



**St Andrew**  
STAPLEFORD

# Annual Meetings 2026

*St Andrew's annual meetings this year will follow the 10.30 am morning services on 10 May 2026. The timings below are therefore approximate.*

## **NOTICE OF THE MEETING OF PARISHIONERS**

The annual meeting of parishioners will be held in St Andrew's Church, Mingle Lane, Stapleford, CB22 5SY on Sunday 10 May 2026 at 11.30 am for the purpose of electing churchwardens.

Those resident in the parish whose names are on the local government register of electors and those on the electoral roll of the church are entitled to attend and vote.

## **NOTICE OF THE ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING**

The Annual Parochial Church Meeting will be held in St Andrew's Church, Mingle Lane, Stapleford, CB22 5SY on Sunday 10 May 2026 at 11.35 am.

Those on the electoral roll of the church are entitled to attend and vote.

## **NOTICE OF PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING**

A Parochial Church Council meeting will be held after the conclusion of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting.

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## AGENDAS

The meetings will be opened with prayer.

### **A. MEETING OF PARISHIONERS**

1. Minutes of 2025 meeting
3. Election of two churchwardens

### **B. ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING**

1. Minutes of 2025 meeting
2. Election of Deanery Synod Representatives  
Note: two representatives to serve for three years until 2028
3. Election of members of the laity to serve on the PCC

Note: four lay members to serve for three years until 2029, following the retirements of Fiona Holliday, Anne Roberts and Nicky West (plus one prior vacancy), and three to serve for two years following the resignation of Nell Jerram (plus two prior vacancies).

4. Election of two assistant churchwardens
5. Financial statements & reports
6. Appointment of Independent Examiner for 2026
7. Parochial Church Council Reports
8. Electoral Roll  
[A copy of the roll is available for inspection]
9. Reports on the activities of the parish
10. Buildings, churchyard, goods and ornaments
11. Deanery Synod
12. Vicar's Report
13. Any other business

## **C. PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING**

Note: the minutes of the meeting in 2025 after the APCM have already been approved at a subsequent PCC meeting, but are included for convenience.

1. Appointment of Vice-Chair, Secretary, Treasurer and Electoral Roll Officer and any consequential co-options
2. Confirmation of date of next meeting

Note: the composition of the Standing Committee will remain as Parish Priest, Churchwardens, Secretary and Treasurer and two additional lay members until confirmed or changed at the next PCC meeting.

## **A. DOCUMENTS FOR MEETING OF PARISHIONERS**

### **Item 1: MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF PARISHIONERS HELD ON SUNDAY 11 MAY 2025 AT 12.03 PM**

Simon Taylor welcomed everyone and opened the meeting with a prayer.

**PRESENT:** Revd Simon Taylor (Chair), Lucy Barlow, Jane Bolland, Sue & Stephen Brown, Oliver Challis, Sarah Donaldson, Margaret Hebden, Alan & Fiona Holliday, Revd Lucinda Howard, Monica Jacot, Nell Jerram, Joan King, Timothy Kwan, Judith Lee, Alastair & Lisa MacGregor, Jackie Nettleton, Bill & Valerie Powell, Frances Richardson, Romie Ridley, Anne Roberts, Constantin Veretennicov, Nicky West, Derrick Wren, Judith Whale

**APOLOGIES:** Chris Bow (Treasurer), Felicity Cooke (Lay Vice Chair)

#### **1. Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The Minutes were approved and signed.

#### **2. Disapplication of Time Limits for Service as a Churchwarden**

The following motion was considered:

*This annual meeting of parishioners held on 11 May 2025 considers it expedient to disapply the six year disqualification for service as a churchwarden in the parish of St Andrew, Stapleford, and the disqualification shall therefore be disapplied.*

The motion was proposed by Simon Taylor and seconded by Romie Ridley. It was passed unanimously.

#### **3. Election of Churchwardens**

Alastair MacGregor was nominated by Romie Ridley and seconded by Margaret Hebden to serve as Churchwarden for the coming year. There being no other nominations he was elected to serve as Churchwarden for 2025-26.

Simon Taylor thanked Alastair for his hard work during the past year. There is a casual vacancy for a churchwarden.

The meeting closed at 12.08 pm.

#### **Item 1: Election of Two Churchwardens**

*There are no documents to consider for this item.*

## **B. DOCUMENTS FOR ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING**

### **Item 1: MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING HELD ON SUNDAY 10 MAY 2025 AT 12.09 PM**

**PRESENT:** as at the annual meeting of the parishioners

**APOLOGIES:** as at the annual meeting of the parishioners

#### **1. Minutes of the 2024 APCM and Matters Arising**

- The Minutes had been circulated in advance
- The Minutes were approved and signed
- There were no matters arising

#### **2. Election of Members of the Laity to serve on the PCC**

Simon Taylor thanked retiring members Kirsty Campbell, Martin Ginger, Sarah Hackett and Romie Ridley for their service.

Alan Holliday (nominated by Martin Ginger, seconded by Romie Ridley), and Nell Jerram (nominated by Rob Needle, seconded by Margaret Hebden) were elected to serve as lay members of the PCC for a period of three years.

There are two casual vacancies for three years, and one casual vacancy for one year.

Our Deanery Synod Representatives, Felicity Cooke and Lizzie Taylor, are in post until 2026.

#### **3. Election of two Assistant Churchwardens**

Margaret Hebden (nominated by Romie Ridley, seconded by Lizzie Taylor) and Romie Ridley (nominated by Lizzie Taylor, seconded by Margaret Hebden) were elected to serve as Assistant Churchwardens for 2025-2026. Simon Taylor thanked Margaret and Romie for their hard work in 2024-2025

#### **4. Financial Statements and Reports**

These had been presented by Chris Bow.

##### **4.1 & 4.2 Treasurer's Report & Financial Statements for 2024**

The extract from the Treasurer's report explains key figures in the accounts. The overall financial position of the PCC remains satisfactory, partly because we have not been able to recruit a youthworker during the year.

Simon Taylor proposed acceptance of the accounts, Alastair MacGregor seconded, agreed unanimously.

### **4.3 Budget for 2025**

The notes show the key assumptions made. The intention is to end the year with a modest surplus and/or to be able to cover unexpected items as they appear.

Simon Taylor proposed acceptance of the budget, Alastair MacGregor seconded, agreed unanimously.

### **4.4 Gift Aid**

The report from Lisa MacGregor was noted. Simon Taylor thanked Lisa for her hard work during the year.

Thanks were expressed to Chris Bow, Sue Brown, Clare Kerr and Lisa MacGregor for their team effort managing our finances. Simon Taylor also expressed his gratitude for parish giving and encouraged people to give via the Parish Giving Scheme if they intend to give regularly.

### **5. Appointment of Independent Examiner for 2025**

Simon Taylor expressed his thanks to Jayne Merrick, the independent examiner, for her work in 2025.

Simon Taylor proposed the appointment of Jayne Merrick for 2026, Fiona Holliday seconded, agreed unanimously.

All subsequent reports were taken as read. Additional matters arising are noted below.

### **6. Parochial Church Council Reports**

#### **6.1 & 6.2 Annual Report of the PCC & Proceedings of the PCC**

The PCC were thanked for their significant contribution during the year.

#### **6.3. Safeguarding**

Thanks were expressed to Rob Needle, Parish Safeguarding Officer, and to Gillian Sanders for her assistance with administration.

### **7. Electoral Roll**

Thanks were expressed to Felicity Cooke for her work as Electoral Roll Officer, to Gillian Sanders for her assistance with administration and to Romie Ridley for her significant contribution in ensuring people signed up to the new roll this year.

### **8. Reports on the activities of the parish**

Thanks were expressed to all who had provided reports. The reports are as follows.

#### **8.1 Churchwarden's Report**

Alastair MacGregor was thanked for his report.

## 8.2 Curate's Report

Lucinda Howard was thanked for her report and hard work. Lucinda's curacy will end in 2025. Matt Lewis will join us as a new curate from the end of June.

### 8.3 to 8.15 Reports of Committees and Organisations

Thanks were expressed to all who had contributed. The reports were presented in groups as follows, with comments made at the meeting included.

- **Ministry in and around Stapleford**

- Pastoral Care & JOY
- Thanks were extended to Romie Ridley and Lucinda Howard.
- St Andrew's/Age UK Community Warden Scheme

Jackie Nettleton reported that this was going well. There are people on the waiting list for the service, but at present it is not possible to expand the scheme. The use of volunteers alongside a paid warden is under consideration. Bill Powell noted the difficulties that such an arrangement can give rise to.

It was noted that fund raising needs to continue, even though funding is secure for this year. The funds raised are ringfenced in the church accounts and will not be used for other purposes.

Mary Cooper and Jackie Nettleton, our representatives on the steering group with the Age UK Cambridge & Peterborough, were thanked.

- **Ministry beyond Stapleford**

- St Andrew's Stapleford-Nachingwea Link

Thanks were expressed to Trish Maude for her leadership of the Link and to the team.

- St Andrew's/Children's Society Partnership

Thanks were expressed to Rob Needle and the team.

- **Children and Young People**

- Children and Families
- Youth Groups
- Little Fishes
- Shelford & Stapleford Youth Initiative

There should be a trustee from the church on the board of SSYI and a volunteer was encouraged to come forward.

- YouthInc

More details on the youthworker Hannah Elphick were given. The hope was expressed that Hannah might be able to work in Stapleford later this year.

Thanks were expressed to all those involved in work with children and families in the church and appreciation expressed for the involvement of children and families in our church life.

- **Music**

- Choir

Thanks were expressed to Tim Kwan for his work with the choir and for his organ playing, and appreciation expressed by the church generally and choir members for the progress the choir has made under his leadership.

- Tower Bells

Thanks were extended to Tony Smith for his leadership of the team, which it was acknowledged was drawing to a close. Plans for training for any would be ringers were outlined.

- **Home Groups, Study Groups and Prayer Groups**

Thanks were expressed to all the leaders of our groups.

- Wednesday Evening Home Group
- Exploring Faith, Life and Prayer (Women's Group)
- Tuesday Evening Bible Book Group
- Friday Prayer Group
- One-off courses

Jane Boland expressed thanks for the welcome she had received at the Tuesday group, and Lucy Barlow said that her mother Ruth Eden had found the Friday group to be a lifeline.

- **Eco Church Project**

Simon Taylor thanked Sophi Berridge for her past work and reaffirmed the church's continued commitment in the project. A volunteer is needed to take on leadership of the project and guide us to the silver award.

- **Church Flowers**

Jackie Nettleton and the team were thanked for their lovely floral work. Additional volunteers are always welcome to join the team.

Jackie noted that the flowers were mainly donated to the church by the flower arrangers.

- **St Andrew's Men's Group**
- **Lunch Group**

Chris Everitt was thanked for organising the group which meets for lunch once a month at the Arthur Rank Hospice.

- **St Andrew's Display Board**

Judith Lee was thanked for organising the display board.

- **Stapleford Mothers' Union**

Hilary Street was thanked for her continued leadership with support from Mary Cooper.

- **Friends of St Andrew's**

The Friends is a vehicle for people to contribute to the church building. Thanks were expressed to Tony Hore for his continuing leadership.

- **Stapleford Messenger**

Thanks were expressed to Martin Ginger and to Ed Rose, who have led the well organised and efficient Messenger production team during the year. There is a need for another proofreader, and a new distribution manager.

## **9. Buildings, Churchyard, Goods and Ornaments**

- **Church Building**

Stephen Brown was thanked for his report and for all the work he has done as chair of the Fabric Committee, and Kirsty Campbell was thanked for taking on leadership of the Fabric Committee.

- **Inventory of Goods and Ornaments**

The inventory is available for inspection.

Thanks were expressed to Romie Ridley and Margaret Hebden for keeping the inventory.

