

THE PARISH OF HOLY TRINITY, LEVERSTOCK GREEN

IN THE BENEFICE OF LANGELEI

MEETING OF PARISHIONERS &

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

AT HOLY TRINITY CHURCH

ON SUNDAY 26 APRIL 2026 at 11.30 am

Contents

Agenda

Minutes of Meeting 11 May 2025

Proceedings of the PCC and Parish Activities

Audited Accounts for 2025

Fabric, Goods and Ornaments Report

Report of Deanery & Diocesan Synods

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AGENDA

Prayers

ANNUAL MEETING OF PARISHIONERS

1. Apologies for absence – please advise the Secretary if you are unable to attend
2. Election of Churchwardens – see nominations for election on the noticeboard.

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

Church members are invited to attend and those on the Electoral Roll to vote

1. To approve the minutes of the APCM held on 11 May 2025.
2. Matters arising from those minutes.
3. To receive reports for 2025/26
 - 3.1 Electoral Roll report
 - 3.2 Report on the proceedings of the PCC including Safeguarding, and parish activities
 - 3.3 The financial statement of the church for the year ending 31 December 2025, and to approve the accounts
 - 3.4 Report on the Fabric, (Goods and Ornament)s of the church
 - 3.5 Reports from Deanery and Diocesan Synods
4. Elections
 - 4.1 To elect lay representatives to Deanery Synod
 - 4.2 To elect lay representatives to the Parochial Church Council
5. To appoint an Independent Examiner for the PCC accounts for the coming year.
6. To receive a report from the Vicar
7. Any other business

Secretary: Sue Gouch 07808 929219

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THE PARISH OF HOLY TRINITY LEVERSTOCK GREEN

In the Benefice of Langelei

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL CHURCH MEETINGS

Held on Sunday 11th May 2025 at 11.30am

ANNUAL MEETING OF PARISHIONERS

Revd Dr Diana Stretton opened the meeting with prayers.

Apologies for absence were received from Zoe Bullock, Lyn and Norman Parkyns, Dick and Val Selby and Kieran Theiramanaoharan. 57 Parishioners attended in church.

Election of Churchwardens: Terry Perry, proposed by Sue Gouch, seconded by Kathy Perry and Beverley Burgess proposed by Terry Perry, seconded by John Burgess were duly elected and declared as churchwardens. Diana thanked Terry Perry and Beverley Burgess for continuing to stand as Churchwardens.

All Agreed

The Annual Meeting of Parishioners closed at 11.38 am.

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

Items 1 & 2: Minutes of the last APCM, 11 May 2025

Prior to the start of the Meeting, Quiz forms were handed out to all attendees with the advice that all the answers could be found in the 'Bundle' and should be competed and handed in at the close of the APCM. The winner would be drawn and announced on Sunday 18th May 2025.

1. **Minutes of the APCM held on 14 April 2024** were approved and signed as a true record.
2. **Matters Arising** – There were no matters arising.
3. **Reports**
 - 3.1 **Electoral Roll Report** – Every sixth year, the Church of England requires that the electoral roll of each church is totally revised. So, instead of other years in which the roll is amended by removing those people who have died or moved to another church and adding any new people who have decided to join, the roll is effectively scrapped and everyone who wishes to be on the new roll must fill in an application form. This was one of those years! The title Electoral Roll is a strange one as it sounds like something to do with local elections and in some way that is what it is, because to vote at this church meeting, you need to be on the Electoral Roll. However, it also serves essentially as a "membership list" of the church if you like. The number on the roll is submitted to the Diocese and forms the basis of decisions about how much we pay to them in our parish share but informs their decisions over the size and needs of the church. In the absence, of a vicar, we wanted to make sure that we did this absolutely correctly so I went on a course at the diocese to learn of all of the legal notice periods, timings etc. As you will have seen there were repeated reminders in the notices etc and the church wardens and I tried to contact as many people as possible who had been on the old roll. The new roll, having been duly completed comprises of 122 names. This is quite a drop in number from the 141 names on the roll at the last full revision 6 years ago, and the 151 names on the roll at last year's APCM. It was quite a surprise given that church attendance during the vacancy remained strong, and numbers during Holy Week and Easter were, I think, even higher than before. Looking at the in-year figures on the roll against last year, I think that it is worth pointing out that we gained 11 new names and we are very pleased to welcome them. We also remember 5 dear members who died during the year: Pauline Glasscoe, Charles Baker, Barbara Batten, Madge Field and Pat Brown. However, 36 people who were on the old roll did not apply to be on the new one despite the extensive publicity. Strangely, some of those people are regular or semi-regular attendees, others may drift away.

