baptisms	16	15	11
Thanksgivings	0	0	0
Confirmations	0	5	0
Weddings	4	3	4
Funerals	19 (12 in church)	14 (8 in church)	21 (13 in church) <i>One committal only</i>

The average of children on a 'usual Sunday' has been based only on those at Church Together. The average number of adults at Church Together services was 39 (38 in 2024), and the average number of adults at Parish Communion was 47 (47 in 2024). The average attendance at Messy Church was 18 adults and 11 children.

The Worshipping Community includes all those who attend church on a regular basis, whether or not they are on the Electoral Roll and including those who come regularly to a Fresh Expression (in our case, Messy Church). (The usual Sunday attendance figure does not include Messy Church attendees.) We have continued to welcome new people to our Church over the past year, whilst sadly saying farewell to a few others.

PCC review of the year

The full PCC had nine meetings during the year. As always, much of the PCC's work is reflected on in other parts of this report. In July, following discussion, we decided to advertise for a volunteer Anna Chaplain for the Parish, and in November a panel approved Janet Ashfield for the role, subject to undertaking the training. The PCC also approved a Lone Working Policy and a Volunteers' Expenses Policy. Health and Safety and Safeguarding are standing agenda items at every PCC meeting. Peta Thornton has continued to be our PCC minute taker, for which we are most grateful.

SAFEGUARDING

Keeping our Church worship, activities and premises safe for everyone in our parish is a key priority for the PCC, as is ensuring as far as possible that the organisations that regularly use our facilities are also able to achieve similar standards.

Safeguarding is a standing item on each PCC meeting agenda, and there will be a written or oral report presented for PCC scrutiny. The PCC is the responsible body for Safeguarding for the Parish. Safeguarding in the United Kingdom covers children and young people up to the age of 18 years and adults who are considered 'at risk' or vulnerable for whatever reason. The parish is taking part in the Diocesan (and national) Safeguarding Dashboard scheme. This evaluates mandatory Safeguarding effectiveness at three levels: Level 1 - Safer Foundations; Level 2 - Safer Activities; Level 3 - Safer

Practices. We reached Level 3 compliance, the highest level, in most areas in 2023 and are maintaining this level. This means the PCC has reviewed policies and procedures ensuring that these are in line with the requirements of best practice and the duty the PCC must have 'due regard' to the House of Bishops' Safeguarding Policy and Practice Guidance. Maintaining this level requires church members and the organisations that regularly hire our premises, to consistently and continuously adhere to mandatory requirements and apply best practice in Safeguarding.

In 2025 we extended this work to include the Church of England's related set of five National Safeguarding Standards (introduced in 2024). This is because the House of Bishops' Safeguarding Guidance is gradually being replaced by a new Safeguarding Code. The code is more explicit that clergy and PCCs must comply with the mandatory requirements, but it also introduces ongoing quality assurance into our Safeguarding practice. The standards are: Standard 1 - Culture, Leadership and Capacity; Standard 2 - Prevention; Standard 3 - Recognising, Assessing and Managing Risk; Standard 4 - Victims and Survivors; Standard 5 - Learning, Supervision and Support. The standards are supported by worksheets to help a PCC measure its progress over a three-year period. In 2025, we completed three of the four published worksheets, and we will complete the fourth by March 2026, covering culture and leadership, promoting the welfare of vulnerable groups, support to victims and survivors of abuse, and support to those involved with Safeguarding.

The Parish had been using a Church of England online DBS checking service for several years, but in August 2025 we learned that personal data from seven volunteers had been compromised by a data breach related to this service. This was a worrying time for those concerned, and the Parish promptly followed all the guidance and support offered by the DBS contractor and the Diocese, immediately informing those volunteers affected, offering advice about how to improve personal data security, spam or phishing emails and telephone calls, and completing a report to the Information Commissioner. Subsequently, the Church of England has provided an information and credit check service to those affected. The Diocese is seeking an alternative online service for DBS checks; meanwhile, we are reverting to hard copy paper declarations.

Margaret Ward, Parish Safeguarding Officer

WORSHIP

Services

I am very grateful to everyone who has contributed to our worship in any way over the past year, not least Margaret Ward (LLM) and Pat Abbott (BCM Worship) for leading worship and preaching. Thank you to everyone who reads or leads intercessions at our more formal services, and to those who facilitate zones at Church Together.