- **Johnson Hall and Verger's Cottage**

Gillian Sanders was thanked for managing bookings.

- **Churchyard**

Chris Cooper and the team of volunteers, particularly John O'Boyle, were thanked.

## **10. Granta Deanery Synod**

Lizzie Taylor and Felicity Cooke were thanked for representing us on the Deanery Synod; they are in post until 2026.

## **11. Vicar's Report**

Simon Taylor had circulated in advance his report in writing in the papers for the meeting. There were no questions or comments.

## **12. Any Other Business**

Alastair MacGregor thanked Simon Taylor on behalf of the congregation for his vision, imagination, energy, compassion and leadership. Romie Ridley expressed particular thanks to those working with children and families, and Judith Lee expressed thanks to Peter Wenham for his contributions, particularly for stepping in to help lead services.

The meeting closed at 12.55 pm.

## **Item 2: ELECTION OF MEMBERS OF THE LAITY TO SERVE ON THE PCC**

There are no documents to consider for this item.

## **Item 3: ELECTION OF TWO ASSISTANT CHURCHWARDENS**

Assistant wardens are a non-statutory post which St Andrew's have found convenient to have for many years. Assistant wardens are not automatically members of the PCC, a body whose composition is defined in the Church Representation Rules.

## **Item 4: FINANCIAL STATEMENTS & REPORTS**

### **4.1: TREASURER'S REPORT**

*Extracted from the Report & Accounts 2025 for submission to the Charity Commission by the PCC. A full copy of this document will be available for inspection at the APCM, and can be provided in advance or subsequently on request.*

### **Financial Review**

As illustrated in the financial statements, the church's financial position continues to be maintained predominantly by regular giving and donations. This income category, at £80,922, was little changed from the previous year (2024: £80,297).

Other ordinary income rose to £36,968 (2024: £32,014), mainly due to higher Hall rental income.

Before investment gains, the net surplus for the year was £20,004 (2024: £18,398). The restricted funds were in surplus for the year by £2,913 (2024: £6,378). The church's unrestricted funds (which reflect the normal operations of the PCC) were in surplus by £17,091 (2024: £12,020).

The PCC transferred £3,000 to The Messenger designated fund (2024: £3,000). No money was paid out in 2025 (2024: £6,000).

Losses on investments amounted £3,746 (2024: £2,452 gain).

Net assets were £241,659 (2024: £225,401).

The overall financial position of the PCC remains satisfactory.

**Statement explaining the policy for holding reserves stating why they are held**

It is the policy of St Andrew’s Church, Stapleford to hold in reserves the equivalent of three months’ general running costs and three years’ annual deficit of income versus expenditure (based on recent years’ experience). It is also our policy to hold an amount for likely building works arising from the church’s next quinquennial inspection and other major issues, currently ceiling and heating repairs.

The appropriate sum to hold in reserve for these purposes at the present time is £200,000.

**The charity’s principal sources of funds (including any fundraising)**

The charity’s principal sources of funds are personal giving and fees gained for wedding and funeral services (charged in accordance with Ely Diocese procedures), with additional funding provided by rental income, income from the village magazine and interest on investments. A programme of fundraising events augments the church’s funds but are primarily to aid other charities eg: our links with St Andrew’s Church, Nachingwea, Tanzania and The Children’s Society as well as a range of local, national and international aid charities.

Two Stapleford charities provide funds for the long-term maintenance of the church fabric

**4.2: FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR TO 31 DECEMBER 2025**

*The tables under this heading are extracted from the Report & Accounts 2025 for submission to the Charity Commission by the PCC.*

**4.2.1: Statement of Financial Activities**

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	2025 total	2024 total
	£	£	£	£
<b>Incoming resources</b>				
Donations and legacies	69,169	11,753	80,922	80,297
Charitable activities	2,598	0	2,598	1,312
Other ordinary incoming resources	32,494	4,474	36,968	32,014
Investments	5,389	0	5,389	5,614
<b>Total incoming resources</b>	<b>109,650</b>	<b>16,227</b>	<b>125,877</b>	<b>119,237</b>

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	2025 total	2024 total
	£	£	£	£
<b>Resources expended</b>				
Raising funds	(14,134)	0	(14,134)	(15,563)
Charitable activities	(78,425)	(13,314)	(91,739)	(85,276)
<b>Total resources expended</b>	<b>(92,559)</b>	<b>(13,314)</b>	<b>(105,873)</b>	<b>(100,839)</b>
<b>Net incoming/(outgoing) resources before other gains and losses</b>	<b>17,091</b>	<b>2,913</b>	<b>20,004</b>	<b>18,398</b>
<b>Gains/(Losses) on investments</b>	<b>(3,746)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(3,746)</b>	<b>2,452</b>
<b>Net movement in funds</b>	<b>13,345</b>	<b>2,913</b>	<b>16,258</b>	<b>20,850</b>
<b>Reconciliation of funds</b>				
Total funds brought forward	184,600	40,801	225,401	204,551
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>	<b>197,945</b>	<b>43,714</b>	<b>241,659</b>	<b>225,401</b>

#### 4.2.2: Balance Sheet

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	2025 total	2024 total
	£	£	£	£
<b>Fixed assets</b>				
Investments	121,127	0	121,127	124,873
<b>Current assets</b>				
Debtors	2,549	691	3,240	2,445
Cash at bank and in hand	91,854	43,023	134,877	112,809
Sub-total	94,403	43,714	138,117	115,254
<b>Current liabilities</b>				
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	(17,585)	0	(17,585)	(14,726)
<b>Net current assets</b>	<b>76,818</b>	<b>43,714</b>	<b>120,532</b>	<b>100,528</b>
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>	<b>197,945</b>	<b>43,714</b>	<b>241,659</b>	<b>225,401</b>
<b>Total net assets</b>	<b>197,945</b>	<b>43,714</b>	<b>241,659</b>	<b>225,401</b>
<b>The funds of the charity</b>				
Restricted funds	0	43,714	43,714	40,801
Unrestricted funds	197,945	0	197,945	184,600
<b>Total funds</b>	<b>197,945</b>	<b>43,714</b>	<b>241,659</b>	<b>225,401</b>

#### 4.2.3: Incoming Resources

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	2025 total	2024 total
	£	£	£	£
<b>Donations and legacies</b>				
Donations & gifts	57,867	10,512	68,379	66,319
Gift aid	11,302	1,241	12,543	13,978
Sub-total	69,169	11,753	80,922	80,297
<b>Charitable activities</b>				
Fee income	2,598	0	2,598	1,312
<b>Other ordinary incoming resources</b>				
Hall hire	8,968	0	8,968	6,138
Fundraising	0	4,474	4,474	4,044
Magazine sales & advertising	17,657	0	17,657	17,008
Other income	5,869	0	5,869	4,824
Sub-total	32,494	4,474	36,968	32,014
<b>Income from investments</b>				
Interest income	5,389	0	5,389	5,614
<b>Total incoming resources</b>	<b>109,650</b>	<b>16,227</b>	<b>125,877</b>	<b>119,237</b>

#### 4.2.4: Resources Expended

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	2025 total	2024 total
	£	£	£	£
<b>Expenditure on raising funds</b>				
Magazine printing costs	9,585	0	9,585	9,568
Other trading activities - hall upkeep	4,549	0	4,549	5,995
Other	0	0	0	0
Sub-total	14,134	0	14,134	15,563
<b>Expenditure on charitable activities</b>				
Ministry share	28,602	0	28,602	26,486
Administrative costs	14,647	464	15,111	13,954
Utilities	8,359	0	8,359	7,076
Insurance	2,724	0	2,724	2,809
Repairs & maintenance	6,629	8,084	14,713	10,314
Events & entertaining	814	0	814	220
Missions & charities	1,685	4,766	6,451	11,217
Upkeep of services	2,151	0	2,151	1,897
Choir, robes & music	12,983	0	12,983	11,552
Youth work & education	(169)	0	(169)	(249)
Sub-total	78,425	13,314	91,739	85,276
<b>Total resources expended</b>	<b>92,559</b>	<b>13,314</b>	<b>105,873</b>	<b>100,839</b>

#### 4.2.5: Funds

	1 Jan 2024	Movement during 2024	31 Dec 2024	Movement during 2025	31 Dec 2025
	£	£	£	£	£
<b>Restricted funds</b>					
Estate fund	24,545	2,081	26,626	(1,982)	24,644
Nachingwea fund	7,577	4,790	12,367	2,266	14,633
Children's Society	30	10	40	138	178
Warden Scheme	271	1,497	1,768	2,491	4,259
<b>Total Restricted funds</b>	<b>32,423</b>	<b>8,378</b>	<b>40,801</b>	<b>2,913</b>	<b>43,714</b>
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>					
Johnson Hall fund	28,225	143	28,368	4,420	32,788
General fund	57,217	15,329	72,546	3,724	76,270
Legacy fund	77,527	0	77,527	0	77,527
<b>Designated funds</b>					
Messenger fund	8,383	(3,000)	5,383	3,000	8,383
Music fund	0	0	0	2,201	2,201
Youth fund	776	0	776	0	776
<b>Total Unrestricted &amp; Designated funds</b>	<b>172,128</b>	<b>12,472</b>	<b>184,600</b>	<b>13,345</b>	<b>197,945</b>

	1 Jan 2024	Movement during 2024	31 Dec 2024	Movement during 2025	31 Dec 2025
	£	£	£	£	£
<b>Total funds</b>	204,551	20,850	225,401	16,258	241,659

### 4.3: BUDGET FOR 2024

#### 4.3.1: Notes

##### General inflation assumptions

Energy & water	10.0%
Contracted gas & electricity supplies	7.5 % best estimate
General	3.0 %

##### Johnson Hall

###### Income

- Expectation of modest increase in letting activity
- No increase in rates

###### Maintenance

- Routine work, no decorating

##### Estate Fund

###### Income

- Feoffees as last year plus inflation

###### Repairs

- £1,000 for sundry repairs
- No quinquennial repairs
- Excludes major heating & ceiling repairs as not yet agreed

##### General Fund

###### Income

- No repeat of large donation received in 2025
- Modest increase in regular giving
- Investment income – current rates held
- No other changes

## Costs

- Normal running costs assumed except as stated below

## Staff

- 3.5% increase on current rates
- Parish Administrator – fewer hours per week
- Organist – fewer hours in 2026 and £600 in cover fees

## Maintenance etc

- WiFi/boiler/extinguisher service/safety equipment £2,000 plus, say, £500

## Insurance

- Adjustment to value insured results in no annual increase

## Quota to diocese

- Per formal notification

## Missions & Charities

- Age UK & SSYI

## Magazine profit

- Sale revenue – based on actual receipts to date
- Advertising revenue – based on confirmed adverts received and an allowance of £1,000 for sundry/late applications

### **4.3.2: Summary**

<b>Net Surplus/(Deficit)</b>	<b>2026 Budget</b>	<b>2025 Actual</b>
Johnson Hall Fund	4,406	4,419
Estate Fund	5,313	(1,983)
General Fund	7,322	3,241
Messenger surplus retained	5,381	5,073
<b>Total</b>	<b>£22,423</b>	<b>£10,749</b>

#### 4.3.3: Johnson Hall Fund

	2026 Budget	2025 Actual	% increase / (decrease)
<b>Income</b>			
Hall Hire	9,282	8,968	3.50
<b>Expenditure</b>			
Cleaning	631	610	3.50
Electricity	1,038	966	7.50
Gas	820	763	7.50
Insurance	841	813	3.50
Other	632	610	3.50
Repairs & Maintenance	600	503	19.29
Water	312	284	10.00
<b>Net Surplus/(Deficit)</b>	<b>£4,406</b>	<b>£4,419</b>	<b>(0.28)</b>