The roll reopens following the conclusion of this meeting when further names can be added. So, in summary the number of names on the Electoral Roll at the start of this APCM 2025 and sent to the Diocese is 122. The Electoral Roll was duly received and Diana thanked Norah Tattersall for her work on this.

3.2 Report on the proceedings of the Parochial Church Council (PCC) including

Safeguarding and Parish Activities – Safeguarding was fully covered in the report. The Safeguarding report was fully received and Diana thanked Pauline Lindsey for her continuing work on safeguarding. Diana thanked Sue Gouch for her work as PCC secretary.

3.3 The Financial Statement of the Church and to Approve the Accounts - Martin Chapman thanked everyone for their contribution over the last year for the marvellous stewardship. There was a gain of £7,976. Thank you all very much but we still need more money to cover the cost of rising bills and upkeep of our Church. Thanks also go to Kathy Perry and Sue Gouch for counting and banking the money. Martin thanked Geoffrey Dix for inspecting the accounts.

Martin Chapman proposed acceptance of the accounts which were seconded by Mike Heylin.

All Agreed

The Treasurer's Report was duly received.

Diana thanked Martin Chapman for managing the Accounts.

3.4 Report on the Fabric of the Church - The report from the Fabric Committee was duly received and Diana thanked Mike Heylin and the FC Committee for all their work.

3.5 Reports from the Deanery and Diocesan Synods - as there were no questions relating to the Deanery and Synod reports, they were duly received. Diana thanked Sam Stanbridge and Liam Derham for their commitment to the Deanery Synod and thanked Colin Gage for his commitment to the Diocesan Synod.

4. Elections

4. 1 To elect lay representatives to the PCC – Karen Ball and Lesley Ripley were standing down from PCC, leaving 2 vacancies. Diana thanked them for the work on the PCC. There were 4 parishioners applying to be on the PCC meaning that a vote must take place to elect 2 people onto PCC at this meeting and the remaining 2 will be co-opted at the first meeting of the PCC. All those present was asked to complete a voting form in accordance with 'The Church Representation Rules'. The votes were counted by the Secretary and the Vicar giving a result of Monty and Stephen Stratford being duly elected. Miles Cooksey and Roni Crawford will be co-opted to PCC at the first meeting to be held on the 21st May 2025.

The PCC consists of the Vicar - Revd Dr Diana Stretton, Priest - Jos Perris, Lay Reader - Tim Bourne, 2 Churchwardens - Terry Perry and Beverley Burgess, 3 Synod representatives – Colin Gage, Liam Derham and Sam Stanbridge and 12 elected members. The following people were elected for a 3-year term to fill the 2 vacancies:

Monty Onanuga proposed Sue Gouch, seconded by John Walker

Stephen Stratford proposed by Terry Perry, seconded by Kathy Perry

All Agreed

5. To appoint an Independent Examiner for the PCC accounts for the coming year – Martin Chapman said that Geoffrey Dix was willing to continue as the Independent Examiner and was duly proposed by Martin Chapman and seconded by Tim Bourne. **All agreed**

6. To receive a report from the Revd Dr Diana Stretton, Team Vicar

There is a sense of symmetry as we come to this year's APCM, as it was around two weeks after the last APCM that Lizzie retired and just over two weeks before this one that I was installed. A year of vacancy during which it feels that Holy Trinity lost none of its vibrancy and connection with the community. There are many people who have contributed to making that happen. We have seen the names of many of them in the reports and thank you again to everyone who contributes to the life of the church by leading groups, making tea, coffee and cake, cleaning, arranging flowers, locking and unlocking the building, making our services work as wonderful praise to God through serving, technical support and welcoming. Thank you to all those making our music, making sure that the building and church yard is maintained, keeping us organised with meeting notes and financial planning, planning events, visiting those who are sick or lonely, connecting with children, young people and families and making sure that those connections are made within a safe environment that follows best safeguarding practices, and so much more. Thank you especially to the warden team Terry, Beverley, Karen, Mike and Kathy and to the ministry team Jos, Tim, Jane, and most recently Becky.