We used the lectionary readings for almost all the year and continue to use Roots on the Web for resources, which particularly helps with ideas for Church Together. Christian Aid's Church Engagement and Fundraising Officer for Surrey, Hampshire, and Isle of Wight, Anitha Santharaj, came to speak to us during May in advance of Christian Aid Week, and we had two visiting speakers – Kate Powell (Southampton Port Chaplain) and David Lloyds – during December to speak about The Mission to Seafarers, our Christmas charity.

I am very grateful to all who lead and play for the musical aspect of our worship: Jon Senior and our worship band; Ann Arnold, for her playing at St Paul's almost every week of the year and sometimes singing; Phil Dunford for playing at Parish Communion and most of our weddings and funerals. I am also very grateful to Ann and Jon for their song choices, which invariably fit our Bible passages and

themes extremely well. The ad hoc choir for Carols by Candlelight grew even more in number this year and sang incredibly well on just three rehearsals, directed by Ann with Phil at the organ.

We continued to offer prayer ministry once or twice a month at St Mary's, and for the tenth year running we encouraged people to take part in the global prayer initiative 'Thy Kingdom Come'.

Richard Wise

Children and Young People

Children and young people continue to play a major part in both Messy Church (see p.7) and Church Together.

DISCIPLESHIP

Prayer Healing Fellowship

Last year I was able to report no deaths in the group, but sadly this year we have lost two treasured members: Joy Barnard, our Treasurer for many years, died on 15 March, and dear Chris Tilly on 23 October. Neither of them were able to attend meetings for some years but maintained an interest in PHF right to the end.

God is so good! I can report that this year Rose, Denise, Julia and Pauline have joined us and swelled our numbers to 16! Each week, numbers can vary from 8 - 16!

I am so very grateful to every member for their love, loyalty and support, but I would especially like to thank Cherry, my deputy; Margaret for tea and coffee; Rose for cakes each month when we celebrate birthdays; Pat and Ann for playing the keyboard; everyone who reads during the meeting; Richard, who takes communion for us three times a year; and those who put chairs back ready for the next service. We are all so sad that our dear St Paul's is no longer fit for purpose, but we will continue with our mission, praying for the church and the world, and particularly for those who are sick. We continue to send cards all over the world and know from some feedback how much they are appreciated. Even non-Christians love to know someone cares enough to pray for them in their hour of need. We meet every Monday at 2.30pm at St Paul's, and everyone is welcome.

Sheila Sebborn

Home Groups

Two home groups continued to meet on Tuesday evenings during 2025.

Our home group meets in person at St Mary's, usually on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month. We have 16 members, but a few find it hard to come regularly, and sometimes people take a break from the group. During the year, we finished working through Mark's Gospel, read and discussed 'The Hopeful Activist', had an evening on centring prayer, and started The Lectio Course.

Richard Wise

Our group meets on Zoom on the first and third Tuesdays of the month during school term times. Over the last twelve months we have been looking at Mark's Gospel using studies based on books by Tom Wright. We have had some new members, but others have moved away; our membership now stands at eight. This group is particularly useful for those who cannot easily travel from their homes in the evening but have access to the internet. For further information, please contact me.

Margaret Ward

PASTORAL CARE

During 2025 there were many opportunities for pastoral care amongst the people of St Mary's and St Paul's, as well as in the wider community, especially those we welcomed to our social events and family occasions. Face to face, telephone and Zoom conversations continued, as well as home communions and hospital visits. As in previous years, mid-week worship and Communion services took place at Bishopstoke Park retirement village, Orchard Gardens (until late summer), and Stoke Knoll. Requested individual visits also took place at the local care homes. In March, a coffee morning was organised at Bishopstoke Park for residents who come to services at St Mary's, and in December, Ann and Richard were welcomed to the Bishopstoke Park carol service.

Special occasions were commemorated with handmade cards signed by congregation members. Get well wishes and flowers from Mothering Sunday and the Easter and Christmas decorations were taken to some house bound people. Prayer ministry continued to be available during and after some services, and there are always people prepared to listen to those wish to talk in confidence. Later in the year some of our pastoral visitors met with Margaret, our Safeguarding Officer, to discuss the new Lone Working Policy.

