

# **ST PETER'S CHURCH HERSHAM**



**Annual Parochial Church Meeting  
17<sup>th</sup> May 2026**

St Peter's Church Hersham - Annual Parochial Church Meeting 2026

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## Introduction

It has been a joy to see the congregation of St Peter's continuing to grow in number, in discipleship and in diversity throughout 2025, and despite a few challenges early in the year, 2025 had some real highlights and joy.

I would like to thank our small but dedicated ministry team who have worked together for the benefit of the parish. Each used their gifts and experiences in many ways to help deliver ministry, mission and pastoral care to our congregation, our community, our schools and residential homes.

Thank you also to Linda and Lynne, our Churchwardens, the Standing Committee, and PCC for their support, wisdom and hard work during the year. I would also like to thank Sarah, our administrator, for all her hard work (and for keeping me supplied with chocolates!). Finally, I would like to thank you, the congregation, and all who work behind the scenes to make St Peter's a warm and welcoming place for our whole community.

I am genuinely excited to see what 2026 brings.

*"<sup>22</sup> let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. <sup>23</sup> Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. <sup>24</sup> And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, <sup>25</sup> not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching".*

*Hebrews 10: 22-25*

Jackie Richardson  
Vicar

## AGENDAS

### Annual Meeting of Parishioners & Annual Parochial Church Meeting Sunday 17th May 2026; to be held in the church.

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#### Annual Meeting of Parishioners

1. Welcome and Prayers
  2. Appointment of Clerk
  3. Minutes of the meeting held on 25th May 2025
  4. Election of Churchwardens for 2026-2027
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#### Annual Parochial Church Meeting

1. Minutes of the meeting held on 25th May 2025
2. Reports that must be legally presented
  - I. Electoral Roll.
  - II. Report on the proceedings of the Parochial Church Council.
  - III. Care Team Report
  - IV. Share Team Report
  - V. Grow Team Report
  - VI. Report on the Fabric, Goods and Ornaments of the Church  
(Churchwardens' Report)
  - VII. Deanery Synod
  - VIII. Safeguarding Report
  - IX. Financial statements for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2025  
*(see separate report – Parochial Church Council's Report and Unaudited Accounts  
for the year ended 31 December 2025)*
3. Elections and Appointments
  - 3.1. Members of the Parochial Church Council
  - 3.2. Appointment of Independent Examiner
  - 3.3. Deputy Churchwardens
4. Vicar's Report
5. Health and Safety Report
6. AOB

**St Peter's Church Hersham**  
**Minutes of Annual Parishioners' & Parochial Church Meeting**  
**Sunday 25th May 2025**  
**Held in Church**

**Annual Meeting of Parishioners**

**1. Welcome and Prayer**

The Chairman, Jackie Richardson, welcomed everyone and opened the meeting with a prayer.

**2. Appointment of Clerk**

Karen Richards was proposed as Clerk by Jane Anderson, seconded by Clare Warne, and the appointment agreed unanimously by those present.

**3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> May 2024**

The minutes of the meeting held on 19th May 2024 were agreed and signed as a true record.

**4. Election of Churchwardens for 2025-2026**

Jackie thanked the churchwardens Lynne Watson, and particularly Andrew Strong, who having served 6 years in the role, did not stand for re-election. Lynne Watson was nominated for re-election, proposed by Gillian Coates and seconded by Katherine Ind. Linda Convery was nominated by Karen Richards and seconded by Jane Anderson. There being no other candidates, both were duly elected to serve as churchwardens. Jackie expressed her thanks to Lynne for her continuing commitment and welcomed Linda to this vital role, and there followed a round of applause.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 12:10

**St Peter's Church Hersham**  
**Minutes of Annual Parishioners' & Parochial Church Meeting**  
**Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> May 2025**  
**Held in Church**

**Annual Parochial Church Meeting**

**1. Minutes of the Meeting Held on Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> May 2024**

The minutes of the Meeting held on 19th May 2024 were agreed and signed,

**2. Reports that must be Legally Presented**

**I. Electoral Roll**

A new electoral roll must be prepared every 6 years and 2025 being the sixth year in the cycle, a new roll was prepared in May 2025.

KR presented the figures:

The number on the new electoral roll prepared in May 2025 is 137

- Resident within the parish accounted for 82
- Out of parish accounted for 55

The number on the old electoral roll in April 2024 was 145

- Resident within the parish accounted for 84
- Out of parish accounted for 61

Thanks were extended to Sarah Tourell for all her work on updating and preparing the roll.

**II. Report on the Proceedings of the Parochial Church Council**

There were no questions and Karen Richards was thanked for compiling the report.

**III. Care Team Report**

No questions were raised. Thanks were extended to the whole team for all its work in continuing the mission of St Peter's.

**IV. Share Team Report**

No questions were raised, and the team was thanked for all they have achieved this year.

V. **Grow Team Report**

No questions were raised, and members of the team were thanked for their contributions.

VI. **Report on Fabric, Goods and Ornaments of the Church**

No questions were raised and the churchwardens, Lynne Watson and Andrew Strong, and deputy churchwarden Tony Skrzypecki, were thanked for the contribution they make to the smooth day to day running of the church.

VII. **Deanery Synod**

It was noted that there is still a vacancy on the Deanery Synod.

VIII. **Safeguarding Report**

Lynne was thanked for her continued vigilance in monitoring, updating, and implementing our policies and practices.

IX. **Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024**

Treasurer Malcolm Reid reported that the 2024 accounts had a deficit of expenditure over income of £27,000 (excluding asset revaluations). Another deficit budget is forecast for 2025, which will reduce further our cash.

Malcolm presented a comparison of the 2024 results to 2009 noting that the number of givers has reduced by 45%; the congregation has decreased both in number and their level of giving. At the same time, expenditure has gone up; for example heating from £5,000 to £20,000.

Legacies are vital to balancing the books (£29,000 received in 2009, £20,000 in 2024) and Malcolm called on those present to consider a legacy.

We need to be forward thinking as our cash is diminishing at a rate that, if not reduced, will leave us with no cash in just a few years.