Looking back at the minutes from last year's APCM, I can see that Lizzie emphasised the importance of everyone in the church contributing in different ways, both visible and invisible, as part of the body of Christ. I think that Holy Trinity has been living that out and I hope will continue to do so! Thank you for all you have done and for all you will do next. Note that Karen Ball is stepping down from the position of Deputy Warden – thanks for her work and small presentation. Part of what we are doing today is looking back at the previous year, and I'm conscious that I've not been around for most of that time. So, I would like to invite Jos to come and say a few words.

Jos:

It is a wonderful reflection of the church community and the commitment and dedication to our collective mission that has enabled us to maintain our numbers through the interregnum. We have very firmly kept this ship safely afloat and now we need to be ready and open to supporting Diana as we move forward in growing our church community and reaching out to new people and being the beacon of trust and hope to our village community and beyond.

I would like to give a personal thanks to all who supported and encouraged me over this year, especially Terry and Beverley who were always available and amazingly supportive. It has been a busy year but also a fun one. There have been moments of huge joy and much humour (thinking of the very random cake making sermon) and a lot of winging it on my part (notably the candle procession at Pentecost!) and some surprising revelations about the congregation and who wears bright sparkly underwear and who needs anti-farting medication! I am really excited about what lies ahead in the coming years with Diana leading the ship!

Diana thanked Jos!

As well as looking back at the previous year, in our APCM we also look forward to what is coming next, where we think God is calling us to next in our community here. At just two weeks in, I am very firmly in a place of listening and asking questions. Coming into a community is a bit like moving to a house with a new garden. You need to take some time to see what is growing and how to encourage that growth to thrive. Here are a few of the things that I have noticed growing in this garden so far.

First, there is a strong sense of connection between Holy Trinity and the local community which I hope that we can continue to build on. In particular, I've been delighted to visit the school twice in as many weeks, and I'll continue to be there on a weekly basis leading worship and meeting both students and staff. On the 28th September, our morning service will be a special one to celebrate 40 years of the school in its current location, connecting up with the celebrations that the school is hosting later in the day. This church is also clearly a place that the local community wants to connect with when big life events happen. It was a privilege to have conversations about a baptism, a wedding and a funeral all within a week of starting. I think that our connections with and invitation to our local community will continue to be an important part of who we are as a church.

Second, in the parish profile that I looked at when I was deciding whether to apply here or not, it was interesting to note that the word family was very prominent. Having arrived, I can see why the sense of the church as a family came through so strongly. The word family isn't just about having people of different ages; it is about the kind of welcome that people can expect when they come through our doors. I hope that we can continue to build on that welcome and that sense of inclusion, so that everyone who wants to come, either to visit or to stay, knows that they will receive an open and inclusive welcome as part of God's family. Third, part of the Diocesan vision is about going deeper into God, and I'm excited to have arrived in a parish that already has a retreat in the diary! Holy Trinity is already a place where what we do is rooted in God's love and that again is something that I hope we can continue to grow. As I said in my first sermon, I want us to be able to ask questions and explore our faith together so that we can deepen our experience of God and enable others to do the same.

Finally, it is also important to note that we are part of a wider Team, and I know that it has been difficult to contemplate the fact of another vacancy at St Mary's and St Benedict's so soon after we are out of vacancy here. Alice and Coral will be much missed from the life of our team. The PCC had the opportunity on Thursday night to hear from Bishop Jane, Archdeacon Charles, and from James, about the emerging vision for a partnership between St Benedict's and Soul Survivor Watford. This will keep St Benedict's as part of our team, and there is a commitment to appoint a new Team Vicar for those parishes, but with this extra support to help enable both St Mary's and St Benedict's to thrive. If those conversations continue to proceed as positively as they have so far, then we may not be looking at a long vacancy.

To summarise there is much to be thankful for in what has happened over the last year, and there is much to look forward to in the next season. I'm excited to be here and to be sharing it all with you.

7. Any other business – None.

The meeting closed at 12.31pm with The Grace.

REPORTS FOR 2025/26

3.1 Electoral Roll Report - Holy Trinity APCM - 26 April 2026

Following last year's full revision of the Electoral Roll, this year the revision of the Roll only includes any in year changes.