Please let Richard or one of us know if you would like prayers for yourself or for others. We can organise pastoral visits, home communion or opportunities to chat, as well as refer people to the Prayer Healing Fellowship. So let us all continue to communicate, so that we can support the wellbeing of each other. Our phone numbers can be found on the Welcome sheet and website.

Ann Brown & Joan Cook, Pastoral Care Coordinators

MISSION AND OUTREACH

Events

During 2025 we continued to hold events to raise funds for St Mary's Urgent Repairs, and it was wonderful to welcome many people into the church building. In addition to Café @ St Mary's, which took place eight times during the year, we hosted two Bishopstoke History Society presentations, had two quizzes (run by some of the bellringers, who also formed several teams), and held another hymnathon and a Harvest barn dance. Many thanks to everyone who arranged, planned, and provided things such as raffles and refreshments for these very enjoyable occasions.

Richard Wise

Cream Tea

The Cream Tea group, which first met on 9 July 2022, continues to be a much-valued part of church life. Meeting every other month on Saturday afternoons at St Mary's, it offers a warm and relaxed opportunity for people of all ages to come together for conversation, friendship, tea, cake and sandwiches, often with family members, neighbours and friends joining. It is open to everyone, and reflects the friendly and hospitable spirit of our church community. Attendance has remained strong throughout the year, and it is always a pleasure to see children and teenagers there as well, helping to make the gatherings feel truly intergenerational. The group continues to run on a donation only basis; the donations help to cover the cost of refreshments, and any surplus is shared each year between St Mary's Urgent Repairs fund and a local women's refuge. In this way, the group not only provides companionship and a sense of belonging, but also offers practical support to those in need within the wider community.

Sibo Armstrong

Messy Church

Messy Church continued to take place at St Paul's Church on the first Sunday of each month (except for a summer break in August). Each session begins with an hour of activities (usually around eight different activities to try out), followed by a short Celebration, where we sing, hear a Bible story and pray. We then move into the hall to enjoy a meal together.

The Young Leaders Team continues to meet once a month for pizza and planning, and it's been great having such a fantastic group of young people leading some of the activities at Messy Church. We had to say goodbye to one of our young leaders, Stephen, as he started university in September – we hope he will come back to be with us in the holidays!

A huge thank you to everyone who was involved in making Messy Church happen in 2025, whether through planning, leading activities, or preparing and serving the food.

Anne Wise

Open the Book

Open the Book is part of the work of Bible Society. Volunteers take assemblies in primary schools, the major part of which is reading and acting out Bible stories wearing costumes, with a brief introduction and closing reflection and prayer. Our team continued to give an assembly in both Stoke Park Infant and Stoke Park Junior Schools most weeks of the year, but sadly, since the start of the autumn term, neither Year 5 nor Year 6 have been to the assemblies. The Reception Year, however, came into assemblies from almost the start of the school year. The team includes two members of other churches in the area and had a total of nine members during the year. The assemblies continue to be much appreciated by both children and staff.

Richard Wise

School Pastors

Since September 2021 School Pastors have been patrolling the playground at Stoke Park Junior School every Tuesday lunchtime. Working alongside lunchtime supervisors, we continue to build positive and supportive relationships with the children. The original team comprised Martin Ward and Shirley Smeal from our church, together with Sharon Adams from St Thomas', Fair Oak. Last year, the team was delighted to welcome three newly trained Pastors: Julia Clarke, Peta Thornton and Sally-Ann Mitchiner, all from our church. Their addition has eased rota pressures and strengthened the overall team.

Training for School Pastors is provided by the Ascension Trust, with several modules shared with the Street Pastors programme. The quality of this training continues to be excellent, equipping volunteers to engage effectively and compassionately with pupils. Two School Pastors serve each week, maintaining a consistent and caring presence. Over the past five years, we have built strong and trusted relationships with pupils, staff and the headteacher. The team is encouraged by the appreciation shown by the school community. This is expressed through kind gestures such as thankyou cards, a summer cream tea, and thoughtful Christmas gifts and cards.

As School Pastors we provide a friendly and calming influence in the playground, helping to resolve minor upsets and offering reassurance to both children and staff. Pupils regularly seek us out for conversation, support, or simply to share in activities – a clear reflection of the positive impact our presence brings to school life.