Back in 2009, we had two curates and two Lay Ministers in addition to a vicar. Currently we have just Jackie as vicar and one Licensed Lay Minister, which is an unsustainable situation. We need a curate and a Children and Families' worker, if we are to grow the church both in numbers and discipleship.

Malcolm first raised the idea of selling the Lodge in 2023 and using a small fraction of the proceeds to progress the projects needed to continue our ministry and mission of growth. Most of the proceeds could be invested for the longer term, with the remainder to be used to seed fund some of the projects identified and to pay the cost of housing a curate for three years. Jackie re-iterated that funds from a sale would not be used to finance the undertaking of the projects; grants will be sought for this.

Malcolm has also recommended realising the value of the Endowments to invest elsewhere and improve return (currently only 2%).

The overall aim is to balance the budget in 2026.

Thanks were given to Malcolm on behalf of all by Tony Skrzypecki, for all the hard work he puts into the Treasurer's role and the preparation of the report.

### **Questions and Clarifications**

Ailsa (Lulu) Button asked whether we can claim all the VAT back on eligible repairs and maintenance works (through the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme); Malcolm confirmed it is currently capped at £25,000 but that there will be government changes to the scheme in 2026. It was also confirmed that legacies are tax exempt and that selling the Lodge is not currently subject to Capital Gains Tax. New legislation will be coming into effect in 2026 giving tenants more rights and making it more difficult for landlords to remove them. Tony Skrzypecki noted that it could be advantageous to sell before any tax law changes.

## **3. Elections and Appointments**

### **3.1. Members of the Parochial Church Council**

All candidates had been nominated prior to the meeting.

- Andrew Strong was elected for a 3-year term; proposed by Karen Richards and seconded by Suzanne Barrett
- Gillian Coates re-elected to the PCC for a further 3-year term; proposed by Suzanne Barrett and seconded by Margaret Hicks
- Malcolm Reid re-elected to the PCC for a further 3-year term; proposed by Tony Skrzypecki and seconded by Pat Shore

### **3.2. Appointment of Independent Examiner**

Malcolm Reid proposed that Frances Wilde (of Warner Wilde Ltd) be reappointed as the Independent Examiner. This was approved unanimously.

### **3.3. Deputy Churchwarden**

Tony Skrzypecki was re-appointed as Deputy Church Warden, proposed by Jackie Richardson and seconded by Karen Richards, and thanked for all the work he does "behind the scenes".

#### 4. Vicar's Report

Jackie Richardson opened by saying it had been a year of "ups and downs", as recorded in her written report.

She thanked the 10am Sunday congregation who willingly adopted the new 10:30am format from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2024, allowing time for fellowship to be enjoyed by those attending the Breakfast Praise service. This well attended service is led by the children, whose prayers have included unicorns, friends and new shoes! It follows the pattern of a simple communion service with chocolate brioche being substituted for bread.

Following a successful 3-year training period, our curate Katrina Jenkins left having secured a job in Derby Diocese.

During 2024 there were many events, activities and successes to celebrate:

- The first Sunday of the month service has developed and is attracting more of the older children and their families
- The number of Life Groups has increased from one to three, a measure of our developing faith
- The churchyard was continually improved and cared for by a committed group of volunteers
- Music to Calm the Soul was well received by those attending the five evenings it ran for during the autumn/winter months
- The Music Group continued to flourish
- Pre-school Praise (for those with newborn to 4-year-olds) was enjoyed by those attending
- The Women's Breakfast has been successfully run again this year, attracting women from the wider community as well as St Peter's
- The Men's Group has reformed
- Four new Pastoral Visitors have been trained
- Melissa Wood joined St Peter's while she explores ordination
- The St Peter's Evangelism Hub participants continue to demonstrate their enthusiasm to show and share their faith

There were some "lows" too:

- The death of Adela Foddy shortly after Easter, a long-time member and Lay Minister of St Peter's, who will be missed greatly.
- The departure of Sara Holland to continue her training elsewhere after negotiations failed to produce an agreed way forward.
- The resignation of Sarah Dunn from her role as Children and Families Co-ordinator.

During 2024, the long running historic child-abuse case finally ended with the imprisonment of the perpetrator. Jackie thanked our safeguarding officer, Lynne Watson, who with Jackie, the diocesan safeguarding team and Bishop Andrew provided unwavering support to the victim and to each other, before and during the court case. Jackie also thanked the survivor for his bravery and grace throughout the ordeal.

2024 has been the hardest year of her time as vicar at St Peter's but is excited for what next year will bring. We will apply to the diocese for a curate to start in June 2026 and continue the search for a new Family and Children's Minister. There has been progress on funding the community café, and Jackie and Lynn are looking forward to working with Linda Convery, just elected as a new churchwarden. Jackie then quoted from John, Chapter 15, "Jesus the True Vine".

Jackie expressed thanks to the many people involved in running and maintaining the church and carrying out our ministry within a multitude of roles.

- The PCC, who are a real asset to St Peter's and in particular, Tony Skrzypecki as deputy churchwarden, Malcolm Reid as Treasurer and Karen Richards as PCC secretary.
- Sarah Tourell, Parish Secretary, and Licensed Lay Minister Deborah Lock.
- The team leaders, occasional preachers, Rob Stafford and Lynn Skrzypecka for their contribution to music, the Pastoral Assistants and Visitors, Mark Hover, the Health and Safety Officer, flower arrangers, coffee makers/severs and in particular Kumar Swamy, the Vauxmead team, bell ringers, Hanna Sizer (hall bookings), churchyard volunteers, sides people, readers, servers, chalice assistants, those who pray, and the congregation.

Special thanks were given to the "magnificent" churchwardens, Lynne Watson and, in his absence, Andrew Strong, whom Jackie has been privileged to work with. Andrew will be thanked on his return from holiday, having served for 6 years in this vital role.

Lynne Watson reflected on the huge contribution Jackie has made as vicar of St Peter's. It is a challenging role and has been more so this year due to Katrina completing her curacy and moving to Derby as well as managing the historic safeguarding case. She worked effectively with the diocese, which in turn has given invaluable support and guidance throughout the process to both herself and Lynne, as well as the survivor. She has demonstrated resilience, understanding and empathy to bring about a positive spiritual outcome from a horrific experience. The year ended without a Children and Families' worker and the prospect of months with no replacement due to the difficulties in recruitment, an issue for many other churches also. Despite this, Jackie is looking forward with vision, faith, inspiration and enthusiasm.