The number of names on the Electoral Roll at last year's APCM was 122. During the year, 4 new names were added, 4 names were added back to the Roll and no names were removed. This means that the number of names on the Roll at the start of this y APCM is 130, an increase of 8. The Electoral Roll certificate for this parish to be sent to the Diocese for 2026 therefore states the number on Roll to be 130. Names can be added to the Roll at any point in the year following the conclusion of this year's APCM.

Full details on the requirements to be on the Roll are given on the application form. However, in summary, they are that a person needs to be aged 16 years or older, to have been baptised, and to either be resident in the parish or to have been a regular worshipper in the parish for at least 6 months. Please speak to Diana or me if you need any further information.

Norah Tattersall

3.2 Report on the proceedings of the PCC including Safeguarding, and parish activities

Proceedings of the Parochial Church Council

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) is a corporate body established by the Church of England and operates under the Parochial Church Council Powers Measure. It is a charity excepted from registration with the Charity Commission. PCC members are appointed in accordance with the Church Representation Rules. It has the responsibility of co-operating with the Revd Dr Diana Stretton, in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. Its membership consists of the Clergy, one Lay Reader, two Church Wardens, three representatives to the Deanery Synod and those elected by the Parish to serve on the PCC for a period of three years.

In the first meeting after the APCM last year, Miles Cooksey and Roni Crawford were coopted onto the PCC. The following people were also appointed to roles: Sue Gouch as PCC Secretary, Martin Chapman as Treasurer, Mike Heylin and Kathy Perry are the Deputy wardens. The Team Reps are Dick Selby and Mike Hawtin. Sam Stanbridge stood in for Mike Hawtin when he was unwell. The standing committee consists of: Diana, Beverley Burgess and Terry Perry, Mike Heylin and Kathy Perry, Martin Chapman and Sue Gouch. The PCC has met every other month, with some approvals going to the standing committee during the gaps. Full minutes of all PCC meetings can be found on the notice board in the Trinity Room. During the year the PCC has reflected on the vision for the church, including a special meeting in March to begin the process of exploring a new Mission Action Plan. The PCC has been involved in discussions of new services which have been introduced during the year, as well as approving the initiative to move Holy Trinity onto a new platform for managing and storing data called ChurchSuite - this move will happen during 2026.

Sue Gouch – PCC Secretary

Safeguarding Report to the Annual Parochial Church Meeting 2026

The Parish remains fully committed to the safeguarding of children, young people, and vulnerable adults, and to supporting those who have experienced abuse as well as those who may present a risk to others. The PCC continues to comply with its duty under Section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 to have due regard to the House of Bishops' safeguarding guidance.

The PCC has adopted the House of Bishops' Safeguarding Policies and Practice Guidance, including Promoting a Safer Church and the Domestic Abuse statement. Safeguarding information is displayed within the church building and is accessible electronically via the parish website. During the year, the transition of Parish Safeguarding Officer responsibilities has been completed, with continuity maintained and documentation appropriately handed over. A safeguarding team structure is now in place, consisting of the Parish Safeguarding Officer, Deputy Safeguarding Officer, and the Vicar. The team meets on a quarterly basis to review safeguarding matters and ensure appropriate oversight.

The PSO Team would also like to acknowledge the faithful and diligent work of our previous Parish Safeguarding Officer. Her commitment over many years laid strong foundations for the safeguarding culture we continue to build upon. We are grateful for her service and the stability she provided during her tenure.

All clergy, staff, and volunteers requiring safeguarding training and DBS checks remain compliant with diocesan requirements. Training is monitored and refreshed as necessary. Safeguarding Sunday was held during the year and focused on raising awareness of safeguarding children, young people, and adults. The service aimed to reinforce the shared responsibility of safeguarding across the congregation. Feedback was positive, and the event contributed to strengthening understanding of safeguarding as part of our Christian discipleship and parish culture.

There have been no safeguarding incidents requiring statutory referral during this reporting period. Looking ahead, the safeguarding team will remain available to attend parish groups to promote awareness and confidence in safeguarding practice. We aim to ensure safeguarding is embedded in the life of the parish and understood as a shared responsibility rather than the role of a single individual.

The safeguarding team would like to thank the PCC, clergy, ministry leaders, and the wider congregation for their continued support and engagement throughout the year. Safeguarding is not the responsibility of one individual or one team; it belongs to the whole church community. Parishioners are encouraged to raise any safeguarding concerns promptly with the Parish Safeguarding Officer, Deputy Safeguarding Officer, clergy, or directly with the Diocesan Safeguarding Team (if appropriate). Having several people formally identified with safeguarding responsibility helps ensure that individuals feel able to approach someone they trust. It also reflects the seriousness with which safeguarding is taken within our parish and across the wider Diocese.