#### 4.3.4: Estate Fund

	2026 Budget	2025 Actual	% increase / (decrease)
<b>Income</b>			
Donations	50	50	0.00
Feoffees	6,263	6,051	3.50
<b>Expenditure</b>	0	8,083	(100.00)
Architect's fees	1,000	0	n/a
Repairs	50	50	0.00
<b>Net Surplus/(Deficit)</b>	<b>£5,313</b>	<b>(£1,983)</b>	<b>(367.96)</b>

#### 4.3.5: General Fund

	2026 Budget	2025 Actual	% increase / (decrease)
<b>Income</b>			
Collections & Donations	6,000	7,817	(23.24)
Cottage rent	4,600	4,510	2.00
Fees	2,600	2,598	0.10
Gift Aid	11,500	11,302	1.75
Interest	5,400	5,390	0.19
Regular Giving	51,000	50,051	1.90
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>£81,100</b>	<b>£81,666</b>	<b>(0.69)</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>			
Administration	1,186	2,282	(48.03)
Bank Charges	292	282	3.50
Choir, Robes & Music	1,227	1,185	3.50
Church Cleaning	554	535	3.50
Church Electricity	2,227	2,072	7.50
Church Gas	3,483	3,240	7.50
Church Insurance	2,587	2,500	3.50
Church Maintenance & Repairs	2,500	3,094	(19.20)
Church Water	467	425	10.00
Churchyard	462	447	3.50
Clergy Expenses	500	320	56.25
Cottage Cleaning	281	272	3.50
Cottage Electricity	2,322	2,160	7.50
Cottage Gas	232	216	7.50
Cottage Insurance	232	224	3.50
Cottage Maintenance & Repairs	1,000	1,346	(25.69)
Cottage Water	271	246	10.00

	<b>2026 Budget</b>	<b>2025 Actual</b>	<b>% increase / (decrease)</b>
Education/Children's Work	(150)	(170)	(11.55)
Events/ Entertaining	825	814	1.38
Gifts	300	288	4.14
Missions & Charities	1,500	1,685	(11.00)
Organ Maintenance & Repairs	269	260	3.50
Organist	10,680	11,797	(9.47)
Other	259	250	3.50
Photocopier	1,180	1,322	(10.72)
Postage & Stationery	250	210	18.86
Quota to Diocese	28,649	28,602	0.16
Salaries	5,300	7,940	(33.25)
Upkeep of Services	2,227	2,151	3.50
WiFi & Website	2,664	2,428	9.72
Administration	1,186	2,282	(48.03)
Bank Charges	292	282	3.50
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>£73,778</b>	<b>£78,425</b>	<b>(5.93)</b>
<b>Net Surplus/(Deficit)</b>	<b>£7,322</b>	<b>£3,241</b>	<b>125.94</b>

#### 4.3.6: Magazine Profit & Loss Account

	2026 Budget	2025 Actual	% increase / (decrease)
<b>Income</b>			
Advertising	13,870	13,613	1.89
Copy Sales	4,252	4,044	5.14
<b>Total income</b>	<b>£18,122</b>	<b>£17,657</b>	<b>2.63</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>			
Administration	250	415	(36.69)
Printing	9,491	9,170	3.50
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>£9,741</b>	<b>£9,585</b>	<b>1.63</b>
<b>Net Surplus</b>	<b>£8,381</b>	<b>£8,073</b>	<b>3.82</b>
Distributed	3,000	3,000	0.00
<b>Retained by PCC</b>	<b>£5,381</b>	<b>£5,073</b>	<b>6.08</b>

#### 4.4: GIFT AID

Thanks very much to everyone who gift aids their donations. For 2025, total gift aid received by St Andrew's was £12,759.

Gift aid of £4,723 on donations to St Andrew's outside the Parish Giving Scheme was claimed (about £700 less than for 2024). Of this, £3,472 was for the church's general fund, £889 was for the Nachingwea Link and £362 was for the Stapleford Community Warden Scheme.

A total of £8,036 of gift aid was received during 2025 from donations made via the Parish Giving Scheme. This is almost exactly the same as received for 2024. The number of regular donors using the Parish Giving Scheme increased by one overall during the year to 39.

Anyone interested in giving to St Andrew's is encouraged to do so through the Parish Giving Scheme. Monthly, quarterly, annual or one-off donations can be made on the Parish Giving Scheme website at: [www.parishgiving.org.uk](http://www.parishgiving.org.uk) by clicking on the 'Donors' tab at the top of the page and searching for 'Stapleford St Andrew'. Thank you.

*Lisa MacGregor*

## **Item 5: INDEPENDENT EXAMINER**

The Independent Examiner for 2025 was Jayne Merrick. She has signed the Report & Accounts 2025 for submission to the Charity Commission. She was extremely thorough in her work. Our grateful thanks go to her.

Jayne has indicated her willingness to act again in 2026 and the APCM is invited to make the appointment.

*Chris Bow*

## **Item 6: PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL REPORTS FOR THE YEAR TO 31 DECEMBER 2025**

### **6.1: ANNUAL REPORT OF THE PCC**

*Extracted from the Report & Accounts 2025 for submission to the Charity Commission by the PCC*

#### **OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES**

##### **Summary of the purposes of the charity as set out in its governing document**

Stapleford Parochial Church Council (PCC) has the responsibility of working with the Vicar, the Revd Dr Simon Taylor, to promote in the ecclesiastical parish the whole mission of the church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. The PCC has maintenance responsibilities for the Church of St Andrew, the Verger's Cottage and the Johnson Hall.

Summary of the main activities in relation to those purposes for the public benefit, in particular, the activities, projects or services identified in the accounts

The provision of religious services on a regular basis. St Andrew's is a church for the whole community, including Stapleford and the surrounding areas, and aims to provide a safe and inclusive welcome to everyone, whatever their situation in life. The PCC is committed to enabling as many people as possible to worship at St Andrew's Church and to become part of the church community, including offering special services at Easter, Harvest, Remembrance Sunday and Christmas. We offer baptism, marriage and funeral services as requested and in accordance with Ely Diocese instructions. Pastoral and spiritual support and various groups and activities are offered to the whole community.

##### **Statement confirming whether the trustees have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit**

In provision of these activities we are mindful of Christian teaching as well as the guidance issued by the Commission on public benefit. Thus whilst our worship, ethos and practices are Christian and accord with the doctrine of the Church of England, activities organized or led by the church for individuals or groups are open to all and are carried out without discriminating in relation to any protected characteristic. We

also work in partnership with the community to maintain the fabric of St Andrew's church and the churchyard and both are used by the wider community.

### **Contribution made by volunteers**

The Vicar of St Andrew's serves as 'House for Duty', receiving housing but no stipend from the Diocese. The parish contributes the full ministry share requested from it. Members of the PCC and the congregation lead and support all activities on a voluntary basis, through a system of sub-committees of the PCC. Maintenance of the buildings and churchyard, worship and social events, pastoral work in the parish, and children's and youth work in the parish are all contributed to by volunteer members of the PCC and the church.

### **ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE**

#### **Summary of the main achievements of the charity, identifying the difference which the charity's work has made to the circumstances of its beneficiaries and any wider benefits to society as a whole**

During 2025 the church's activities continued to recover from the effects of the Covid pandemic.

#### **Worship and Prayer**

The PCC offers a range of services and other worship opportunities each week and in the course of the year. During the course of the year St Andrew's has generally offered up to three services on Sunday mornings, in addition to evening services once a month. Series of services during the year followed a number of different themes: in addition to significant use of the lectionary, there were series based on Paul's first missionary journey in the book of Acts, the life of Moses, and the middle chapters of the letter to the Ephesians.

Every Sunday morning begins with a BCP communion service at 9 am. The various services at 10.30 am are of different styles. In 2025 they included regular Forest Church services in the churchyard or Messy Church services in the Johnson Hall depending on the weather. These services have proved popular with families with young children, but also with some older members of the church. The popularity of Forest Church has continued to prompt greater use of the churchyard for other services too, so that a number of summer services were successfully held in the churchyard.

Special services have taken place according to the church calendar (e.g. Easter Sunday, Harvest Festival).

In May 2025 at the date of the annual church meetings there were 110 persons on the Electoral Roll, a decrease on the previous figure following the complete revision of the Roll required by law. Attendance compared with the previous year, and with the pre-pandemic figures in 2019 were as follows:

	2019	2022	2023	2024	2025
Average week in October	100	83	79	104	108
Usual Sunday	85	76	80	83	90
Easter Eve/Day	240	196	185	193	207
Christmas Eve/Day	430	368	368	386	479

Overall, therefore, attendance is satisfactory compared to pre-pandemic levels. There is a sense that in attendance as well as in the range of activities the church offers a continuing recovery from the pandemic.

The church meets monthly outside of Sunday services for a prayer meeting. It is open to all, though attendance is limited.

### **Deanery Synod**

Four members of the PCC, including the parish priest and curate and two elected representatives, sit on the Deanery Synod, which provides the PCC with an important link between the parish and wider structures of the church.

### **The church building, Johnson Hall and Verger's Cottage**

During 2025, as in most years except during the pandemic, the church remained open 24 hours a day. The quinquennial inspection which took place in 2025 was satisfactory. The PCC's Fabric Committee has continued to undertake and commission regular maintenance and upkeep, and volunteers do the bulk of the work necessary to maintain the churchyard.

The Johnson Hall is used both by church groups, community groups and local service businesses. A weekly toddler group, Little Fishes, run by the church, takes place in there. This re-started at the end of 2021. A popular monthly group for seniors, called JOY (Just Older Youth), is also run by the church in the Hall. The reduction in use of the Hall after the pandemic continues to be rectified. Whether the revenue will cover the cost of maintenance remains to be seen.

The Verger's Cottage provides office space for the parish, including the administrator and curate. A local charity, The Magog Trust, rents office space and uses it as their postal address, and it is also used as a postal address for another local charity (the Stapleford Feoffees). The sitting room or other rooms in the cottage are used as counselling rooms on a fairly regular basis.

### **Parish Magazine**

The church publishes a monthly news and events magazine for the village of Stapleford, The Stapleford Messenger, which is available on subscription with copies delivered in the village and in local shops. The production of the magazine has been taken over by the Messenger Production Group. The surplus from the magazine is used in part to fund local, national and international good causes.

## **Youth Work**

It has not been possible to revive our youth group during 2025.

## **The St Andrew's Stapleford-Nachingwea Link**

Together with the local community the church runs a Link Committee with the church of St Andrew's in Nachingwea, Masasi Diocese, in southern Tanzania. The Link celebrated 43 years of operation in 2025 with a service in October. It is thought to be the longest running, continuously active Parish to Parish link in the UK.

## **The St Andrew's/Children's Society Partnership**

In 2025 the partnership continued to support the work of The Children's Society (TCS) by praying, acting and giving. The key event of the year was a celebratory service in September. The partnership committee continue to devise novel ways in which we can support the vital work of TCS with the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children and young people in the country and St Andrew's models these initiatives so they can be adopted by other churches.

## **The Stapleford Community Warden Scheme**

This scheme, run by Cambridge and Peterborough Age UK but sponsored by St Andrew's has continued to run during the year. There is significant demand for the services of the warden, more than the scheme can currently meet.

## **6.2: PROCEEDINGS OF THE PCC**

The Church of England defines the responsibilities of the Church Council (PCC) as follows:

- It has the responsibility, along with the incumbent, to promote the mission of God in its parish.
- Legally, the PCC is responsible for the finances of the parish. It also has ultimate responsibility for the care and maintenance of all church buildings and their contents. Although these responsibilities are executed by the churchwardens, all PCC members must share in the oversight. The PCC has a voice in the forms of Service used by the church and may make representations to the bishop on matters that affect the welfare of the parish.
- All PCCs are charities. Therefore, every member of a PCC is also a charity trustee and the PCC must comply with the Charity Commission guidance and legislation in relation to charities.