## **5. Health and Safety Report**

Mark Hover has once again done an excellent job as Health and Safety Officer, such that no major issues have arisen. It was noted the emergency lighting in the WI Hall was inadequate and this has now been dealt with.

## **6. AOB**

Margaret Hicks thanked Jackie for being a "can do" vicar, but also for highlighting when there are things which may not get done or activities which cannot take place, due to the lack of people in key roles to support her. It takes many people to do their bit in their own way to keep everything running smoothly, particularly during the more challenging times. An example of this is how, following the departure of the Children and Families' worker, those running the children's services and activities have risen to the challenge to ensure continuity of provision.

The meeting closed with the Grace at 12:31

## **Agenda Item 2**

### **Reports, which must legally be presented**

- I. Electoral Roll.
- II. Report on the proceedings of the Parochial Church Council.
- III. Care Team Report
- IV. Share Team Report
- V. Grow Team Report
- VI. Report on the Fabric, Goods and Ornaments of the Church  
(Churchwardens' Report)
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- IX. Financial statements for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2025  
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## **I. Report on the Electoral Roll**

Our Electoral Roll is completely renewed every six years.  
The last renewal was undertaken in 2025.

The number on the new electoral roll in May 2026 is 137

Resident within the parish accounted for 80

Out of parish = 57

The number on the old electoral roll in May 2025 was 137

Resident within the parish accounted for 82

Out of parish = 55

Sarah Tourell  
Electoral Roll Officer  
May 2026

## **II. Summary of the Proceedings of the Parochial Church Council**

### **Overview**

The PCC held nine scheduled meetings in 2025, including the short meeting following the APCM, which was held on 25th May: two more than in 2024. In addition, an extra meeting was held in February, to discuss our financial position.

Three members came to the end of their term in 2025, two of whom were proposed for re-election and duly re-elected. Andrew Strong, having served as a Churchwarden for six years, did not stand for re-election for this role, but was nominated for membership of the PCC, and was duly elected. We thank him for the enormous contribution he has made during his time as a Churchwarden. We welcomed Linda Convery as our new Churchwarden, to work alongside Lynne Watson, who was re-elected to serve a sixth year. As of May 2025, the total number of members was 14, comprising: 8 lay members, 1 co-opted member and 5 ex-officio members.

At the beginning of the year, discussions focused on the options available to ensure St Peter's future financial security whilst continuing to grow the church, as set out in the Mission Action Plan. The PCC agreed to seek to employ another Children and Families' Minister (following the post-holder's resignation in December 2024) and to apply to have a curate from 2026. To finance these posts, and to secure funding for the initial (seed) stages of the projects identified as high priority, the PCC dedicated extra time in addition to the scheduled meetings, to assess and debate the benefits, risks and possible long-term consequences of either mortgaging or selling the Lodge. Following this prayerful and difficult process, members voted by a majority to sell the Lodge.

Lynne Watson has again ensured that Safeguarding is at the forefront of all our activities. Safeguarding is a standing item on the agenda of all scheduled PCC and Standing Committee (SC) meetings, and the Safeguarding Dashboard is regularly updated and used to ensure compliance in all the areas monitored. Any potential issues or required updates are dealt with in a timely manner, with input from the PCC and SC as required.

The time and talents of the PCC and all other volunteers who contribute to the day to day running of the church as well as planning for its future financial and spiritual health is greatly appreciated and we give thanks to God for their commitment and dedication.

*Karen Richards*

*PCC Secretary*

### **III. Care Team Report**

The St. Peter's CARE team oversees the day-to-day ministry of the church and the wider deanery in worship, prayer and pastoral care. Thank you to all who ensure that St. Peter's remains a loving church family in the heart of Hersham, living out our mission statement to serve, pray and reflect the light of Jesus in all that we do.

#### **Worship**

The Worship Team met three times in the year to review and plan services.

Highlights of the year include:

The Tenebrae service which was held in April. The numbers attending this service in Holy Week continued to grow with attendees appreciating the opportunity to hear Christ's Passion expressed through words and music.

Approximately 150 people from St Peter's, Hersham Baptist Church and All Saints' Church took part in the ecumenical walk of witness on Good Friday morning following an intergenerational service at St Peter's where Hersham Baptist Church joined us.

An Hour at the Cross used interplay between the artistic images of the stations of the cross and music to encourage reflection on Good Friday afternoon.

This year's Summer Workshop focused on Spirituals – particularly apt against the backdrop of a rise in nationalism and the flying of the St George's flag that was sweeping the UK at the time. The Summer workshop and the Carol Service continue to offer opportunities for outreach and attract people from outside the St Peter's congregation to contribute to the musical life of the church.

The Remembrance Day service at the War Memorial on Hersham Green attracted large numbers of members of the public. We give thanks for Vic Gilder, the bugle player who retired at the end of 2025, after playing for 18 years. A replacement is being sought for 2026.

Church in Churchyard continued throughout the spring/summer swapping to Music to Calm the Soul for the autumn/winter period. Highlights of the summer were the amazing Pentecost service on Vauxmead, complete with firepit and kites; bat listening with Surrey Wildlife after an informal evensong; and the churchyard team led a moving, reflective service in the churchyard, sharing their thoughts on Bible verses that reflected the peace and hope of the Churchyard garden.

Thank you to everyone who contributes to the rich worship life of our church.

## **Prayers**

Our ministry is inspired by the Holy Spirit and supported by faith filled prayer and we thank everyone who contributes to the prayer life of our church.

### *Intercessions*

Many thanks to Sue Gray who continued to coordinate the rota for intercessions. We are blessed by the different styles and personalities of those who lead our weekly intercessions and we would encourage new people to join this ministry. Support and training can be given.

### *Prayers after the 10.30.am service –*

Thank you to the small group of people who met in the lady chapel after the 10.30.am service to pray for the church and the concerns of the world. This ministry was paused at the end of 2025, while we explore ways to make this more accessible to all.