We are grateful for the way parishioners have embraced the message that safeguarding is part of our shared Christian commitment to care for one another. As we move into the coming year, we ask that this culture of attentiveness, early advice seeking, and mutual responsibility continues to grow.

Creating a safe church is an ongoing task. It requires us all to listen well, notice when something does not feel right, and have the confidence to speak up. Together, we can ensure that our parish remains a place where every person feels safe, valued, and heard.

Miles Cooksey and Monty Onanuga

Churchwarden Report

We are happy to share that Holy Trinity has experienced a smooth year overall. Much of this success is thanks to Diana, who has integrated quickly and positively into our church family and the wider community, helping maintain steady congregation numbers throughout the year. To our knowledge, there was only one Sunday without a priest, during which Tim led Morning Prayer instead of the usual Eucharist. We are also grateful for Jos and Becky, whose generous contributions greatly enrich our worship.

As in previous years, we have faced recurring issues with cracks in the church walls, especially around the chancel. Dry summer weather caused cracks to widen, but they closed up again during the wetter winter months. Mike Heylin, working closely with diocesan experts, is monitoring the situation carefully, and a more thorough investigation will be undertaken if needed.

The carpets in both the Trinity Room and Chancel were professionally cleaned over the summer to remove stains and wax residue, and the oven received a professional cleaning as well.

Many of the red hymn books are worn or have damaged spines, so Diana and Rosemary are looking for suitable replacements. Funding from the Leverstock Green RE Fund is expected to cover these costs. Since several current hymnals feature name plates commemorating loved ones, these will be preserved, and a similar scheme will be available for the new books.

We organized several "Big Cleans" throughout the year to prepare the church for major festivals. The Trinity Room roof was periodically swept to prevent drainage problems. On one occasion, a blocked drainpipe led to water leakage onto the Alban Room floor; although the carpet was soaked, it dried out after the blockage was cleared, but the surrounding wood panel now needs replacement.

Gravestones in the churchyard were checked for safety concerns. A loose cross and some unstable headstones were laid down for safety, which prompted concern on Facebook about possible vandalism. We addressed this by explaining our Health and Safety responsibilities in the churchyard through follow-up posts.

The lead-up to Christmas was particularly busy at Holy Trinity. Events such as the Diversion concert, Quiz evening, Christmas Fair, and Light up a Life provided valuable financial support at year-end. Worship services, including Carols by Candlelight, the Crib service, Carols and Chill, Midnight Mass, and Christmas Day services, were all well attended and received positive

feedback. Replacing the second crib service with Carols and Chill proved to be an excellent decision, as it was very popular and enjoyed by everyone.

Together with Diana and Sue Gouch, we completed the 'Statistics for Mission' for 2025 in early 2026. These showed stable attendance compared to the previous year, with some increases but a slight drop in the Electoral Roll, which had undergone a complete revision.

Diana introduced two new styles of service: 'Calm Church,' starting in January, was created for children who are neurodivergent or have special educational needs and their families, and it was warmly received by attendees. The second, 'Sacred Space,' held on March 1st with the ministry team, followed a Taizé style and was also well attended and appreciated. These informal services will continue to explore various worship and prayer forms.

The Open Church rota saw changes as Lee-Anne stepped down, but new members have joined to fill the gaps. The team works effectively together via WhatsApp to coordinate coverage, ensuring that the church remains open and accessible to everyone seven days a week from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm.

The gardening team, led by Simon, are doing an excellent job keeping the churchyard looking at its best and we are very grateful for all their work. The car park entrance was repaired with a tarmac area which has resolved the problem of the deep ruts that kept appearing and improved the appearance of the area. We are grateful to the Leverstock Green Parish Trust for funding much of the cost of the work.

Terry and Beverley

My thanks to everyone at the meeting for the support they have given me during my period as Churchwarden. Terry Perry

Baptism Report

This year we have had fewer baptisms here at Holy Trinity - only 6 children and 3 adults. Baptisms are generally held after our Sunday service but Church families may choose to make it part of morning worship.