In the course of the year the PCC has, amongst other things:

- Continued to follow good safeguarding practice, including safer recruitment and thinking about how the culture of St Andrew's impacts safeguarding. We thank Rob Needle (Parish Safeguarding Officer) and Gillian Sanders (who temporarily stepped back into her role as Parish Administrator) for all their work on this and the congregation for supporting this important process.
- Received regular up-dates on church finances, maintained the budgeting process and approved investments for church funds. The PCC is grateful to Chris Bow for his work as Treasurer, to Sue Brown and Clare Kerr who look after the day-to-day running of the accounts, and to Lisa MacGregor for handling Gift Aid.
- Reviewed the Quinquennial Report (five-yearly report on the state of the building).
- Through Anne Roberts, started to think about Eco Church again.
- Approved allocation of £3245, raised by The Messenger, for local good causes.
- As part of our vision for buildings, continued to make plans for major upcoming work: installing a new heating system, replastering on the nave ceiling, replacing pews with chairs, enhancing lighting and improving accessibility. We thank Kirsty Campbell for her work as Chair of Fabric Committee.
- Prepared a Trustees' Annual Report to file with the accounts filed with the Charity Commission.
- Participated in Feoffees, Friends of St Andrews and the Messenger Fund.
- Supported St Andrew's partnership with The Children's Society and also with the Link Committee furthering the relationship with St Andrew's, Nachingwea.
- Received regular reports from committees and organisations. We thank everyone who contributes to the work of these groups.
- Backed the Stapleford Warden Scheme. The PCC thanks Jackie Nettleton, Mary Cooper and Age UK.

We thank Nicky West for her diligent work as PCC secretary.

St Andrew's can only run with the enthusiastic support of the whole congregation. We are very grateful to everyone who contributes to roles visible and invisible. For example choir members and musicians, cleaners, coffee team, sides people, servers, prayer leaders, service leaders, occasional preachers, children's and youth work leaders, Deanery Synod representatives, flower arrangers, sacristan, vergers and people responsible for sound, repairs and maintenance, churchyard, pastoral care, home groups and the Johnson Hall. A special thanks to the retiring members of the PCC: Fiona Holliday, Anne Roberts, Nicky West and Nell Jerram.

*Alastair MacGregor*

### **6.3: SAFEGUARDING**

We are an active church with a congregation covering a wide age range. That brings with it certain obligations regarding the safeguarding of children and adults at risk.

St Andrew's ran five Church Activities and oversaw one Non-Church Activity that were subject to Safeguarding requirements. Leaders and helpers for those activities undergo safeguarding training and are subject to checks with the Disclosure and Barring Service. Both the training and the checks are renewed every three years.

The safeguarding requirements set by the Church of England are updated regularly. We monitor our compliance with those requirements and keep up with changes through the Parish Safeguarding Dashboard and Safeguarding Hub. These are managed by the Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) and reviewed by Rev Simon Taylor regularly throughout the year.

On Sunday 16 November, we marked Safeguarding Sunday, with a service that focused on the theology and the practicalities of safeguarding at St Andrew's.

The PCC oversees the safeguarding provisions of the church and receives reports from the PSO at every meeting.

One unexpected and unwelcome event that occurred in August was a data breach suffered by APCS, the company that processed DBS checks on behalf of Ely Diocese. This involved the leak of personal information of some of our volunteers who had recently undergone DBS checks. All those affected were informed and supportive measures were put in place by the Diocese. The Information Commissioner's Office was also informed. Ely Diocese stopped using the services of APCS. After the completion of due diligence checks, a new firm, U-Check, has been appointed to manage our DBS checks. This new system seems to be working well.

*Rob Needle*

### **Item 7: ELECTORAL ROLL**

A complete revision of the Electoral Roll took place in 2025 and at the APCM on 11 May 2025 there were 110 names on the Roll. The number of names on the Roll on 10 May 2026 is 110, a change caused by two deaths and one move abroad and three additions in the last year.

Of the names on the Roll:

- 64 are resident in the parish of Stapleford
- 36 are resident in Great or Little Shelford
- 3 are resident in nearby villages
- 5 are resident in Cambridge, including Trumpington
- 2 are resident more than 10 miles away

All who live outside the parish have longstanding, close links with St Andrew's.

*Felicity Cooke*

## **Item 8: REPORTS ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE PARISH**

### **8.1: CHURCHWARDENS' REPORT**

The Church of England defines the role of churchwardens as:

- officers of the bishop, representing the laity and co-operating with the incumbent
- encouraging parishioners in the practice of true religion, and promoting unity and peace
- having oversight of finance, though the detail of this is handled by the treasurer
- having oversight of the care of the fabric of the parish church and reporting on its condition each year
- having legal ownership of the moveable furniture and ornaments of the parish church and keeping an up-to-date inventory of them
- maintaining an up-to-date logbook of all works done to the fabric of the parish church
- ensuring that all parish registers and records are properly kept and filed
- answering question from the bishop or archdeacon

The assistant churchwardens, Romie Ridley and Margaret Hebden, and I have worked with the clergy and Diocese to fulfil these requirements as best we can. This would not have been possible without the support, help and goodwill of everyone in the congregation. Thank you.

Thanks to our treasurer Chris Bow, the finance team, the Chair of the Fabric Committee Kirsty Campbell, and the whole fabric committee. Special thanks to Alan Holliday for tireless work with the church boiler. Thanks too to everyone who keeps the building and churchyard clean, tidy, operational and looking beautiful.

#### **Vision for buildings:**

- Over the last year the Vision for Buildings group (Simon Taylor, Kirsty Campbell, Romie Ridley, Alan Holliday and I) has made good progress in re-imagining the interior of our church building to improve usability, flexibility, heating (comfort and efficiency), seating, lighting and accessibility. We also need to replaster the nave ceiling to stop further plaster falls. When we do this work, we will need to move out of the church building, possibly to Stapleford Community Primary School.

- The PCC has approved outline plans prepared with architectural firm Archangel and quantity surveyor CB3. The plans, supported by a Statement of Significance and Statement of Need, will shortly be reviewed by the Diocesan Advisory Committee. We will then consult more widely with specialist historical groups, the congregation and community. Next we will seek formal permission to proceed from the Diocese. At that point we will need to undertake a major fund raising activity to raise about £1 million. We need to find help to manage fund raising. We are hopeful that the Friends of St Andrew's will be able to help cover about 10% of the costs.
- In the longer term, we would like to be able to build a larger church hall next to the church since the Johnson Hall is at capacity e.g. for Messy Church, Little Fishes and JOY. Also, parking is likely to become more difficult as rules governing Mingle Lane are tightened. We are talking to the Diocese about purchasing a strip of the field behind the church.

We have responded to Diocesan requests about Statistics for Mission and Articles of Enquiry. We have checked the inventory. It will be available to view at the APCM.

Many thanks to our clergy Simon Taylor and Matt Lewis for their energetic, positive and imaginative ministry.

We look forward to the future of St Andrew's as it fulfils its role as a church for the whole community.

*Alastair MacGregor*

## **8.2: CURATE'S REPORT**

It's been a wonderful beginning to ordained ministry here at St Andrew's. I've enjoyed settling into the role and church, and now feel at home here. Importantly, so do my family. Thank you to all who have made us feel so welcome.

I've enjoyed learning about how the role feels and balancing the various commitments that ministry involves. My week feels settled with a clear routine, and the differing weekly or monthly commitments help ground the more flexible times. Visits to people in their homes and home communions have been a highlight. Thank you to all who have welcomed me into your homes. During my first months at St. Andrew's I was given time to finishing my MA. Thank you to those who asked after my progress. I completed this in September and officially graduated with distinction in January (although I missed the ceremony). What I have learnt is that keeping time to be flexible for matters arising is helpful. My time in teaching was the opposite of this, so it has been a healthy change in my working habits.

Sunday worship has been a highlight each week, and I've enjoyed preaching here and at other services run by the church. Christmas and Easter were great seasons, and I enjoyed hearing from people about which services they enjoy most. It has been beneficial to my ministerial thinking and dreaming for the future to hear why different

services work for people. Thank you to those who have shared their thoughts. Other key events have involved taking my first baptism and funerals, and I look forward to taking my first wedding later this month.

Later this year I look forward to being ordained Priest on 4 July. What this means is that I can lead communion in church services. I am looking forward to presiding at St Andrew's on July 5.

A final thank you to Simon is necessary. His welcome and guidance have really helped me to settle, and I am thankful to God for his ministry at St Andrew's over the last decade. I realise that I get the best of his wisdom from all those years and remain grateful for his openness and challenges that are helping me to develop as a minister (and read Greek).

*Matt Lewis*

### **8.3: MINISTRY IN & AROUND STAPLEFORD**

#### ***8.3.1: Pastoral Care & JOY***

The Pastoral team consists of Matt Lewis, Rob Ferneyhough, Sarah Hackett, Jackie Nettleton and Romie Ridley. The team continues to telephone, visit and support mainly older members of the church family, particularly when they cannot easily come to church, are in hospital or at home recovering. Romie and Matt alternate to take communion to five people/couples at home each month, and any others who wish for it while unwell. John King continues to visit Stapleford people in Addenbrookes after his volunteering at The Royal Papworth on Mondays. The team meets about every two months to share news and concerns and discuss ways forward.

The JOY group continues to flourish and grow (without advertising) and is a joy for its members and the team alike. We begin with a Christian reflection and prayer, including for anyone in need of our prayers. Tea or coffee, cake, chat and friendship are also key. We are very thankful that Lisa MacGregor has joined the JOY team.

The group has enjoyed various speakers and activities, ranging from Rob on the wonderful Sand Dams project, Romie on changes to RE teaching since 1944, Chris Everitt on his very hairy National Service in Malaya, Sarah Donaldson on teaching in India, and a representative of the Fire service on fire safety in the home. And we had sessions on Christmas tree decorations, carols, board games, Gavin Howard on his favourite Laurel and Hardy films ... we spent the rest of the meeting watching the piano moving one! Wendy Elsbury also spoke on teaching at Stapleford School in the 1970s and all the community activities, aided by Clare Kerr and Lynn Pepperell – who had us all singing.

Rob Ferneyhough continues to organise Monday outings, about every 6 weeks, to the Arthur Rank Bistro for lunch, and Glenda Ferneyhough helps with transport for the increasing number who do not drive.

Please let any of the team know if someone needs support or visiting.

*Romie Ridley*

### **8.3.2: St Andrew's/Age UK Community Warden Scheme**

At present our Warden (Juliet) has been given 15 hours of work per week from November 2025. She has 13 people on her books including 2 couples and 4 on her waiting list with 3 more who want to join the waiting list. The service users now pay £18 per week and £22 per couple.

In 2025 fundraising events included selling bric-a-brac at the Stapleford Village Weekend and at the Shelford Feast, with jewellery. The Village Show committee gave the Warden Scheme a sum of money (£150) because the Scheme was their chosen charity. This money went towards a room hire at Cox's close for a coffee morning every month. These coffee mornings are very well received and are open to all. A donation box is put out so we get £40-£75 each time we meet.

We received £500 from the Feast and raised about £145 at the Stapleford Village weekend and £70 at the Ritz tea. Next time the Warden hopes to run a game stall at the Stapleford weekend.

This last year financial support has come from St Andrew's Church, which continues to be named local sponsor of the scheme, the Messenger Fund, the Shelford Feast, and South Cambs District Council.

The Christmas tree festival held in Church in December 2025 raised over £1,000 for the Scheme.

We've yet to meet Sharon Spittle from Age UK, Peterborough and Cambridgeshire (who has replaced Sarah Lees as the manager of the Scheme) because of a change in dates. A date has been suggested for May.