### *Circle of Prayer*

On the last Monday of each month, a small group shared in a time of prayerful reflection inspired by items such as poems; Bible passages; St Francis of Assisi's Canticle of the Creatures, with a reflection for Creationtide; and the change in prayer throughout one's life. The meeting provided a safe, supportive place to share experiences, thoughts and ideas. The afternoon finished with fellowship over a cup of tea. New members are always welcome!

## **Weddings and Funerals**

The number of weddings and funerals held in church continue to fall nationally, with the option of many venues for both, and the rise of cremation only (with no service) funerals affecting our numbers.

Last year Jackie conducted four weddings. We conducted seven funerals in St Peter's, two funerals at St Mark's, four funerals at a crematorium and fourteen interments of ashes.

## **Flowers**

During the year a dedicated team, coordinated by Margaret Hicks, has enjoyed filling our church with floral arrangements on the special days. Vivian valiantly made sure there were flowers in the Lady Chapel throughout the year. Christmas decorating was truly for all ages: our young members decorated the tree; the windows were adorned by our older floral enthusiasts; and a great splash of red poinsettias at the High Altar was offered by Rosemary. We are always looking for anyone who would like to arrange flowers at any time in the year they would like to offer remembrance.

## **Bells**

St Peters bell ringers (teens to 80s) met to ring for services on Sundays and for practice on Tuesday evenings. Josh, John and Jane who started at the end of 2023 have been a great help, but the unavailability of others means we are still very short of numbers. Our practices are better attended because of help from nearby churches. We are always looking for and are willing to train new ringers. Bell ringing is a service to the Church but can be a lifelong pleasure also.

## **Pastoral care**

The pastoral team continue to provide pastoral care for those members of our community who have been bereaved or are suffering from illness. Our team also take communion at home to those who can no longer attend church. We held two afternoon teas in the vicarage for those who find it difficult to get out and over All Saints weekend we held the annual memorial service for those who have lost loved ones to come and light a candle and remember. This is always very well received by those who attend. During the year we also started to hold a monthly communion service in both Burwood Grange care home and the Eliza Palmer Hub nursing home in Whiteley Village and this has been appreciated by the residents and staff.

Thank you to all of our pastoral team who work hard to bring the hope of Christ into the homes and lives of those in need of care.

**For the Deanery Report, see section VII on page**

*Jackie Richardson*

## **IV. Share Team Report**

The groups within the Share Team develop relationships with communities beyond St Peter's. We meet people where they are and share God's love through our care, commitment, and prayer.

### **Mission Partners**

The Mission Support team met on Zoom to arrange speakers for services and to agree payments to Hersham Youth Trust, Peace and Hope Trust, Casa Reom and Mission Aviation Fellowship. Each received £2,700 from church funds except that £1,000 was switched from the Peace and Hope Trust to Casa Reom to reflect their relative need. They also supported Jackie's suggestion of local homeless charity Rentstart for the Christmas collections.

### **Women's Breakfast**

The Women's Breakfast continued to thrive and proved very popular. The quarterly gatherings attracted women not only from St Peter's congregation but from the wider area. Attendances averaged 35 and the donations were always generous. The church office provided support by printing posters and flyers to promote the Breakfast at church events. Volunteers always came forward to help and clear afterwards.

### **Interdenominational events**

Members of St Peter's, All Saints' and Hersham Baptist Church (HBC) met together for the World Day of Prayer service held in All Saints' Church. The three churches participated in the Good Friday Walk of Witness followed by hot cross buns provided by St Peter's. Members of HBC joined St Peter's for a short service before the annual service of Remembrance in the Memorial Garden.

### **Publicity**

Sarah Tourell continued to produce all publicity material for the congregation and the wider community. She has updated and maintained the Churchsuite database to ensure the ministry team has accurate data. Sue Burke updated the website regularly.

Philip Foster took on the Instagram publicity role in August. Since then, the account has grown rapidly, with increased visibility, stronger engagement, and a broader reach within the parish and wider community. Instagram has become a vibrant and fast-growing outreach tool for St Peter's. Seasonal content, worship updates, community gatherings, and Scripture-based Stories have been especially effective. The account now serves as both a publicity channel and a way to share the Gospel beyond the church building.

Shantha Deshpande took over responsibility for Facebook. Post interactions, including comments and shares, increased significantly, reflecting a significant increase in visibility and community engagement. Shares are especially impactful as they extend our reach beyond our immediate Hersham community, promoting our message and events to the wider area. Comments reflect active connection and conversation, showing that people are not just seeing our posts but responding, engaging, and participating in St Peter's Church community life. Together, these interactions demonstrate growing visibility, deeper relational connection, and increased awareness of St Peter's mission and activities.

### **St Peter's Fellowship**

The Fellowship is for all people in the community, men and women, young and old. There were several new members last year and attendance was often over 30. Regular pianist, Peter Toth, opened both the Spring and Autumn seasons. Among the many speakers, Neil Mach, in the guise of Captain Mainwaring of the Home Guard, entertained members with a talk to celebrate the 80th anniversary of VE day. Meryl White shared her experience as a volunteer at the 2024 Paris Olympics in her talk, *From Surrey to the Seine*, while magician, John Field gave an entertaining talk on magic and performed some tricks. Major (retd) Paul Whittle TD spoke on the small gauge Darjeeling Himalayan railway. The Fellowship was very grateful to Lynn Skrzypecka who played the piano on two afternoons, guiding the singing of hymns and carols. On occasions without a speaker or entertainer, members entertained each other by reading favourite poems or from their favourite books or joining in a quiz. A good chat with others over tea, coffee and biscuits provided fellowship in the second hour of each meeting. Members finished the year with a buffet Christmas meal in the WI Hall. Thanks go to Susan Mahon and all who helped in the preparation and hard work in setting up and clearing afterwards. Also, to Sarah, the Parish Secretary, for her help in advertising the Fellowship on social media.