Martin Ward

Tots and Tinies

Tots and Tinies is our term-time toddler group at St Mary's on Tuesday mornings for young children and their parents / carers. There are toys and craft activities, refreshments, and a story and song session at the end. We average around 10 parents / carers each week with their children, and aim to offer support and friendship to all who come. Many thanks to Wendy, Chris and Carla for all their help in running the group, and a huge thank you to Anne for leading it from when it started in 2017 until the end of 2025.

Richard Wise

Unshakeable

Unshakeable, a group for 11-17-year-olds on alternate Saturday evenings, enjoyed their usual varied mix of activities during the spring and summer of 2025:

- plenty of cooking – toffee popcorn, pancakes, chocolate Easter egg making
- wide games in the woods and a chip hike in Winchester
- lots of fun and games at St Mary's, both indoors and out
- rounded off the summer with our traditional beach trip to Southbourne

Sadly, partly due to not having enough regular leaders, the difficult decision was made to not restart the group in September 2025.

I would like to say a huge thank you to everyone who was involved with Unshakeable over the last 11 years, whether as a regular leader, giving up many of your Saturday evenings, or an occasional helper coming along to help with cooking, walks, staying up all night to watch films(!), trips, etc. There are many young people in Bishopstoke who have very happy memories of Saturday evenings spent at St Mary's, and we hope and pray that they will remember the church as a being a place where they belonged, where they felt welcomed and cared for.

Anne Wise

Creation Care

During 2024 the Eco team had morphed into 'Greening Bishopstoke' to join with the community in a project to make Bishopstoke a greener place to live. As part of this project, a group which included Sibbo set up a 'Toy Library' which is popular with families in the community and has been taken on by Carla, helped by Peta, Julia, and some mothers in Bishopstoke. At St Paul's, we set up a community garden, growing beautiful flowers and tasty veg. The aim was to provide food for us and pollinators, and we achieved this, involving the Pre-school. School children and team members designed a sign which you can see at St Paul's, and Jeanette is now involved in the leadership team for this. The church Eco team now needs to be restarted with a new leader, but we still have the wildflower meadow at St Mary's each year, and we are looking out for the appropriate time to change to green energy at St Mary's. We hope to continue to work on ecology at St Mary's to gain a silver Eco Church Award.

Karen Caws

Giving outside the Parish

Please see section G in the Financial Notes for most of the charities we supported last year. In addition to those, we supported Eastleigh Basics Bank in kind and The Leprosy Mission by hosting a stall at some of our Cafés.

Christian Aid

The Parish supported Christian Aid with three major fundraising events in 2025, raising funds as listed below. These amounts do not include Gift Aid. We would like to thank everyone who has helped with fundraising or contributed to the valuable sums raised. This enthusiastic support is so important. The Christian Aid Week Plant Sale, linked to Café @ St Mary's, is now part of our regular Church calendar, and it has been good to introduce a Plant Propagation morning a couple of months before the plant sale itself, enabling more people to have the opportunity to help.

- Special Appeal for Myanmar Earthquake Appeal - £691.00
- Christian Aid Week focus on sustainable farming in Guatemala - £1227.96
- Harvest Appeal focus on post-flood agriculture Sierra Leone - £367.00

Margaret Ward

BUILDINGS AND STEWARDSHIP

Fabric and Goods

St Mary's

In February we applied to the Diocese for a Minor Repairs and Improvements Grant for the rainwater goods around the lower part of the church to be cleaned out, repaired (where necessary) and painted, and were awarded £1,100. Our builder proposed replacing all the missing and broken roof tiles at the same time, to save the cost of hiring scaffolding on another occasion. Following a very popular 'Sponsor A Tile' campaign during September and October, all the work was undertaken during November and December.

We have put replastering the vestry on hold until other the other external works (mainly on the tower) have been undertaken. It would make sense to have the south wall replastered and painted at the same time.

We are still awaiting the design of a ladder for the bell tower which complies with Health and Safety regulations. We received some very expensive quotations for repairing the external clock but have now heard of another repairer who may be able to do this relatively cheaply.