The Scheme is going from strength to strength, mainly because our Warden Juliet is so popular and works very hard. She has a good back up relationship with Yvonne Smith too, who is our Deputy Warden.

*Jackie Nettleton & Mary Cooper*

### **8.4: MINISTRY BEYOND STAPLEFORD**

#### **8.4.1: St Andrew's Stapleford Nachingwea Link**

The Link Committee has had a productive year, continuing to support education, health and training projects in Nachingwea, Tanzania, including:

- Funding for a three-month English course for 35 pupils, run by Nachingwea Link Chair Kevin Bushiri. This course is well-attended and helps to prepare children moving up to secondary school (where lessons are taught in English, not Swahili),
- Uniforms, 3 wheelchairs and hearing aids for special-needs children,

- Financial support for 10 girls going to secondary school (covering uniform, health insurance and books), and
- Financial support for 2 girls studying for A-levels (covering uniform, health insurance and books).

We are currently developing projects to provide government-accredited technical courses (called Vocational Education and Training or VETA) for boys, and an outreach project with a secondary school for making sanitary pads. Plans are also in hand to provide some equipment for Nachingwea Hospital.

We were very grateful to a couple from Kent, Rob and Liz Claiborne-Dixon, who visited Nachingwea last September and who very kindly compiled for us a comprehensive report of their visit, including feedback on projects and suggestions for future support.

In their report Rob and Liz said:

*'The gratitude from all that we met towards the Stapleford Link committee was overwhelming, so please know that what you have accomplished over the years is meaningful and made a difference to the lives of many children and adults.'*

Drawing on the information provided in their report, during the latter part of the year we started to look at the feasibility of developing outbuildings in the St Andrew's Nachingwea compound into a workshop for young people on VETA courses. This work is ongoing, as is our work to fund VETA courses for young people.

We re-established our Church Sub-Committee, following a request from the priest in Nachingwea, Revd Phares Lihewe, to develop a closer link between our two churches. Revd Phares and our own Simon Taylor are now in email contact.

The Link held four fund-raising events over the year, which together raised in excess of £3,000: the May Lunch at Stapleford Pavilion; a jazz concert at St Andrew's (also held in May); Christmas Tea in the Pavilion; and a pub quiz at the Three Horseshoes in March this year. We also had a vintage jewellery stall at the Village Show last June.

Other donations included a grant of £1,000 from the Messenger Fund, and a generous gift from the legacy of a former church member.

The Link Committee thanks all supporters past and present for their support and generosity.

The Link was saddened to hear of the death in September last year of Nicholas Galahenga, a longtime member of the Nachingwea Link committee and a great friend to many of us over the years.

We were pleased to welcome three new Committee members during the year; Rob Fernyhough, Monica Jacot and Tom Robinson. Each comes with background knowledge and professional experience which add valuable perspectives to the Link's work.

*Trish Maude*

#### **8.4.2: St Andrew's Children's Society Partnership**

During 2025 the St Andrew's/The Children's Society Partnership team ran several events.

The Lent fundraiser raised funds for The Children's Society campaign for more support for young people to help with their mental health. We had a particular focus on harm caused by inappropriate content on social media. Pinned on our noticeboard in St Andrew's throughout Lent was a giant representation of computer monitors, and in return for a £5 donation, people could choose from a range of online issues which are potentially harmful to children's and young people's mental health, such as poor body image, fake news or toxic masculinity. Once they had selected an issue, they could then stick it (printed in bright yellow) across a picture of a monitor.

In the autumn we collected in the money from the Children's Society collection box scheme. The preacher for the annual Children's Society service was Jon Young, the Diocesan Director of Education. The year ended with a very well attended Christingle service on Christmas Eve, with funds raised for The Children's Society.

The above events between them raised a fantastic £1,259 to support the vital work of The Children's Society. A big thank you to the St Andrew's family for their generous support throughout the year.

We are always looking for new ideas to promote the work of The Children's Society. If you would be willing to get involved in planning or supporting any of our initiatives, please speak to me.

*Rob Needle*

### **8.5: CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE**

#### **8.5.1: Children & Families**

2025 has been another successful year for Messy and Forest church. We've held our services in the Johnson Hall during the colder months and in the churchyard behind the church building during the warmer months.

Numbers have remained fairly steady with an average of 35 attending each month, almost equally split between children and adults.

We have looked at diverse bible readings, including the story of Ruth, Psalm 139, as well as annual celebrations such as Pentecost, Easter and Christmas.

We said a sad farewell to Lucinda during the year, who contributed enormously to our services but Matt has made himself at home with us and comes with the added bonus of being a family of 5, to boost our numbers!

Of particular note was our first ever family-friendly Remembrance Day service which was appreciated by all who came and will become an annual highlight I am sure.

My thanks to everyone who has helped during the year - with craft activities, refreshments, reading, leading prayers and leading the service and giving the talk. Just as important are those who make our families welcome and continue to build relationships amongst our congregation. Our services are very much all-age and everyone is welcome.

Our work has been greatly enhanced by the provision of children's activities in the Lady chapel on the other Sundays in the month. A huge thank you to all who have taken a turn, particularly those not on our regular children's work team – Nicky West, Beth Atkin, Vicky Mercer and Glenda Ferneyhough plus any others I've forgotten to mention!

Thanks to our regular team of Alastair and Lisa Macgregor, Fiona and Alan Holliday, Lizzie Taylor, Sarah Needle, Sarah Hackett, Anne Roberts, Daniel Mantell-Roberts, Matt Lewis and Simon Taylor for their support, contributions and encouragement. New helpers always welcome!

*Sue Brown*

### **8.5.2: Youth Groups**

Matt Lewis and I have been considering how we might try to revive our youth group. We are engaging later this year with diocesan training with a view to re-starting some provision.

*Simon Taylor*

### **8.5.3: Little Fishes**

The Little Fishes Toddler group continues to thrive. In the school year 2024/2025 we met on 36 Mondays, serving 38 different families with an average attendance of 9 adults and 11 children. So far this year our average attendance may have risen, but we tend to get high attendance in the autumn and winter terms. On some occasions we can have up to 18 adults and 22 children. The Johnson Hall can seem very small at these times. In the summer term we open the garden and have more space, but our numbers are usually lower.

We acquired a few new (to us) toys donated by generous members of the congregation. There have been played with a great deal already, and the joy from the children is a blessing each week. Our format remains the same with free time and crafts followed by stories (one from the Bible) and songs. Parents seem to appreciate our low key approach and the relaxed atmosphere. There are notices as well, and we

highlight what else is going on in the church. We have been very happy to see a few members of the group attending Messy church and other services, especially at Christmas and Easter.

We are very grateful to our team of volunteers Alan, Anne, John, Kirsty, Lizzie, Sarah and Rose without whom it would be impossible to run the group.

*Fiona Holliday & Matt Lewis*

#### **8.5.4: Shelford & Stapleford Youth Initiative**

Looking back over 2025–2026, SSI has continued to adapt and grow in response to the needs of young people across our communities. With 9 youth groups happening each week across Shelford, Sawston, and Duxford, alongside providing one-to-one support for up to 17 young people each week. Across all this work, our focus remains on creating consistent, welcoming spaces where young people feel supported, valued and heard. The work has been run by our dedicated team of youth workers: Kay McNealis, Tilly Akoto, Tina Woodstock and Zac Britton. Jack Newman supported our work for part of this year and recently we welcomed Jack Gilmore to the team. Jon Sanders the Youth Development Team Lead at Romsey Mill provided oversight.

We've seen particularly strong engagement in Duxford this year, where we are now running two sessions on a Monday that continue to attract consistently high numbers each week. In Sawston, attendance has also been increasing showing encouraging signs of connection with local young people. This year we have started some new work with year 6's in the Sawston primary schools with one-to-one sessions and detached work now taking place in both Bellbird and Icknield, allowing us to do some early intervention work and provide support to a slightly younger cohort.

The one-to-one support we offer local young people in Sawston Village College, the primaries and in the community enables us to really invest in individuals and their needs and offer more focused support. Our minibus and football cage continue to play an important role in how we engage young people. They have supported the delivery of our 'Shred It Up' skate sessions, outreach work, and presence at local village events such as the Shelford Feast and Christmas Lights switch on. This year also saw us host our own mini-Christmas market, giving young people the chance to take part in planning and running stalls, helping them to build confidence and develop practical business skills.

Residentials and trips continue to be a highlight of the year, providing space for young people to step outside their normal routines, try something different, and grow in confidence and friendships. Alongside several trips, we also ran a joint residential with young people from another area, creating opportunities to meet new people and share new experiences. With support from the Serious Violence Duty Fund, we have continued to deliver targeted sessions for young people who may need additional support.

Our faith-based provision, Deeper, has also had a positive year. Through a weekly Wednesday group and attending various evening and day events run by Romsey Mill, we have created regular opportunities for young people to come together in a different context. These sessions offer a relaxed and open environment where young people can explore questions around faith, share their thoughts, and learn more about Christianity in a way that feels relevant to them.

We are thankful, as always, for the ongoing support of our partners and funders. Your support continues to make this work possible and enables us to invest in the lives of young people across our local villages.

*Zachary Britton*

### **8.5.5: YouthInc**

The aim of this charity is to ensure that all young people in South Cambridgeshire have the opportunity to hear the gospel. It does this principally by providing a professional youth worker to run youth groups and give help to those parishes that do not have their own youth worker. It also runs relevant courses for parents and in the past supported a monthly deanery Connect service at St Andrew's.

The charity is funded by parishes and the Deanery, including benefitting from the proceeds of the Deanery Fair in previous years, plus donations from individuals. The period of matched funding from the diocese has come to an end.

The project builds on existing work with children and families with under nines. Having started with the Hinkledux parishes it has extended its work to other parishes that have not had the services of a youth worker. There are now groups in Whittlesford and Sawston, and others are in development.

Hannah Elphick started as the youthworker in September 2025 and is making a visible difference.

St Andrew's contribute £300 pa. I was chair of the trustees until May 2025. Michael Wilcockson has now taken on that role.

*Simon Taylor*

## **8.6: MUSIC**

### **8.6.1: Choir**

It has now been over two years since I began as Director of Music, and I remain very grateful to work with such a committed and enthusiastic choir. This past year has seen continued growth in both our musical confidence and our sense of community.

The choir has maintained a strong presence in regular Sunday services and special liturgical occasions, with a wide-ranging repertoire spanning many centuries.

Our monthly Choral Evensongs continue to be a central part of our musical life and are well supported by both congregation and visitors. We have welcomed visiting organists and “come and sing” singers for Evensong, which have been a great success.

We have welcomed new singers over the year, helping to sustain a balanced and confident sound across all parts. Our Junior Organ Scholar, Philip, has continued to recover from his accident (a broken knee) and should be rejoining us in May 2026.

Advent, Christmas, and Easter were particular highlights, with a well-attended choir and musically rewarding services. Over the Easter period, we performed Vierne’s Messe solennelle (double organ mass), with Luke playing the second organ part; this was a fantastic and memorable occasion for all involved.

Following last year’s launch, our concert series has continued successfully, strengthening links with the local community and supporting music in the church generally, building up a fund which will support expenditure on special music expenses outside the norm for the church. Our last concert (April 2026) raised over £340, with *Carnival of the Animals* filling the church, complete with poems. Our next concert will take place on 11 July.

We have continued to develop links with many local churches and have supported a number of weddings and funerals, which remain an important part of the choir’s ministry. We also look forward to hosting the Deanery Ascension Day Service at St Andrew’s on 14 May, at which we hope many churches and choirs will be in attendance.

If you would be interested in joining the choir, we would be very pleased to welcome new singers. You do not need to attend every week, and singing is widely known to have many benefits, as well as being great fun.

It has been another full and rewarding year. I am very thankful for the dedication and spirit of all involved, and I look forward to the year ahead.