### **Schools**

We continued to be blessed with extremely strong links with both primary schools in our parish. We provided weekly online or face to face school assemblies at Bell Farm primary school and fortnightly face to face assemblies at Burhill primary school. We continued to help with RE topics when requested, covering subjects like 'Why go to Church?' and the meaning of Christian symbols. Jackie also facilitated and led a whole school multi faith assembly in both primary schools and encouraged children of different faiths to bring and show items they use in worship.

We held school services at Easter, Harvest and Christmas, as well as end of year services, which gave us an opportunity to connect with parents. We also invited one year group from each school to share an interactive Easter Experience, with different stations in the church yard representing Gethsemane, Pilot's Courtyard, The Cross and the Open Tomb.

## **Friends of St Peter's**

The small team responsible for The Friends has been identifying fundraising opportunities and investigating grants for conservation and restoration projects of historical importance. The company which carried out the damp survey of the chancellery made periodic visits to assess the drying out of the walls. There has been no further ingress of water since the downpipe was replaced and the progression with damp readings is very encouraging. Plans have been made to publicise the mural to a wider audience, rather than just those who visit the Church.

Although we have had a year impacted by adverse weather, our dedicated team of volunteers have continued to work their miracles and the churchyard has never looked better. Their efforts have transformed the Remembrance Garden into a tranquil and inviting space with a tidy lawn that is mowed weekly and surrounded by beautiful and carefully maintained flowers. Volunteers and those who signed up to the 'Adopt a Grave' initiative have ensured that the rest of the churchyard is tidy, cared for and loved.

The major undertaking for the year was the creation of a wildflower meadow to improve the unsightly area at the end of the churchyard nearest the surgery. Thanks to kind donations for both the ground preparation and the wildflower seeds, we got off to a great start. By May we were rewarded with a meadow full of poppies and other colourful flowers. Then came a dry and hot June and July. The meadow soon wilted and plants died off. Due to the very low water pressure in the churchyard, no sprinkler system would work. We had planted 250 whips to create a hedge surround to the meadow and, to keep them alive, one of our volunteers came every day to drip water on them. Thankfully, this dedication enabled the plants to survive the summer and we are now exploring options to counteract another dry summer.

Later in the year, we were blessed with donations to enable us to place six new benches around the churchyard. They have been a great success and many people enjoy the peace and spiritual tranquillity of the churchyard.

None of this maintenance could have been achieved without the support of Elmbridge Borough Council who ensured that the grass was mown regularly by a very diligent group of outsourced contractors and we are most grateful for their efforts.

Thanks should go to the incredible team of volunteers who turn up every week, in all weathers, to maintain the churchyard to the appreciation of all who pass by.

## **Music to Calm the Soul**

Sarah Tourell hosted six evenings of this popular event which still attracts many people from the wider community as well as members of St Peter's. 278 people attended in total and £1,398.30 was raised.

## **Concert**

In November, ten talented members of *Gospel Touch Choir* provided another unforgettable evening of soulful music, community and joy, with the audience singing and dancing. The choir later commented on the incredible atmosphere and said it was an honour for them to help bring such joyful energy to the church. Thanks are due to the many volunteers who helped make the evening such a success: those who sold tickets; ran the bar; managed the raffle; procured prizes; got the church ready for the services the next day; took boxes of glasses home to wash. A special thank you is due to the charity of Robert Phillips for their sponsorship; to the person who donated the wine; and for the generous donation of £2,500, which increased the total made from £5,325 to a very impressive £7,825. This money will go towards the development of the St. Peter's Church Community Café which will be open to all on a "donate what you can, if you can" basis.

*Katherine Ind*

## V. Grow Team Report

2025 was a year of change, alongside renewal and growth. Deborah and several committed volunteers led our children's work until Melissa Wood was appointed as Children and Families' Minister in September. Melissa has brought a quiet, caring, spiritual approach to her work, developing the spirituality of our children and families.

**God and Friends (GAF)**, our term time group for primary aged children, was run by volunteers between January and July under Deborah's lead. The leaders used the *Roots* resources to plan and deliver the sessions. In September, Melissa brought a new sense of direction to the team. The purchase of a screen allowed the children to watch videos, bringing stories to life and enhancing their meaning, and to watch, listen to and join in with action songs. The sessions were planned around a Bible passage and included a time of teaching and life application, prayer, song (depending on the leader) and a craft activity. The vision of the group was to create children who are not only God-smart but God-connected, taking their faith out into their Monday to Saturday lives. The group had a consistent number of 4-6 children each week.

**Tots Praise**, based on the *Tots Praise* model, was set up in September for 0–4-year-olds and their carers. The session consisted of a short service with worship songs, a Bible story, prayer time and worship with instruments. The use of the screen allowed easy access to a wide range of songs and videos, enabling everyone to take part. The group really evolved over its first term into a lovely service where both children and carers were engaged. The service was followed by a time of fellowship through play and refreshments. A great team of volunteers gave up their Thursday mornings to enable this important ministry.

**Breakfast Praise** continued to be a fun, interactive service, filled with action songs and praise, enjoyed by our younger children and their parents and grandparents (and all the leaders and helpers). There was space for worship, a Bible story, an opportunity to pray for things important to the children and, after the peace, to break bread and share some sweet delights - possibly their favourite part! During the colouring and activities for older siblings, the adults spent time together over coffee. This important fellowship has enabled families and the team to build relationships. There have been a number of baptisms and some families with older children have been regularly attending the 10.30.am intergenerational service on the first Sunday of the month.

**TAG** has seen some changes over the year. At the beginning of the year, they met once a month in church for evening prayer and then moved to the church hall for fun games and fellowship. In March, they had a fun outing to London for e-karting. In June, they said goodbye to Jonathan Atkinson, who has been a much-valued leader of TAG. In September, TAG split into two age ranges. The 11-14 years met in church during the service. They explored the books of the Old Testament, drawing out key themes and people's relationship with God. The 15+ year olds formed a house group, meeting once a month for evening prayer, discussion and a meal. However, family commitments and exam

pressures have meant this has not become fully established. The young people continued to be fully involved in church life. They participated in services, bell ringing and took part in church events, such as the annual Nativity service. Two of them joined the servers' rota in September.