After the initial contact, parents are required to attend a preparation class before booking. On the day, two people are there to welcome the families and their guests, and act as sidespeople during the service. One of the team will come forward with a taper lit from the Easter candle to light the Baptismal candle which is then given to the child/adult. Once the families have left, the church is then tidied and the register completed.

If anyone is available to join the team and would like information on what being a helper entails, please contact me.

My thanks as always go to the whole team Ruth Carl, Linda Cooke, Pat Driver, Lorraine Ellis and Jean Hunter for ensuring a warm welcome for baptism families at Holy Trinity.

Kathy Perry

Baptism co-ordinator

Toddler and Baby Church Annual Report

Since Diana joined us after Easter last year, we have grown in numbers slightly, with on average 8 – 10 toddlers and babies each week, with new ones starting and some leaving throughout the year. We have also changed our name so that people understand we do not just accept toddlers, but very much enjoy seeing (and cuddling!) babies too. As usual we have lost some regulars through mums going back to work, as well as a couple of toddlers going to nursery, but we have gained some new children and grandparents who come along each week.

We have continued to follow the Diddy Disciples stories, adding some 'new' stories from the Old Testament into the mix occasionally too, including Joseph and his Coat of many colours and Noah. As our toddlers are growing, our crafts are changing too and we have had great fun decorating chalices after learning about the bread and wine, we've decorated a welcome banner for Diana and made masks of lions faces when we heard the story of Daniel in the lion's den. When we returned in September, we also had a new song book, with some new 'hymns' to learn. At Christmas it was all hands-on deck to learn and perform the Toddler Church Nativity play, which went down very well as usual.

With many thanks to Carole, Vickie, Wendy and Gillian for all their help throughout the last year and to Diana for all your new ideas which have freshened up the Toddler Church experience.

Lorraine Ellis and Lesley Ripley

Junior Church Report

Over the past twelve months, Holy Trinity Junior Church has continued to provide a consistent and welcoming space for children aged approximately one to thirteen. Attendance remains steady, typically welcoming five to eight children each week, with a growing sense of continuity as families become regular members of the group.

It has been particularly encouraging to see children progressing from Toddler Church into Junior Church, and in turn, several of our older members now regularly attending Youth Group. This reflects a positive and natural journey through the life of the church, and it is a privilege to support children at each stage of their journey of faith.

Our sessions continue to focus on engaging, age-appropriate teaching of the Christian faith through a mixture of Bible stories, discussion, prayer, and creative activities. The children consistently show curiosity, enthusiasm, and an increasing confidence to contribute and ask questions.

Our leadership team remains committed and experienced, and we continue to prioritise safeguarding in all that we do. All leaders and helpers are recruited in line with Church of England safer recruitment guidance and are subject to the appropriate checks and training, ensuring a safe and supportive environment for every child.

We are always open to conversations with those who may feel called to support Junior Church or Youth Ministry, whether on a regular basis or as part of our team rota. Any involvement is, of course, subject to safer recruitment processes, including application, interview, and DBS checks.

We remain committed to being an inclusive and welcoming space for all children, regardless of background, experience, or additional needs. Our team continues to draw on a broad range of experience in supporting children with SEN and neurodiverse profiles, adapting sessions where needed to ensure all children can participate fully.

We look forward to continuing this work in the coming year, strengthening links with Toddler Church and Youth Group, and supporting our children as they grow in confidence and faith.

Miles Cooksey

Junior Church Leader

The Youth Group (TYG) Report

TYG has met monthly throughout the year, with a steady attendance of around 5-7 regulars. The group is largely made up of members of the immediate church family, but TYG is open to all in the community and Benefice - the more the merrier! We have enjoyed a variety of activities including rounders in Bunkers Park, a nature count in the churchyard, and even the opportunity to practice public speaking. Our biggest events over the last 12 months have been the Christmas Party, which was hosted at Jos' house, and organising the Talent Show for the Harvest Supper. This was felt to be an especially successful event, and we are anticipating doing the same again this year.

Our usual pattern for TYG is to have a combination of games and other activities, combining fun with questions about spirituality and life in general, providing a safe space where young people can discuss big questions and also have fun. Our discussion on whether under 16s should be banned from using social media brought up some interesting points and not what you might assume! We also share a supper together.

During the year, Abby Daniell and Liam Derham stepped back from being TYG leaders. We are grateful to them for all the work that they have put into TYG in the past. The leadership team is now Miles Cooksey, Diana Stretton and Jos Perris.