*Timothy Kwan*

### **8.6.2: Tower Bells**

We have not had a regular ringing team in 2025, but have encouraged and welcomed lots of visiting teams, and also held the Deanery ringers carol service at St Andrew’s. I am hopeful that over time we will re-establish a ringing team based in St Andrew’s, though doing so will be a long project. What we need more than anything for that to happen is an enthusiastic ringer who can teach bell ringing and who would like to lead a team.

*Simon Taylor*

## **8.7: HOME GROUPS, STUDY GROUPS & PRAYER GROUPS**

### ***8.7.1: Wednesday Evening Home Group***

We have continued to meet fortnightly hosted by different members and valued the varied contribution of several members of the group sharing leadership of evenings. None of us has mastered the art of keeping enough time for prayer towards the end of the meeting! The needs of our world are unlimited.

We began the year completing our study of Romans. It was a good base for our autumn study of the Nicene Creed, its historical origins, its present value in uniting the worldwide church and its relevance for today.

During Lent when we met weekly we looked at the 7 miracles in John's gospel which John describes as signs given that we may believe that Jesus the Christ is the Son of God and put our faith in him. Finishing with the raising of Lazarus was a great lead into Holy week and Easter.

*Peter Wenham*

### ***8.7.2: Exploring Faith, Life & Prayer (Women's Group)***

Our ecumenical women's group has continues to meet on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of each month from 7.30 to 9 pm with 7 members. Since lockdown, meetings are hybrid with those in person welcomed to Imogen's in St Andrew's Close, (roaring log fires in the winter) with others on Zoom using an iPad. Our usual format is: news and prayer requests and prayer, input and discussion, and time to reflect on the topic in silence. We all find the group very supportive.

We continued using the Margaret Silf's *Soul Journey* after Easter 2025, followed by a mixture or reflections, ending with our usual delicious summer bring and share meal. In the autumn until Lent, we used her book, *The Other Side of Chaos* which proved very timely and helpful with both personal and world situations. She has a great gift for illuminating visual images.

We are following the Lent course (some of us used it in 2019 and happy to do so again) using Rowan Williams' book and listening to/catching up on the sermons. We are saving the resurrection chapters until after Easter. It is challenging, thought provoking and helpful.

Do get in touch if you would like to join us.

*Romie Ridley*

### ***8.7.3: Tuesday Evening Bible Book Group***

Our core group of nine members meet weekly during term-time, with two more joining our more social get-togethers during the holidays. (Work and other commitments mean they can't attend more regularly!)

We began the year continuing to explore John's Gospel – and rediscovering how new life is breathed out through Jesus, with its parallel in Genesis: 'And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life...'

After studying John we were inspired to look again at the Lord's Prayer, petition by petition, using Kenneth Bailey's wonderful *Jesus through Middle Eastern Eyes* as one of our reference books. Our Bible Book Group member Kay especially loved Bailey's inclusion of an early 2<sup>nd</sup> century Syriac translation (possibly the earliest translation of Greek NT into any language), which literally says: 'Give us today the bread that doesn't run out'.

We then looked at Paul's letter to the Philippians, before deciding as a group that it would be helpful to refresh ourselves with an overview of the whole Bible, revisiting the Bible Society's online 8-week study *The Bible Course*.

We are halfway through this but have stopped for Lent/Easter, to look at Rowan Williams's *God With Us*, following the sermons running at the same time at St Andrew's, which we have found very helpful in helping us to understand Williams's thinking and guiding our group discussions of each chapter.

*Nicky West*

#### **8.7.4: Friday Prayer Group**

We were sad when our friend, Mary Antcliff, died. Her strength, unwavering faith and sage wisdom will not be forgotten. Our group runs as before. Prayers for the locality, family and individual concerns, as well as the world. Candles are lit to highlight difficulties and struggles. We remember thanks and praise too. Music helps reflection.

Jill Ward has become our host in her peaceful home looking on to the garden. We are grateful and settled.

Interestingly we belong to four different churches between us, but all came together at St Andrew's. We know, value, understand and trust one another.

*Judith Lee*

#### **8.7.5: One-off Courses**

The Lent Course for 2025 was based on Rowan Williams' book *God with Us*. It seemed to be well-enjoyed and was followed in a sermon series as well as being taken up by some of the home groups and some individuals. We will return to this format in the future.

*Simon Taylor*

## **8.8: ECO CHURCH PROJECT**

I took over the coordination of this role from Sophi Berridge in October 2025. Sophi successfully helped us achieve a Bronze award in the A Rocha UK Eco Church scheme in 2021. I should like to thank Sophi for helping us achieve this milestone and getting our eco credentials off to a good start.

Since 2021 the Eco Church survey has become significantly harder with more involvement required from us as a church body and as individuals.

There are 5 categories to the A Rocha award with nearly 100 questions to be addressed.

- Worship
- Building
- Land
- Community & Global Engagement
- Lifestyle

We are exploring ways of working towards the Silver award. We are largely compliant with regard to Worship. Looking after our Building and Land in an as eco-friendly way as possible will require improvement but is fairly straightforward. The issue of how to pursue the last two categories of Community & Global Engagement, and Lifestyle is under discussion. We are keen to address this in the context of a Christian message and in a supportive and helpful way.

*Anne Roberts*

## **8.9: CHURCH FLOWERS**

The team has continued to supply flowers for all Church services apart from the seasons of Lent and Advent, when we had the Christmas Tree Festival from 5th - 7th December 2025. The Christmas tree festival raised over £1,000 for the Warden Scheme which the Church supports.

At Christmas time there was an abundance of holly so we were able to have quite a lot adorning the pillars for the Lessons and Carols service, a job for Fiona and Alan both of them being quite tall!

Because our numbers are few, we thought we'd trial doing the flowers on our own rather than work as a pair. Of course this means that our turn doesn't arrive quite so quickly but there's more to do when the time comes around!

We have a rota system for doing the flowers which seems to work well. Arrangers mainly donate the flowers but have the option to claim for them if they so wish.

On Saturday 14 March we made 100 small posies for Mothering Sunday which were distributed even to the men if they wanted one. Members of the congregation were invited to join us on the Saturday to make up the posies. There was a team of 6 altogether and once the 'conveyor belt' started, the job was done by just after 11 o'clock. Some posies were taken to the 'needy' after the service. Any posies that were left were taken and distributed at Little Fishes the following day.

At Easter the flowering cross which this year stood inside the church, was prepared by Jackie Nettleton, with greenery from Valerie Dean's garden, and covered in spring flowers. It was in the porch and Simon brought it into church at an appropriate time at the beginning of the service.

There is always room on the rota for more flower arrangers. We have had one new person who's joined us this year with another potential person ready to start. Please do speak to Jackie Nettleton (07773 423388) if you're interested (men are welcome also!). Arrangements don't need to be elaborate. Indeed, a vase of flowers is all that is needed.

*Jackie Nettleton*

#### **8.10: ST ANDREW'S MEN'S GROUP**

This year saw the re-start of the Men's Group. Having ascertained some of the strengths of previous Men's Group iterations, we've started with a programme that gather men around food, scripture, and open conversation. While a social aspect is essential, the aim is to give plenty of opportunity for honest dialogue between men about matters of faith.

Gatherings so far have included a curry night at the vicarage, pizza in the pub, fish and chips in the Cox's Close Community Room, and Thai food at The Rose. Each gathering has enabled 24 different men to attend, usually with 15 in attendance at any one evening. The conversations have been easier to follow in some venues more than others, and our reviewing of each evening aids our planning for future events. We have two more gatherings planned for this academic year, and will look at dates for next year as we come into the summer and begin planning for 2027.

Our next steps involved thinking through what this group could look like in the future. We will be thinking about the balance between discipleship and faith-sharing, and whether we are getting this right currently. It is likely that we will look to host fewer gatherings with a greater emphasis on sharing faith with those outside of church next year, but it is still early days and what we currently have seems to be working well.

One notable feature is the opportunity to meet people normally outside of church who we have met in Little Fishes. We need to be inviting men through other church activities as well.

One other consideration arising from the Men's Group is the need for a Women's Group. Any volunteers?

*Matt Lewis*

### **8.11: LUNCH GROUP**

I am pleased to report that our group of elderly single people continue to enjoy the hospitality of the staff and volunteers at The Bistro of The Arthur Rank Hospice.

We meet on the second Sunday of each month.

Not only do we enjoy an excellent lunch at a very reasonable cost but also the opportunity to have a good catch up on news of church friends and others in the community and deepen our friendships.

This church led befriending gathering has been going since 2017 and helps to break down the isolation felt by many who live on their own, particular those in a higher age bracket.

Long may it continue.

*Chris Everitt*

### **8.12: ST ANDREW'S DISPLAY BOARD**

The Display Board is shared. It is used by Sue Brown and Messy/Forest Church and The Children's Society with Rob Needle. It is a threesome including me. There would be more creative work from the youngsters but they like to take efforts home. When possible they do contribute. It is good to have involvement. Rob raises awareness of needs and emphasises what can be achieved through campaigns to raise money. Endeavour is varied and has wide ranging benefits. The last one was a great success. After that was Easter when I made the image of a Flowering Cross. Events of significance in the Church year often fall to me, such as Pentecost or Ascension. We work it out between us.

*Judith Lee*

### **8.13: STAPLEFORD MOTHERS' UNION**

We started off the New Year 2025 very well with a fascinating account of Mary's trip to Kazakhstan, a country of which many of us knew little. It was illustrated with some interesting slides and comments about the country. In February we enjoyed the World Day of Prayer slideshow (written by the women of the Cook Islands), which was followed on 7 March by the service held in the Cox's Close Community Room. In March, Fiona Holliday gave us a thoughtful Lent Meditation. Later in March, Hilary attended the Commissioning Service in St Mary's in Ely for new officers, when banners were paraded. There are now three leaders of the Diocesan MU in Ely – Hazel Williams, Jean Webb and Debbie Tye.

Kate Romero of Stapleford Granary gave us a very interesting talk on the work of the Granary in encouraging children from the primary school to come and appreciate the art and music there – apparently a class a week goes to the granary for these events and there are practically no children’s absences on that day! Our member, Julie, talked in May about MU projects, with special reference to Nachingwea our Link in Tanzania. This was followed by a ‘A Summer Miscellany’ in June, when we also had a raffle to raise funds for the Village Show, as we had decided not to have a stall at the Village Weekend. As the Milton Branch has now closed, we had a Tea Party for ourselves in July, followed by an excellent outing before Mary Sumner Day to the Granary, where we enjoyed fellowship and delicious cakes and coffee.

Our new session started in September when Matt Lewis, the new curate, led the service and got to know us all. In October, Rob Needle, late of the Children’s Society, spoke entertainingly on the shop in Sawston and some of the unusual donations they have been given in the past. Hilary gave an illustrated talk in November on the statutes in Anglesey Abbey and the history of some of the less well known saints there. In December we hosted the Deanery Advent Service, quite well attended from the Deanery, when Mary gave a good talk on the theme of ‘Hope’ with special reference to the Link in Nachingwea and how the activities are reflected in many of the MU’s activities, especially in Africa.

There were two coffee mornings this year, our thanks to Mary for hosting them both. We also collected many toiletries once again for the Women’s Refuge and we were able to pass most of them on when Maureen Haigh and Helen Banyard (Trustees) attended the November meeting. So, all in all, we have had another interesting year, with talks on various subjects, but always with the Aims and Objects of the Mothers’ Union in mind, namely, the upholding of Christ’s teaching on marriage, the encouragement for parents to bring up their children in the Christian faith, the maintenance of a global fellowship of Christians united in prayer, the promotion of conditions in society favourable to stable family life and the protection of children, and the giving of help to those whose family life has met with adversity. Funds raised in the Branch were allocated to the Away From It All fund, as well as a contribution to the administration of the MU in Ely, and to the Overseas fund.