Four young people took part in a four-session preparation course and were confirmed at St Peter's by Bishop Andrew in June. 13 children were baptised from 10 different families, including three families who had two children baptised at the same time.

During *Baby Loss Awareness Week* in October, the church was open with different prayers stations and music to provide a very welcome space for families to remember babies who had died. Jackie was able to pray with those who wanted prayer.

### **Christian Development and Discipleship**

Following on from the success of Home Groups using the Swedish Method of Bible study, three groups began meeting in January to follow *Practicing The Way*, an exploration of what it truly means to follow Jesus and develop spiritual formation. Each of the eight sessions began with a shared meal and prayer followed by a video focusing on a particular aspect: apprenticing under Jesus; spiritual formation; healing from sin; meeting God in pain; and crafting a Rule of Life in community. Question prompts helped members explore the teaching and Bible passages and members then followed weekly practices and exercises to help integrate what they had learned into their everyday lives. Following John Marks Comer's vision for life – to be with Jesus, become more like him and aspire to do what Jesus would do - participants were able to grow in their own walk with Jesus. In May they delved deeper into one of the practices, pursuing a deeper union with God through prayer. Over four sessions they explored talking to, being with, listening to and finally being with God. In the autumn one home group continued daytime sessions exploring the Bible. September saw the start of *The Bible Course*, looking at God's big story from Genesis to Revelation. Many of the participants had not previously attended the Home Groups. The sessions were held in church and started with coffee, cake and prayer. The group watched a video, hosted by Andrew Ollerton, which followed the storyline of the Bible. Smaller groups then explored a passage in depth and discussed guided questions. Each week there was a daily Bible reading plan where members read or listened to Bible passages to help prepare for the following session. Through the sessions they became more confident in their reading of the Bible and in their understanding of how it fits together and in its application to their daily lives. By the end the year we were able to celebrate over 35 people reading the Bible and deepening their faith and spirituality.

St Peter's **Evangelism Hub** continued to meet termly, recognising that at the heart of our faith is good news to share. After connecting with God by Dwelling in The Word (sharing a Bible passage together), participants spent time encouraging each other, sharing the tools needed and the courage required to share their faith with others. The Hub has enabled the group to explore where they are ambassadors for their faith, to practise faith conversations

and to share their own stories. Together they have worked to nurture a faith-sharing culture and what it might look like at St Peter's.

### **Intergenerational (established congregation)**

Our plan to continue being intentionally intergenerational continued throughout the year. The 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of the month services have been engaging and inspiring for all. "Open the Box" became an integral part of the service, when a child put a surprise item in the box for the preacher to open and relate to the week's sermon. One memorable item was a sword, presenting a challenge, until the young person profoundly stated that turned upside down the weapon was a cross. This was a great example for the congregation to consider how to use the everyday as an opportunity to share their faith. All generations celebrated our Patronal Festival in June and enjoyed a celebration in the vicarage garden complete with bouncy castle. On the evening of October 31<sup>st</sup>, despite the rain, Jackie and Deborah shared the light of Jesus from the church lychgate with families and young people trick or treating. Hot chocolate was appreciated, especially by the adults, and over 85 trick or truth boxes containing a book about Jesus as the light of the world, a bookmark, stickers and sweets were distributed. It was a good way for the church to be present in the community and show the presence and light of Jesus.

### **Summing Up**

The past year has provided the St Peter's Grow Team with much to celebrate, despite many changes: our children's and youth work has flourished; we have established a culture of faith sharing; and our home groups have continued. Thanks must go to all who continued to share their time and expertise to make all the above happen. Together, we look forward to 2026, where with prayer and the support of many, we can continue to share our faith in Christ and help the St Peter's family grow.

*Suzanne Barrett*

## **VI. Report on the Fabric, Goods and Ornaments of the Church**

### **1. General**

Linda Convery became a Churchwarden in June, having been elected at the 2025 APCM. She replaced Andrew Strong, who had served as a Churchwarden for six years, and we thank him for his contribution to the church in this capacity. Lynne Watson was re-elected and is in her sixth year as Churchwarden.

We are grateful to Tony Skrzpecki, our deputy warden, who has assisted us throughout the year at the 10.30 a.m. service making sure that the various roles within the service are covered so that the service runs smoothly.

As wardens we are responsible for the care and maintenance of the church buildings and the churchyard. We are supported in this area by all the hard work carried out by the maintenance team, led in the main by Andrew Strong, and we are grateful to Colin Taylor for the contribution he has made in connection with various maintenance matters.

We are also grateful to Mark Hover who has done great work as both Fabric Officer and Health and Safety Officer. Mark has organised various inspections and servicing visits for a variety of services across all the buildings.

The Health and Safety policy is available to read both at the Parish Office and on the website.

### **2. The Church**

#### **Inspection of Inventory**

The Churchwardens did an annual check of the NADFAS (which is a very detailed inventory of the contents, fabric goods and ornaments of the church prepared by the National Association of Decorative and Fine Arts Societies) and the Church Property Register which details contents acquired since 1993.

Generally, the property and contents were found to be in good order.

It was noted that a second cashless collection machine had been acquired; the same as the one acquired in 2023. The Church Property Register was noted accordingly.

#### **Heating**

There was a problem with the heating during the year which had to be addressed. As a result, one of the sumps needed to be replaced and both sumps were cleared, which has improved the working of the system. However, the long-term future of the current system is in doubt. The PCC is obtaining a general report on the manner in which the Church could be heated so that alternatives systems can be explored.

### **Community Café**

In order to carry out any alterations to the church under Ecclesiastical Law the PCC has to obtain consent from Guildford Diocese in the form of a Faculty. During 2025 a faculty application was made for the first stage of the Community Café and was approved subject to completion of a petition document which required a PCC resolution. The PCC passed a resolution on 23rd June 2025 noting its agreement to the first phase of the conversion of part of the Church to enable it to be used as a Community Cafe. This phase involves new joinery to replace existing cupboards and the reordering of notice boards in the church. This work is now underway.

We successfully applied for a grant from the CIL fund held by Elmbridge Borough Council towards the cost of carrying out this work and were awarded £30,008 against an estimated cost of £35,000.