TYG is open to any young person who is in year 6 or above. There is no obligation to attend every time and we have a lot of fun. Do talk to any of the leaders to find out more.

Diana Stretton

Choir Report

The choir has continued to support the congregational singing on Sundays and holy days and has sung an anthem and an introit at each service, except at non-eucharistic family services. The choir sang for the switch on of the village lights in November and at the Carols by Candlelight in church in December. We were joined by the choir of All Saints Kings Langley for the installation of our team vicar and we sang with them at the Advent Carol Service and other team services.

Matt Tattersall has continued to accompany the service once a month and I am particularly grateful to him for covering the Christmas services when I was ill.

One soprano has left during the year but we have gained an experienced tenor and a soprano and a bass who are new to choral singing. We now have eleven members: four sopranos, two altos,

three tenors and two basses. We are pleased that our team vicar is a gifted soprano and very supportive of the choir.

We would welcome new members, especially in the lower parts. It is not necessary to read music, just to be prepared to listen to the other singers and sing in tune.

I shall be retiring in July. It has been a privilege and a great pleasure to accompany services and direct the choir here for nearly thirteen years.

Rosemary Knight

Servers and Sacristy Team

The Servers and Sacristy Team continued to evolve over the year as we welcomed new people. It has been a delight to see our younger servers grow into their roles.

Our tasks, in terms of setting up and clearing away, last year increased significantly due to the church being open during the day as so much more of the altar vessels and decorations now need to be locked away. Thank you to everyone who has taken the time to do this and to the ongoing support and help of the church wardens particularly during the vacancy.

Diana has reflected on how we can make a few small changes to enable services to flow more easily and also to reduce the amount of additional work needed in preparation for services. These changes will be introduced in the coming year.

As always, we need to say thank you to John Buxton for being sacristan and to Sarah Kiesa who prepares the many rotas!

We are always keen to extend the opportunity of serving on the altar to others so please let us know if you would like to know more about joining the team.

Norah Tattersall

Pastoral Group

The role of the pastoral group is to provide support to those in our parish who are unwell, experiencing difficulties, elderly, lonely or unable to come to church for any reason. Visiting people at home mostly involves just having a chat but can involve signposting to other support services or small bits of practical help. We also keep in contact with people over the phone and take Home Communion when requested. All home visits are logged to comply with good safeguarding practice.

The group meets together every other month for updates and mutual support. In the last year, Frances Brown became part of the group, and Anne Twiggs stepped down. Thank you to Frances for joining us and to Anne for all your support over the years. Pauline Lindsey is also taking a rest from active duty in the group at the moment. We are grateful to her for coordinating the group over recent years. The group currently are Pam Batten, Tim Bourne, Gillian Redman, Lesley Ripley and Diana Stretton. Many thanks to everyone who is part of this important work of supporting people in our parish.

Diana Stretton

Social Committee Report

January 2025 started with another joint concert by Just A'Cappella and BURP, they're a good combination, it's always a fun evening and well attended. Terry and Kathy hosted a wine tasting in February with a variety of delicious wines and cheeses, this was enjoyed by all. Dick and Val held another Scrabble Tea in March, a fun afternoon with a delicious cream tea. Also, in March and April, we had our usual Pancake Tea, two Lent Lunches and Easter breakfasts. On 24th April we held a very important event with lots of VIPS! Diana's Licensing and Installation service, followed by cake and Prosecco, we had a great team of helpers and thankfully all went well. The Trinity Sunday barbecue was held on 15th June in the churchyard. On 21st June a few of us went to see The Life of Christ at Wintershall estate in Surrey, a lovely day out. The Summer Fun Day was held again in July, this event has grown over the last few days and attracts lots of visitors, our small team were very busy serving refreshments in the Trinity Room and we even ran out of sausages! Thanks to Gillian and her team for organising another successful SFD event. Lee-Anne and Maureen organised the church stall at the village fete in July. At the end of August, Diana and Chris kindly hosted the Strawberry Tea in the vicarage garden, lots of people came to enjoy all the lovely cakes and strawberries, unfortunately so did the rain!