Next year is the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the foundation of the Mothers’ Union by Mary Sumner and many events are planned, including a national service in June at St Paul’s cathedral followed by the National Meeting the next day. Hilary and Mary are going to the service and Mary to the National Meeting, upon which she hopes to report later in 2026.

There is going to be a service in Ely Cathedral near or close to Mary Sumner Day – and in our Branch we will be holding a music concert in the church, as our contribution to the anniversary festivities. The programme is nearly complete for 2026 on the theme ‘Join Us! Join In!’

We look forward to another successful year in 2026 and my thanks go to all members for their faithful attendance at meetings, and especially to the Committee for their help.

*Hilary Street*

#### **8.14: FRIENDS OF ST ANDREW'S**

The Friends of St Andrew's are continuing to support the Church in maintaining its fabric.

We are currently working with them as they develop a scheme to improve the facilities and use of the building for the whole community.

Once we have received their proposals we will consider how best to support them.

*Tony Hore*

#### **8.15: STAPLEFORD MESSENGER**

##### ***8.15.1: Magazine***

The Messenger has seen another successful year with many articles of local interest and consequence eg: the busway, Local Plan, Parish Council issues as well as regular reports from local societies and groups.

##### **Production**

The two Production Editors are working well together, sharing the role to accommodate other commitments. Liaison with the printer continues to work well and all issues have been delivered on time and within budget.

##### **Distribution Manager**

Jane and Beth Atkin have joined the Team in this role, taking over from Val Powell who retired after many years. They are assisted by Christine Hall and Konstantin Veretennicov.

##### **Readership**

Thanks to Simon Taylor, the readership/subscription database has been reviewed and consolidated.

It appears that over the last few years the readership of the printed magazine has declined. We now have around 400 delivered copies. The magazine is also posted online so some of the lost readers may well be using the online edition.

##### **Advertising**

Achieved revenue in 2025 was £13,563, up from £12,255 in 2024, due to several new short term adverts. We lost nine advertisers for a variety of reasons including retirement, budget, poor response and ended the year with 60 advertisers.

We have lost a further seven advertisers at the start of 2026 but have gained one to give us currently 54 advertisers with a current projected revenue for 2026 of £12,455.

It should be remembered that we are between Sawston and Shelford, each with their own magazines and also that many small advertisers rely on social media for marketing purposes. Although the magazine is available online, a point which is made to potential advertisers, we cannot provide them with any hit data.

## **Financials**

For full financial details, please refer to the church accounts.

## **Recruitment**

We are currently looking for a Mailbox Administrator; this is a shared role – Katie Swinton is leaving in April.

## **Outlook for 2026**

Despite the challenging economic outlook, the Messenger continues to be a focal point in communicating with the local community. Feedback suggests it is valued by our readers. It would be good if we could increase readership – a previous effort failed due to lack of follow up – so any suggestions would be welcome.

*Ed Rose*

### **8.14.2: St Andrew's Stapleford Messenger Fund**

St Andrew's owns the Messenger, but it has long been run as a magazine for the whole community. In 2018 the PCC took the decision that rather than retaining all the surplus in its general account, some of the surplus would be donated each year, as part of the PCC's own giving, to good causes selected by a church and community committee. The PCC retains the right (as it must) to ensure that donations are consistent with its own charitable purposes, but has never refused to make a donation suggested by the committee. At present the PCC sets aside £3,000 each year from the surplus for this purpose.

In 2025 Martin Ginger stepped down from leading the Messenger Fund Committee after a long and productive stint. Simon Taylor has (temporarily) taken over running it.

Since it began to operate in 2019 the Fund has donated a total of £18,641 to good causes, in the following categories:

School/PTA £4,845

Elderly £4,170

Overseas £2,900

Children & Young People £4,296

Sport £2,430

*Simon Taylor*

## **Item 9: BUILDINGS, CHURCHYARD, GOODS & ORNAMENTS**

### **9.1: CHURCH BUILDING**

During the year the usual maintenance has been carried out, and the church remains in good condition. The quinquennial inspection took place in the summer, and was rightly complimentary to the whole team who have contributed to the maintenance of the church over the last several years. A modest programme of works that needs to be carried out mainly in the next year or so was identified, including some re-pointing and repairs to the parapet of the tower. The work involved is not great, but will almost certainly require scaffolding, so the cost will not be minimal.

Kirsty Campbell has served faithfully as Chair of the Fabric Committee but has now stood down from that role. We are very grateful to her for her efforts.

As reported elsewhere, a subgroup of the PCC (overlapping with the Fabric Committee, has made progress on developing plans for the repair and re-ordering of the church building. After it has consulted with the Diocesan Advisory Committee, and before any application for permission to do works is made, the PCC will consult with the congregation, the village, and historical special interest groups.

*Simon Taylor*

### **9.2: INVENTORY OF GOODS & ORNAMENTS**

The Churchwardens have completed a check of the Church Inventory, which is available for inspection at the APCM or on request.

*Alastair MacGregor*

### **9.3: JOHNSON HALL & VERGER'S COTTAGE**

The maintenance of the Johnson Hall and Verger's Cottage have suffered from unclear lines of management during the year, though bookings have been good. At present Simon Taylor is responsible for bookings and Elspeth Bramley for billings. Repairs and maintenance have been managed on an ad hoc basis which is not entirely satisfactory. A new arrangement is needed.

Regular users include the table tennis club, the Horticultural Society, Ballet East, 440 Jazz plus another band and singing lessons. Church groups, including JOY seniors' group, Little Fishes toddler group and the Mothers' Union use the Hall for free.

The Hall was also used for meetings of the Pastoral Care committee, Age UK/Warden Scheme, the Nachingwea Link Committee and for occasional meetings for local charities. These are also all generally free of charge.

The Verger's Cottage is booked on a regular basis by a counsellor, and the upstairs office is used by the Magog Trust.

The Johnson Hall is available for hire for regular groups and one-offs, and is a pleasant welcoming space suitable for a wide range of events.

The inside of the hall is in reasonable condition, but will need decorating soon. The toilets are in need of updating. Basic external works were completed in the course of the year.

*Simon Taylor*

#### **9.4: CHURCHYARD**

The churchyard continues to be managed to a plan combining formal areas at the front and wild areas behind the church, maintaining its Bronze Award for Churchyards from the BCN Wildlife Trust.

The wild areas include dead wood and ground cover to encourage wildlife, and seasonally managed meadow–grass to encourage chalk grassland flowers. The yew trees have been pruned back to ensure safe access through the churchyard. New saplings are encouraged as appropriate to give succession as older trees pass maturity. The Commonwealth war grave is maintained and an inspector from the War Graves Commission visited in the Autumn to inspect and clean it.

The churchyard is maintained by a small but enthusiastic band of volunteers from the village and St Andrew's. As they are getting older, there is a pressing need for new members. If you would like to join in, please contact Chris Cooper on [iis.cooper@ntlworld.com](mailto:iis.cooper@ntlworld.com) or 01223 842127. There are usually work-parties in the Autumn, before the main festivals of Christmas and Easter plus one or two during the summer especially before a wedding. They are advertised in 'Coming Up' and last about 2 hours with a sociable coffee and chat included.

Grass mowing of the churchyard and Johnson Hall is carried out by Peter Dean.

Special thanks go to John O'Boyle who advises on the ecological management and keeps a careful eye on the wildflowers and also to Jackie Nettleton who regularly mows the ashes plot.

The church is very grateful to all those who attend the work-parties.

*Chris Cooper*

#### **Item 10: GRANTA DEANERY SYNOD**

##### **Introduction**

This report reflects the work and life of Granta Deanery Synod over the period July 2025 to March 2026, during which the Synod met formally on three occasions. Throughout the year, Synod members have continued to work together under our shared strapline:

'Working together to show the love of Christ to the Granta area.'

The year has been marked by thoughtful engagement with scripture, significant discussion of diocesan and national developments, careful stewardship of finances, and a strong commitment to mission initiatives—particularly in relation to youth and families, chaplaincy, and community health and well-being.

### **Worship and Spiritual Life**

Each Synod meeting began with worship, prayer, and a time of Dwelling in the Word, grounding our deliberations in scripture:

- July 2025: Luke 13:10–17
- November 2025: Matthew 13:1–9 (The Parable of the Sower)
- March 2026: Ephesians 6:10–18

These sessions encouraged members to listen deeply to God and one another, shaping discussion and discernment throughout the year.

### **Governance and Participation**

Granta Deanery Synod has remained quorate at all meetings, with strong attendance from both clergy and lay representatives. The Synod continues to benefit from a wide range of experience across its parishes and benefices.

The year concluded with preparation for elections and appointments due at the July 2026 meeting, including the Lay Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, and Standing Committee.

### **Diocesan and National Church Matters**

A significant focus of Synod discussion this year has been the financial position of Ely Diocese, which is managed by the central diocesan team. We discussed the significant projected deficits and the suitability of using of diocesan reserves for such central projects.

Synod members expressed concern about:

- The scale of proposed central diocesan expenditure on centrally-initiated and run projects, such as the one currently proposed by Peter Leech the Director of Mission and Ministry, while the diocese is running a significant deficit, and requests continue for increasing parish share.

My view is that the last diocesan team-led project (Changing Market Towns) was poorly led and managed, minimally successful, and hugely financially wasteful. Although there is a lessons learned report, it's not clear to me from anything we have seen so far that the necessary steps have all been taken.

The two reports on it are [here](#) and [here](#).

(Note that the first of these reports, although marked confidential, is available on the diocesan website. The Lessons Learned Review was edited down for public readership.)

- Communication between Diocese, Deaneries, and Parishes

- The impact on smaller and rural parishes

In response, Granta Deanery communicated formally with diocesan leadership. The visit of Revd Canon Peter Leech, Director of Mission and Ministry, in November 2025 provided an opportunity for open dialogue, clarification of diocesan team priorities, and recognition of the concerns of parishes.

### **Motions and Representation**

A motion originating from Granta Deanery regarding clergy vacancies was successfully progressed through Diocesan Synod after sustained effort, demonstrating the impact of persistence and collaboration.

Matters coming from General Synod discussed in Deanery Synod during the year included:

- Financial pressures
- Environmental sustainability
- Living in Love and Faith
- Wedding and funeral fees (with relief expressed that proposed increases were rejected)

### **Deanery Finance**

The Treasurer reported substantial progress in financial administration during the year:

- Online banking was successfully established after a prolonged process
- Outstanding 2023 and 2024 parish rebates were largely resolved
- All 2024 rebates were confirmed as paid on a pro-rata basis
- The 2026 Ministry Share increase was capped at 4%

Synod expressed gratitude to the deanery treasurer Suzanne Darkins for her perseverance and diligence in managing these improvements.

### **Mission and Ministry Initiatives**

#### ***Science Park Chaplaincy***

The Science Park Chaplaincy has been a major focus of deanery mission:

- A revised and improved vision document was shared with parishes
- Broad support was expressed across Synod
- A voluntary licensed chaplaincy role (lay or ordained) was developed
- The post was advertised in early 2026, with applications received
- Interviews were planned, with the intention to appoint in spring 2026

This initiative reflects the Deanery's commitment to engaging thoughtfully and pastorally with those working in scientific and research environments.

## ***Children, Youth, and Families***

Youth and children's ministry featured prominently, especially at the March 2026 Synod meeting:

- Youth for Christ, working in partnership with YouthInc, outlined current work across schools and communities
- The Deanery's YouthInc worker continues to be supported through these partnerships
- Members engaged in group discussions about provision within their parishes

An action was agreed for all Deanery representatives to:

- Review children's, youth, and family provision in their parishes
- Report back to Synod in advance of July 2026

This reflects a shared desire to understand current provision and opportunities across the Deanery.