### **3. The Churchyard**

See the section headed Friends of St Peter's in the Share Team Report for details of the churchyard maintenance project.

### **4. St Peter's Lodge**

The Lodge was fully tenanted during the year with all due rent payments received.

The PCC approved the sale of the Lodge on the 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2025. This was a much-debated decision as it involved the sale of a long-held asset but the funds expected to be released will provide seed funding for the various projects the church needs to undertake in the future. The PCC is currently taking steps to obtain vacant possession of the Lodge so that a sale can proceed.

### **5. Vauxmead**

The church is very grateful to the members of the Vauxmead committee who work hard to maintain this beautiful green space.

They continue to maintain the site, including its mature oak and other protected trees. The open space is used for sports, games and community events as well as for activities associated with the Church. The buildings are let to the Burwood Preschool, the Guides and the Foodbank.

During 2025, the Vauxmead Committee met or liaised by email to discuss matters regarding renewal of leases for the St Peter's Institute and the Guide Hut with legal advice and discussion with the Diocese, and to resolve matters of maintenance and site management. The Guide Hut lease renewal was signed in July effective for 5 years from 1st November 2024.

## **6. WI        Hall**

The PCC has found that effective use has been made of the WI Hall during the year and it helps to have this extra space available for the PCC to use for its meetings, God and Friends on a Sunday morning and also other short-term renters. During the year some maintenance works were carried out to the heating in the hall.

*Lynne Watson and Andrew Strong – Churchwardens  
Tony Skrzypecki - Deputy Churchwarden*

## **VII. Deanery Synod Report**

Deanery Synod is part of the system of governance for the Church of England. It meets to consider, discuss and make decisions about the life of the Church, representing parishes in the deanery. Suzanne Barrett and Margaret Hicks are our parish representatives and Jackie Richardson is Area Dean. Synod met three times in 2025. Meetings are open to members of the congregation and a number from St Peter's have enjoyed attending this year.

The first meeting took place in March at Holy Trinity Claygate. Stuart Sadler, an Associate Minister at Claygate and Vice President of a Surrey technology company, led a session about faith sharing Monday to Saturday. The session linked well with our own Evangelism Hub, reinforcing that we meet as a gathered community on Sunday, but we should honour God in all that we do and not leave our faith at the church door.

In June we met at St Christopher's, Hinchley Wood where the guest speaker was Beth Collingbridge from the Single Friendly Church Network. In a thought-provoking session, she explained that 40% of UK adults are single, there are many types of singleness and all churches have people who attend on their own. Acknowledging that these people can often feel overlooked and isolated from church life, Beth challenged us to know our church community well. She encouraged us to ensure the language we use and messages we send are inclusive, be welcoming to all, teaching should use illustrations beyond family life and leadership should include single people at all levels.

The final session took place at St. Mary's, East Molesey. Each parish had been asked in advance to share something they would like to celebrate. Examples included a men's group which allows members to support each other spiritually and emotionally; Jane Anderson shared our own intergenerational Church in the Churchyard; Book Box, where an author talks about their book, and which is a great stepping stone for invitation to church; opening the church to local teenagers to study after school; a Waymaker Project in the churchyard to create spaces to empower local communities to connect; community connections with local schools and care homes; and the appointment of a curate with responsibilities for families and youth.

*Suzanne Barrett and Margaret Hicks – Deanery Synod Representatives*

## **VIII. Safeguarding Report**

This year has been one of adapting to a more systematic approach to Safeguarding. The Church of England Safeguarding focus has led to much more emphasis being placed on safeguarding aspects being digitally recorded. This is intended to improve and simplify safeguarding oversight for Parishes.

The main tools provided are firstly, the Safeguarding Dashboard which provides a platform to record progress in meeting safeguarding requirements in the Parish, whilst providing a safeguarding action plan for the future. This is an excellent way of enabling the Parish Safeguarding Officer, the Incumbent, and the PCC to keep abreast of the Parish Safeguarding status. The second tool available is the Safeguarding Hub. This assists parishes in safer recruitment and people management of staff and volunteers. The Hub keeps track of DBS checks and safeguarding training of staff and volunteers. It creates role descriptions and person specifications for roles and finally it tracks the safer recruitment of new volunteers.

Those involved with safeguarding in our Parish have been on a very steep learning curve with the emphasis now being on technical recording and planning. Those on the Safeguarding team have been familiarising themselves with both the Dashboard and the Hub as additional levels have been made available. We are not completely there yet, but steady progress has been made and we are progressing up the various levels required for complete compliance. It is expected that a 100% transition will be achieved in 2026.

One major setback to both the Parish and Church of England Safeguarding this year was the complete failure of the organisation used by all Church of England parishes to process DBS applications. Unfortunately, the company was hacked and their data stolen. This resulted in certain members of our parish having their data compromised and the immediate suspension of any further applications being processed. The situation was swiftly identified, and the victims notified and thankfully they were given very professional help and support. The lack of new DBS checks has caused a huge problem and required a series of ad hoc arrangements to be made until the situation can be normalised.

I would like to record my sincere and grateful thanks to Lorelie Staines who is responsible for DBS checks, Andrew Strong who keeps the safeguarding training records up to date and Revd Jackie Richardson who is always so supportive of all things to do with safeguarding. It's a pleasure working with them all.

*Lynne Watson – Safeguarding Officer*

## **Vicar's Report**

It is fair to say that the beginning of 2025 was plagued with problems with appliances and a very grumpy vicar!

In January while updating the system, BT cut off all WIFI and phone signal to the vicarage, and despite the best efforts of many I remained without connection for over 6 weeks! It was very frustrating as it was a particularly busy time and I could not access emails on my laptop in the vicarage, nor take any calls made to the vicarage number. Thank you to Malcolm Reid and other members of the standing committee who spent hours on the phone and email to get it re-instated. Shortly after this, during a routine check, the boilers in both the church hall and the WI hall were condemned, meaning that all our hall users were without heating until we could replace them. As it was quite cold during this time, we took the decision to waive the hiring fees to our regular bookings, resulting in a loss of income. We lost two regular clients, but thankfully the others donned their thermals and carried on. Many thanks to Hannah Sizer, Mark Hover and Andrew Strong who liaised with the hall hirers and British Gas and contractors to ensure that normal service was resumed once we purchased new boilers.