During the year we had a visit from Ecclesiastical Insurance focused on St Mary's and a Parochial Visitation from the Diocese focused on both our church buildings, their contents, and various aspects of our governance and mission. These overlapped to a small extent, which was helpful. Preparation for the Parochial Visitation was quite intense, and since then we have had various remedial actions to undertake.

St Paul's

The only work undertaken at St Paul's during the year was a new external door to the hall, installed in February.

In July the PCC heard from Eastleigh Borough Council that they were unable to spend the £400,000 earmarked for St Paul's on the building, as the structure of the building was not in a sufficiently good state. Following discussion and reflection, the PCC voted unanimously to approach the Diocese about selling the building and site to benefit parish ministry in some way yet to be determined. Richard wrote to church members and St Paul's hirers to inform them of this decision, and hirers were guaranteed at least one further year at St Paul's, should they need it. Whilst St Paul's will be missed in some ways, the PCC has also shared positive thoughts about all our services and events being brought together in one building, giving a greater focus for our mission and ministry.

The whole premises is cleaned once a week, and we continue to pay for regular upkeep of the grounds. We are also very grateful to Greening Bishopstoke for continuing to make some of the grounds much more attractive and nature friendly (see p.8.)

Church Room

The Church Room continues to be used for both church and charitable storage.

Thank you so much to everyone who helped with building matters during the year, including Cherry Challis, our church warden, and all who clean the churches. We are also very grateful to the Parish Council for all their maintenance work in St Mary's churchyard and Old St Mary's churchyard.

Richard Wise

Financial Review

Summary

The Church's finances in 2025 remained sufficient to cover running costs, and we have made good headway on fundraising towards St Mary's Urgent Repairs. We were able to complete a section of the repair works this year. We received a grant of £1,100 from the Diocese, and the works were completed for around £21,000. We used funds from the fabric reserve fund rather than from the Urgent Repairs fund. The fund available for Urgent Repairs currently stands at £84,000. This is a very good amount to be able to apply for match-funded grants.

Phase 1 works were originally quoted at £122k inc-VAT (*VAT is no longer recoverable*), but we need to get new quotes, and based on information that the PCC has received, the order and extent of the works is likely to change. Our many successful events so far and other efforts raised a total of c£8k in 2025.

Our Reserves policy is to cover 3 months' running costs – after planned increases to Reserve and Fabric funds, unrestricted funds @£29.7k (2024: £10.9k) have increased. Voluntary income showed a large increase this year – largely due to a generous legacy and the continued good response to our appeals to raise money for the urgent repairs.

We made the difficult decision to sell St Paul's this year. This will initially lead to the loss of lettings income, and expenditure on fees for a solicitor and estate agent, before we hopefully gain funds from the sale. We therefore do not know what financial impact this will have over the next year or so.

Shown is our Statement of Financial Activities for 2025 with a breakdown of the Income and Expenditure Account as represented by General Funds and Reserves, and Funds Designated or Restricted for specific purposes. Monies are mostly held in HSBC and Cambridge & Counties.

Income

Voluntary giving in 2025 increased by around 2.7%. It is comforting to see an around inflation increase in general giving as well as the additional generosity from our efforts to raise funds for the urgent repairs – donations comprise c.71% of our income, mainly from parishioners regularly giving. Total income has increased this year largely due to the generous legacy that Reg Philmore blessed the Church with. The amount received this year was an interim payment of £15,000. The PCC intend to make a decision on how best to use these funds in a way that will honour Reg's memory.

Statutory fees income increased this year due mainly to an increase in the number of funerals. **We receive no state funding.**

Expenditure

The large increase in total spending compared to last year is largely due to the major roof and other exterior works undertaken. Total costs were £88.1k compared to £66.5k in 2024. The lettings income showed a small drop this year, while St Paul's Hall running costs increased. In July, we provided a year's notice to all groups that hire the hall, and one had already chosen to find new premises in the last quarter of the year, so both amounts will be decreasing significantly as of next year. The Common Mission Fund (CMF) request this year remained at the (reduced) 2022 level of £37k (2024: £37k). The Diocese has set a lower budget in the last few years in the hope that a higher percentage of CMF would be paid. That doesn't seem to have worked, though, and the Diocese has financial challenges going forwards. CMF represents over half of our non-capital spending – paying for Richard's stipend, housing costs and training, and other services provided by the Diocese (see www.winchester.anglican.org/common-mission-fund/).