## ***Community Health and Well-being***

A proposal for a Church and Community Health and Wholeness Project, including a Parish Nursing model, was discussed in March 2026. The initiative aims to:

- Serve all members of the community, regardless of faith
- Be clearly rooted in Christian values
- Work collaboratively with local partners

Further exploration of governance, funding, and accountability will continue.

## **Events and Fellowship**

The Deanery promoted and supported a range of events across the year, including:

- Come and Sing Evensong
- Open Gardens
- Concerts and Choral Evensong
- Cursillo retreat opportunities

These events strengthen relationships between parishes and help make the Church visible and welcoming in the wider community.

## **Thanks and Remembrance**

The Deanery gave thanks for:

- The faithful service of current office-holders and representatives
- The life and ministry of Andrew Walker, a former Lay Chair, who died during the year

Synod also recorded its gratitude to Bishop Dagmar as she prepared to take up her new role as Bishop of Edinburgh.

## **Conclusion**

The past year has been one of challenge, discernment, and steady progress. Granta Deanery Synod continues to engage thoughtfully with diocesan and national developments while investing time and energy in local mission.

There is clear commitment across the Deanery to:

- Work collaboratively
- Listen attentively to parish realities
- Seek creative and sustainable expressions of ministry

As we move forward, the Deanery remains united in its calling to work together to show the love of Christ to the Granta area.

The main body of this report was drafted by Paru, our Deanery Secretary. I've added a few lines and links re Changing Market Towns and diocesan plans.

*Lizzie Taylor*

## **Item 11: VICAR'S REPORT**

This is my eleventh annual report. It is in some respects rather anodyne – it has been a relatively stable year with many things pottering on nicely in the usual way, some nice highlights, many people to thank, and (mostly) no dramas. But there is a slightly worrying cloud on the horizon, which I will refer to later.

So, 2025: in summary the Lord was worshipped and the good news was spread.

Starting outside Sunday worship, JOY and Little Fishes continue to flourish. Romie Ridley leads JOY, and Fiona Holliday leads Little Fishes. They do so wonderfully, and I am grateful to them both. Neither event is just a social affair. We love that people come to them for company and pleasure, but it is our remit always to declare the gospel, so each session declares the good news of Christ, drop by drop, week on week. That reflects our missional ethos. I take it as a given that a church's task is to tell the good news of Christ, and rather contrary to the bone-headed quote often attributed (probably wrongly) to Francis of Assisi, express words are almost always necessary to do that. So that is what we do: amidst loving actions we tell the good news of Christ.

In any event, both those groups are going well, and it is good to see. Grateful thanks to all those who help to make them a success.

A lovely revival in 2025 was our Men's Group. Matt Lewis and Alan Holliday took that on and have made a success of it, for which many thanks. As with other outreach activities it is social oriented but with a clear gospel message. It would be lovely to see a similar group for women started.

Our pastoral care is also going well. There is now a strong team in place, very well led by Romie Ridley, which really looks out well for members of the congregation. I am grateful to them for all their efforts. The real opportunities to expand that work outwards to more in our community still exist, but we do not have the personnel to pursue that at present.

Turning to Sunday things, our year was shaped, as ever, in two ways.

Firstly, we celebrate all the major festivals with appropriate services, trying to involve the whole spread of our congregation as best we can.

Secondly, lots of regular services. A small change this year: we stopped trying to do a Common Worship sung communion once a month at 9 am, and reverted to the earlier pattern of a BCP Communion every week, which works better for congregation and choir. We moved that additional CW Communion service to a 10.30 am slot, slightly against my instinct for what is best in the overall pattern of our worship. A second small change is the institution of regular 'Come & Sing' Evensongs as part of our former sequence of monthly Evensongs. These have proved popular for those who like singing church music, but do not want to commit to every week, and are popular with the congregation too.

Otherwise our service provision has remained much the same as in the last few years. The 9 am BCP service flourishes. Messy Church and Messy Forest Church do too – a great team, led by Sue Brown. We keep working to improve our All Age services, which are incredibly difficult to do well, and feel as though we are gradually reaching a good place with them. And apart from these I have picked out, the other services keep going very nicely.

The only regular service that I feel still needs re-shaping is our Sunday Worship. This is currently at 10.30 am on the second Sunday of each month. That service may present an opportunity for a worship band and more modern music, and perhaps including some testimonies, to broaden our overall offering still further. Whether we do make any change there, rest assured that we are broadly in a stable phase; any change will be testing and tinkering only at this point.

And secondly we have, in gaps between the festivals, planned sermon series. I continue to be firmly of the view that slavish adherence to the lectionary, and using only it as the determinant of our readings and themes, is a spiritually impoverished approach. It does not really allow for detailed examination of longer passages of scripture in the order in which they were written, which is something we ought to be doing if we are to understand the inspired work of the authors properly. Dancing about the scriptures as the lectionary tends to do is like eating a 15 course taster menu at a fine restaurant – you know it was clever but you really can't remember what you ate at the end of it. When we do have periods of using just the lectionary I am always struck by just how badly it is constructed, and how much violence it does to the biblical author's intentions by skipping about all over the place.

Patterns and themes and real nourishment only come when you follow the divine and human authors' intended sequences of thought.

So we have continued to have other series. In 2025 we had a series on Acts following Paul's first missionary journey, another series on Ephesians, working our way through the middle chapters, and a summer series on Moses. We have already had more of the same in 2026 and will continue to do so.

And in addition to our worship we had all the usual things that go to make up the life of St Andrew's: lovely celebrations of our two mission links, parties, baptisms, weddings and funerals, some wonderful music, involvement in the Village Weekend and more. As I have been glad to say in previous years, it was again a good year in lots of ways. The Lord was worshipped, the Word was preached, the sacraments were celebrated, our worship was led with lots of great music from Tim Kwan and the choir, and we had enormous fun for all ages all the while.

None of this could have taken place without a huge amount of work from lots of people. I have already mentioned some. As well as carrying her pastoral responsibilities Romie has been an assistant churchwarden, working very hard alongside Margaret Hebden in that role. And Alastair MacGregor has continued to be our sole churchwarden. They are a wonderful team, and we are very lucky to have them. I really appreciate their hard work and loving attitudes. Sue Brown continues to lead our children's work with great dedication, creativity and aplomb, visible in Messy Church and All Age services, but actually doing a huge amount behind the scenes, particularly with Matt, Fiona and Sarah Needle, to plan effectively and to make those things happen.

I have thanked a few who carry heavy burdens. I also thank those who take on what may seem smaller roles, but really do have my equal gratitude because they all contribute beautifully to the whole. The silver does not polish itself, the linen does not clean itself, the liturgical colours do not magically change with the seasons, flowers do not grow naturally on our church windowsills, the recalcitrant church clock does not adjust itself as necessary, PCC papers do not arrange themselves and fly out on time, funeral families cannot welcome themselves to church but need to be met with a friendly face, and so on and so on. Thank you one and all! And this year, just one pick out from me, though only one not least because last year I tried and failed to thank everyone: a huge thank you to those who help week on week with our refreshments. I know it is lots of you helping out in church or making cakes behind the scenes, and I thank you for your contributions, but Ollie Challis and Martin Ginger are almost always there clearing up and washing up after we have all enjoyed the provision, so a huge thank you to those unsung heroes.

Much gratitude too to Matt Lewis who joined us as curate in the middle of 2025. Matt stepped into the role carved out by Clare Coates and Lucinda Howard before him – how lucky we have been in our curates – and is successfully making it his own, and making a great contribution to the life of the church. He is a great blessing to us and I am thankful to have him as a colleague. It is also wonderful to have an ordinand again this year in Daniel Mantell-Roberts. We are lucky to have him too.

So lots of people doing wonderful things. But all that genuine thankfulness leads me on to the little cloud on the horizon I mentioned earlier. I mentioned it last year, but this year it has got worse: we do not have enough volunteers coming through for jobs large and small. Some do put their hands up, and I am so grateful to those that have this year. You are wonderful. But too often we advertise jobs for ages and still get no-one. And as I write this year, less than a fortnight before our annual meetings, it looks as though many of our elected roles will go unfilled.

It is worth putting on record that the reduction in the number of volunteers is now having an adverse effect. It is no longer an abstract concern. The effects are threefold.

First, we are storing up trouble. We have not, for example, done all the fundamental routine checks and maintenance work the church needs this year. The effect is not visible now, but it is there, and will become apparent. And that is only one example.

Second, those who are active in the church – a wonderful group of real stalwarts – have picked up all the ‘extra’ jobs, small and large, that they can and are in danger of becoming exhausted. I would include myself in that. Adding tasks to the burdens of those who are in principle willing to be active in the church works only up to the point at which they feel overburdened and can take no more. At that point the risk is of losing a volunteer entirely.

Third, big things are going to get lost. The big things we simply have to do, namely the ceiling repair and boiler replacement, seem way too daunting. And the big things we would like to do, such as improving church accessibility, kitchen, loo, lighting etc, and other aspects of church re-ordering that would deal with some unacceptably poor facilities and set up the church for the next century plus, are likely to prove impossible because fundraising and organising will need committed new volunteers who simply aren’t available.

Overall I want you to know that am now genuinely worried by the reduction in church volunteering that we are seeing. But, ever optimistic and trusting in the Lord’s provision in this regard as elsewhere, we are going to try and begin to tackle the deficit later in the year, so watch out for that initiative.

I don’t want to end, though, on that note. Overall I remain every bit as optimistic as I have been in recent years. The church has a liveliness about it that is a reason for great thankfulness. The demographic spread is healthy. Yes, we have a shortage of volunteers, but there are a great many who do step up and who are wonderful.

Your financial generosity means that we have sufficient funds for day to day purposes. We have a mission field spread out before us. So there is nothing not to like, and lots for which to be profoundly grateful.

As I have said before, trusting God is the key. We are his. We have our bibles. We have prayer. We have faith in Jesus Christ who loves us and died for us. We have the Holy Spirit. In the end those things are what we need. What is really required of us is to be faithful, and that we shall continue to do.

Every blessing to you all, Simon

**Item 12: ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There are no documents to consider for this item.

## C. DOCUMENTS FOR PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING

### Item 1: MINUTES OF THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON SUNDAY 11 MAY 2025 AFTER THE APCM

Present: Simon Taylor (Chair), Nicky West (Secretary), Revd Lucinda Howard (Curate), Sue Brown, Alan & Fiona Holliday, Nell Jerram, Alastair MacGregor, Jackie Nettleton, Anne Roberts, Romie Ridley

**Apologies:** Chris Bow (Treasurer), Felicity Cooke (Lay Vice Chair)

Simon Taylor welcomed new members of the committee, Alan Holliday and Nell Jerram.

The minutes of last year's meeting were available for reference, but had already been approved at an earlier PCC meeting.

#### 1. Appointment of Vice Chair, Secretary, Treasurer and Electoral Roll Officer

The PCC made the following appointments, proposed by Simon Taylor and seconded by Alastair MacGregor and agreed unanimously:

- Lay Vice Chair – Felicity Cooke
- Electoral Roll Officer – Felicity Cooke
- Secretary – Nicky West
- Treasurer – Chris Bow

Chris Bow was co-opted to the PCC (proposed by Simon Taylor, seconded by Sue Brown, and agreed unanimously) so that he can also be on the Standing Committee.

#### 2. Date of next meeting

Monday 2 June 2025 at 7.45 pm in the Vicarage

Monday 28 July PCC social meeting. Anne Robert's house.

The meeting closed at 13.04 pm

Five different ways to give and support St Andrew's Church:

- use our card reader
- cash
- cheque to Stapleford PCC
- as a one-off through our website [standrewstapleford.org/giving](http://standrewstapleford.org/giving)
- by setting up a regular donation through the Parish Giving Scheme - see [standrewstapleford.org/giving](http://standrewstapleford.org/giving) for details