I am pleased to say that after this the year improved considerably and after the initial frustration with these appliances there were many things to celebrate in 2025.

### **Worship**

Our worship remained as important and life giving as ever, and a few highlights of 2025 are listed below.

In both Holy Week and Christmas, we welcomed good numbers of congregation and visitors at most of our extra services. On Good Friday, over 150 people from St Peter's, Hersham Baptist Church and All Saints Church took part in a walk of witness through the town, followed by a joint service in the Memorial Gardens. At 5.45am on Easter Day we welcomed the risen Christ with a vigil service followed by a lovely breakfast of bacon rolls and coffee provided by Sarah Gardner. On Christmas Eve, Mary and Joseph were joined by not one, but two donkeys to process through the town before the Nativity Service.

During the Easter season we also launched our first 'Church in the Churchyard' (CICY) service with an Easter experience. This is an intergenerational, outdoor experience in which we worship God by exploring God's creation. Other CICY highlights were an amazing Pentecost firepit and an August evening of 'bat listening' when we were joined by the Surrey Wildlife team with their bat monitors.

In the autumn, the popular monthly Music to Calm the Soul resumed during the darker evenings.

At the beginning of the year, we also began to hold regular communion services in both Burwood Grange Care Home and Eliza Palmer Hub Nursing Home, increasing our pastoral care to the elderly in our parish and bringing comfort and joy to the residents who attend.

In June we hosted the Archdeacon's visitation service for all Churchwardens in Emly and Epsom Deaneries, which was very well attended. We also hosted a very well attended Confirmation Service in which Bishop Andrew presided and confirmed seven candidates from St Peter's and 23 from other churches across Emly Deanery.

### **Schools and Community**

During 2025 we increased the number of services and learning opportunities that help us connect with Burhill and Bell Farm primary schools. Both schools sent a year group to spend the morning in our churchyard hearing the Easter story in an interactive way in an Easter Experience. Once again, we hosted Harvest, Christmas and end of term services, and continued with our regular school assemblies and RE curriculum help, leading sessions on 'Why do Christians come to church?', Christian Symbols, and 'How do we show that we are Christians?'

2025 also saw a very well attended Remembrance Day service. The Treble Clef Choir and the children from Burwood pre-school joined our Christingle and Carol Service in the Day Centre which was also well attended and much appreciated.

At Christmas we held the annual blessing of the hounds' service for Wimbledon Greyhound rescue on Vauxmead field. This is always a sight to behold as many of the greyhounds come wearing Christmas decorations and reindeer antlers!

I also spoke about the meaning of Christmas at the Christmas Lights event on the village green. This ended up being a brief talk as the British weather rather dampened the festivities!

In 2025 we also decided to engage with our community on Halloween and we set up a 'light' themed table at the front of the church lychgate to welcome passing children and adults who were out to trick or treat. We gave away 84 'Trick or Truth' boxes filled with goodies with a 'light' theme, and we made countless hot chocolate drinks and had many positive conversations with both children and parents about Jesus being the Light.

Our Women's Breakfast and St Peter's Men's evenings continued to offer a chance for congregation and community to come together for fellowship and friendship.

### **Discipleship**

Our Life Groups continued meeting, with two evening groups and a lunchtime group which met fortnightly. During the spring, we studied the 'Practicing the Way' course by John Mark Comer and many felt this helped deepen their faith. We held a Bible Course in the church in

the autumn term, learning about the 'big picture' of the Bible from the book of Genesis to Revelation. Our Evangelism Hub continued to meet termly to support and encourage each other to share our faith. We also received two of our children into Holy Communion after preparation.

During the autumn term Melissa Wood and John Cramp attended the Occasional Preachers Course and they have enriched our ministry team. Also, during the autumn term Suzanne Barratt and Julie Mills began a two year 'Foundations in Ministry' course with the diocese. The first year is theology teaching and in the second year they will each pick a specialism to focus on in the church and study in more depth.

### **Other notable events during 2025**

The PCC voted to sell St Peter's Lodge with the intention that some of the money raised will be used to pay for our curate's housing, and to finance another three years children's ministry. It will also seed fund projects, where we need to obtain architects' plans and pay legal costs before we can seek grants for the work. Most of the funds from the Lodge will be reinvested to ensure sufficient reserves for the future of the church.

We were also awarded a grant of £30,000 to begin the work at the back of the church for the Community Café thanks to the hard work of Andrew Strong, Martin Warne and the rest of the Community Café project team.

As well as continued maintenance, our gardening team planted a beautiful wildflower meadow, which will bless our community for many years to come, and installed new benches for people to sit and appreciate our churchyard.

Melissa Wood was appointed as Children and Families Minister, and she started a new service for pre-school children called 'Tots' Praise.' This has continued to grow and helps us form relationships with young families.

During 2025, Andrew Strong stood down after six years as a churchwarden and we thank him for his hard work, wisdom and service. He was replaced by Linda Convery who has quickly become invaluable to the church and the vicar!

I am looking forward to welcoming a new curate and to the ministry team continuing to develop and grow in 2026, giving us more opportunity to follow God's call to proclaim the good news of Jesus and be a blessing to our community.

None of this would have been possible without the army of volunteers who ensure our ministry and worship continue to thrive. I am very grateful to all who play their part in making St Peter's the warm and welcoming church that it is: those who work behind the scenes cleaning and flower arranging; the bell ringers; the coffee makers; the servers and sides people; the readers and those who lead the prayers; and the pastoral team. Thank you also

to the Vauxmead team for their work in maintaining this valuable space for the community and those who ensure that our halls are in good condition.

My special thanks go to the Churchwardens, the Deputy Warden, Treasurer and finance team, our administrator and our PCC and PCC secretary, and, of course, the ministry team, the occasional preachers and those who use their musical talents to enhance our ministry. I give thanks to God for each one of you.

*<sup>8</sup> Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.*

*Philippians 4:8*

*Jackie Richardson, Vicar*