Stewardship

Financial giving is a sacrificial, rewarding, expression of your faith and worship. Please consider giving regularly via the Parish Giving Scheme, Standing Order or weekly envelopes. We recover tax paid through Gift Aid. Please contact us for forms and details of these or about leaving a financial legacy. You can also give online (please see www.cofebishopstoke.com/giving-to-our-church).

This year we do not have Gift Aid totals as we are not currently ready to claim Gift Aid. This can be back dated, and so will be claimed at a later date, when I will share the figures with the Church. Thanks go to Natasha Redfern for all of her work on Gift Aid in previous years. Penny Roberts has kindly agreed to take on the Gift Aid Secretary role and is currently awaiting approval from HMRC.

Please can I take the time to thank Wendy Dale for all her years of banking the weekly cash receipts and keeping the fees account ledger. She has had to step down this year, and Julia and Rob Clarke have kindly taken over the cash banking, while Richard and I manage the fees account. Thank you, Wendy, and Julia and Rob. Thanks also to our Examiner Stephen Collyer, and to all who help to run our Church's finances.

Carla Hollinghurst

THE BELLRINGERS' GUILD

At the beginning of the year there were 28 members of the band at St. Mary's: Sandra Caro, Peter Cates, Sally Cates, Julia Clarke, Matthew Dancy, Alex Dicks, John Dodd, Richard Eames, Robert Eames, Allen Guille, Ben Knowles, Sean Langton, Ann LeMarechal, Kay LeMarechal, Roy LeMarechal, Stephanie LeMarechal, Helen McCormack, Alasdair Mead, Janet Morris, Alison Parker, Barry Pointer, Fiona Greener, Amanda Sheppard, Emily Sheppard, Elizabeth Skinner, Stephen Wise, Graham Wright and Kristine Wright.

New ringers – Kaiden Glanville returned in May. Freddie's sister, Isla, also started in May. Sadly, after making good progress, she joined a Thursday youth club in September and gave up.

Lost ringers – Amanda has stopped ringing. Her daughter, Emily has joined the St Mary Bourne band where she now rings with her father. Alasdair hasn't been seen this year. Peter Cates has stopped ringing due to failing health, including eyesight. Richard Eames has decided to retire from ringing. We heard of the death of two local ringers who had given up some time ago: Linda White (née Hallett) died on 22 November, and Reader Englefield died on 1 December. Some current ringers attended both funerals.

Demonstrations

On 8 May, following a VE Day quarter peal, we were visited by a bunch of Cub Scouts who had been engaged in some commemorative activities in the church. We took the opportunity to give them a quick demonstration, and then some 'hands on' rounds on the front 6.

Quiz

Roy and Allen ran more quizzes in the church to raise money for the building fabric. The ringers put in several teams. The quiz on 16 May raised £557, and another on 24 October raised £366.84.

In 2024 Stephen Wise requested a ringing challenge that he might complete as part of his Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award. In April this year he successfully completed the challenge of ringing a peal of Bristol Surprise Royal. As an extra result of this, later in the year Roy nominated him for membership of the Ancient Society of College Youths, the oldest ringing society in the world.

This year's outing was from 30 May to 1 June. We stayed in Rugby and visited 14 towers in the area. This included St Andrew's, Rugby, unique as having two towers, each with a ring of bells. 4 weddings had bells this year.

The bells were rung half-muffled for the Remembrance Sunday service, and then for a full peal on Armistice Day.

19 quarter peals were scored out of 21 attempts, mainly on Thursdays and first Sundays, frequently by entirely Bishopstoke ringers. Methods varied from Plain Bob Doubles to Cambridge Surprise Royal.

Local band peals

5 April: Plain Bob Major at St Mary's. This was only Ben's second peal and his first on an inside bell. It was also Helen's first peal for over 38 years!

2 August: Two Minor methods at Tredington, Gloucestershire. The reason for this visit was because Bishopstoke's former treble is now the treble at Tredington.

Striking competitions

17 May: We entered the Guild inter tower 6 bell competition at Wickham, coming 3rd of 7.

14 June: We provided half the band in the Guild's inter-district competition at New Alresford. We came a disappointing 4th.

20th September: In the W&P inter tower 8 bell competition we came 3rd out of 3. Hey ho.

18 May was Bell Sunday. Several of us chatted to the congregation, showing them our competition certificates and scrap books.

The bells were rung four times by visiting bands.

We held a tower barbecue on 23 August, hosted by Roy and Ann. 25 attended.

The 38th annual dinner, in lieu of practice, was held on 27 November. Arranged by Julia, 15 of us went to the Saffron in Eastleigh for an excellent meal.

Attendance on Thursdays and Sundays has been good. A selection of methods, including Grandsire, Erin and Stedman Triples; Cambridge, Yorkshire and Bristol Surprise Major; Grandsire and Erin Caters; and Little Bob Royal, are usually rung on Sunday mornings.

Roy LeMarechal

THE WIDER CHURCH

Deanery Synod

Eastleigh Deanery Synod met three times during 2025: in February at All Saints, Eastleigh; in June at St Paul's, Bursledon; and in October at St Boniface, Chandler's Ford.

In February members of the Diocesan finance team came to consult about the shared challenge of the worsening deficit between income and expenditure of the Diocese. Information about the budget was given in detail. During discussion it was pointed out that the expenses of the Bishops and Cathedral are paid directly by the Church Commissioners at no cost to the parishes. Collectively, Eastleigh Deanery had paid 100% of its Common Mission Fund (CMF). However, more than is collected from the parishes is needed to support parish ministry, church schools, training of ordinands and curates, and other services provided by the Diocese.

In June Bishop Rhiannon came to licence Revd John Pawson as the new Area Dean, and spoke about loving, serving, learning and growing, which are part of the Diocesan Walking the Wessex Way strategy instigated by the Bishop of Winchester in 2024. She emphasised the value of prayer as well as action in this troubled world.

Revd Georgi Thompson Leask spoke in October about Faith and Generosity. She congratulated Eastleigh Deanery for paying the whole of its CMF but said her talk was more about generosity in its fullest sense, i.e. generosity of time, talents and prayer. A Faith and Generosity week is planned for June 2026 using the themes of learning and loving taken from Walking the Wessex Way. Georgi reminded us of the parable of the mustard seed - from small shoots great things can grow.

In June Deaneries were asked to submit the results of consultations about Prayers of Love and Faith to the Diocese, and the results would be debated at General Synod. At the October meeting, we were given more details about the major data breach by Action Personal Checking Services, the provider used by many dioceses including Winchester. Margaret, our Safeguarding Officer, has this in hand.

In the news from the parishes slot, we heard that, on the whole, parishes had been welcoming new people, with one parish pleased to report several confirmations. Generally, fellowship was evident. Several parishes had increased their contact with local schools, and work with young people and children was steadily growing. Challenges across the Deanery seemed to centre on concern about raising money for church buildings and the lack of volunteers for leadership roles such as church wardens, treasurers and church secretaries. Each PCC is encouraged to discuss the wellbeing and support of their clergy. Each meeting ended with a time of open prayer, giving thanks for the joys and opportunities in each parish. More detailed minutes of each meeting in 2025 are available if required.

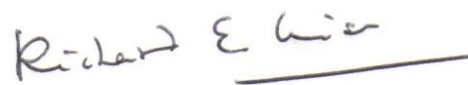
Ann Brown

Churches Together

The Churches Together in Bishopstoke, Fair Oak and Horton Heath group has continued to meet once per term, mainly for information sharing and prayer. This year we had a shared Ash Wednesday service again, this time at St Thomas'.

Our long-standing relationship with Bishopstoke Methodist Church continues. Once more we shared the open-air services on Good Friday and Easter Day, and our united Pentecost service was a Church Together service at St Mary's. We also continue to pray together at the Methodist Church most Tuesday mornings of the year, and anyone is most welcome to come along.

Approved by the PCC, and signed on their behalf by
Revd Richard Wise (PCC Chair)



April 2026

**PARISH OF BISHOPSTOKE
ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING
St Mary's Church, Bishopstoke
Sunday 27th April 2025**

MINUTES

The APCM was held at St Mary's Church. Revd Richard Wise presided over the meeting attended by 29 people.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Ann Arnold, Joan Cook, Carol Guttridge, Janet Henderson and Jeanette Neale.

2. Election of Church warden

Cherry Challis was proposed by Sheila Sebborn and seconded by Margaret Sharp. Following a show of hands, Cherry was re-elected as Church warden with no dissent.

3. Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting 2024

Copies of the minutes of the last APCM meeting were made available prior to this meeting. The minutes were approved by a show of hands and will be signed off as an accurate record by Revd Richard Wise.

4. Receiving of the Annual Report

Copies of the Annual Report had also been made available prior to the meeting. It was approved by a show of hands, having been proposed by Sheila Sebborn and seconded by Ann Brown as a true account of 2024.

5. Receiving of Accounts and Independent Examiner's Report

Carla Hollinghurst introduced herself as the new Treasurer. She summarised some of the financial details, in particular that there remain sufficient funds to maintain costs. Carla announced that approximately £10,000 has been raised in the Urgent Repairs fund, which, including monies available in the Fabric Fund, means that there is approximately £76,000 in total for the works. Voluntary income has increased this year by 16%, the restricted fund by 64%, and general giving by 8%. Carla also mentioned the generous legacy of £2,000 from Jane Lush.

Carla finished by expressing her thanks to Mike Harris for preparing all the accounts for this APCM and for helping her take on this new role.

The Accounts were proposed as acceptable by Lynda Mumford and seconded by Karen Caws. This is subject to the Independent Examiner, Stephen Collyer, completing the check and returning his report.

6. Report on the Electoral Roll

This year, we have 77 people on the electoral roll, with 16 living outside the parish. Richard added that more church members were eligible to join the revised roll, so the numbers could have been a little higher.

7. Election of Deanery Synod member

Michael Thornton volunteered for this role. Pat Abbott proposed him and Martin Ward seconded the proposal. He was elected by a show of hands with no dissent.

8. Election of Parochial Church Councillors

There were three nominations for the Church Council: Jenny Holden-Warren was proposed by Annette Dodd and seconded by Brian Dodd; Louise Unsworth was proposed by Karen Smeal and seconded by Wendy Dale; Julia Clarke was proposed by Martin Ward and seconded by Jenny Rogers. All three were approved by a show of hands without dissent.

9. Election of Sides people

St Mary's: Julia Bancroft, Edna Brown, Karen Caws, Wendy Dale, Jeanette Neale, Karen Smeal and Martin Ward.

Liz Farrington and Shirley Smeal would like to stand down.

Laura Chapman volunteered to join the sides people team.

St Paul's: Joan Cook, Janet Henderson and Marjorie Young.

All were approved on a show of hands.

10. Appointment of an Independent Examiner

At last year's APCM, we were unaware that Peter Cates would not be available to act as the Independent Examiner this year and therefore Stephen Collyer of Boyatt Wood has stepped in to fill the post. All approved the appointment of Stephen Collyer for this year.

11. Any Other Business

(i) Terrier and Inventory – both St Mary's and St Paul's will be brought to the May PCC meeting for any additions and approval.

(ii) Richard informed us that the number of people attending services each Sunday has increased a little and that the funds are better.

(iii) Following a question regarding what works are actually needed, from Julia Clarke, Richard ran through the various requirements. He explained that Margaret Ward is working on grant applications and that a new up-to-date quote is required for any applications.

(iv) Richard also mentioned that a recent allocation of funds from the Church of England to clean and repair the rainwater goods (total approximately £18,000) garnered £1,100. For a further £6,000, while the scaffolding is still up, J Bruno (conservation builder), could replace all the damaged and missing roof tiles. Consideration needs to be paid to where the money will come from. Margaret Ward suggested we go ahead with faith and trust. Murmurs of approval.

(v) St Paul's – the PCC are still awaiting the thoughts of the surveyors at Eastleigh Borough Council.

(vi) Martin Ward expressed thanks from all present to Richard Wise for all that he does within the parish.

The meeting closed with a prayer.

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING 2026

Agenda

1. Apologies
2. Election of Church wardens
3. Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting 2025

2025

4. Receiving of the Annual Report
5. Receiving of Accounts and Independent Examiner's Report

2026

6. Report on the Electoral Roll
7. Election of Deanery Synod members
8. Election of Parochial Church Councillors
9. Election of Sides people
10. Appointment of an Independent Examiner
11. Any other business and questions