We held our usual events during the Autumn, a very different Harvest Supper event was held on 11th October, the Trinity Youth Group organised a Talent Show, this was a really good evening thanks to Miles and his team for all their hard work. Light Night on 31st October didn't attract as many visitors as in previous years and may have been because there was no 'Halloween Trail' in the village but those who did call by the churchyard enjoyed the hot chocolate and popcorn. 'Beryl's Quiz' was held on 1st November, always well attended and is a good fundraiser, we're very thankful to Mike and Lesley Hawtin's daughter and son-in-law. We served refreshments after the Service of Remembrance and Thanksgiving, always much appreciated by bereaved families and friends. Suzanne and her family organised Stir Up Saturday on 8th November, this is particularly popular with the Toddler Church families. On 15th November, Kevin O'Donnell and friends returned to entertain us with their Diversion Concert. On 6th December Kathy, Gillian and a small committee organised another very successful Christmas Fair, we served our usual refreshments in the Trinity Room. Lastly, we served mince pies & mulled wine after the Carols by Candlelight service, another popular service which continues to attract many people.

We are very grateful to **everyone** who helped with all our events last year, they are a good outreach in the community and help with much needed church finances. Special thanks to the Social Committee and the Events Committee for all their help. Sadly, our small Social Committee team is even smaller now and we would love more people to join us in the fun!

Beverley Burgess

Coffee Shop

We have had another great year at our Saturday morning coffee shop. We have had a few new people join the rota which has been amazing.

This still proves to be a great place for people to socialise, whether that be for people who are part of our church family or people from the wider community.

A 'Thank You' card was given to Alan last week for his continuous supply of yummy cakes which are loved by all. His contribution has not only been a great help to the volunteer's running coffee morning but for boosting our weekly donations too.

I would like to say a huge thank you to everyone on our coffee morning rota, for volunteering your time in making cakes but for also volunteering your personal time on a Saturday morning. Without you, we wouldn't be able to run this weekly event.

Another thank you must go to Kathy Perry for keeping on top of our supplies & ensuring we never run out!

If you would be interested in helping on a Saturday morning, please pop your name on the rota sheet which can be found in the Trinity Room or feel free to come & speak to me.

Sam Stanbridge

Events and Publicity Report

LGVA Winter Fair 2025 was supported by the industrious HT Craft Group who created a wonderful hand made goods, displayed our merchandise and gave out Christmas Service leaflets. Over £170 was raised. The Choir and a few members of the congregation led the community carol singing outside the shops before the Village Lights were switched on.

Diversion Concert: November 2025. Diversion supplied their own artwork for publicity. Again, a very popular concert because the group have a lot of fans who support them. It doesn't take too much organising besides selling the tickets. Diversion took one third of the profits (after wine and nibbles deducted) and we raised about £800 (the raffle did very well....).

HT Christmas Fair and Light up a Life 2025. With a small committee of 3 it worked well. The publicity was good with leaflets being delivered locally. We tried silo management so that those who were running a stall took complete responsibility. This worked to a degree. A massive thank you to Terry Perry who organised the heavy lifting and Stephen Stratford, Graham White, John Burgess and James Britt as well as the numerous volunteers who helped on the day and cleared away in readiness for the service on Sunday. Thanks too to the School Choir who were excellent and brought in a flux of mums and dads halfway through. The feedback was excellent "a proper old fashioned Christmas fair" Over £3100 was raised.

We have a committee meeting 11 February when the 2026 programme will be discussed.

Gillian Redman

Welcome Report 2025/6

We are always looking for "meeters and greeters" to stand at the church door to smile and say hello to new and old faces. It's a great way of getting to know people - Please step up and help - you're at church anyway and it's an important form of outreach to make people feel comfortable and keep our reputation as a warm and welcoming place. Also, to nip out at the end of the service to stand by the door to say goodbye as the Clergy frequently get caught up in conversations - you wouldn't not say cheerio to guests who come to your home. We are really short of volunteers to make coffee after the service. It's not difficult, just arrive at church 10 minutes early and bring milk,

set the cups and leave the service 5 minutes before the end to put the coffee on, serve, clear up and stack the dishwasher. Please help.

If you are scheduled to help on any rota and are unable to do so, please can **you** arrange a replacement and then let Sarah Kiesa know. As ever - a huge and massive thanks to Sarah who organises all the church rotas. A thankless task without whom we wouldn't function.

Gillian Redman and Sarah Kiesa

Cleaning Report

Many thanks to the small and very loyal group of folk who clean the church every week + 3 new volunteers, Sarah, Chris and Trish. We are always looking to increase the number so each one can do it less frequently. It's only the church and porch that are cleaned; the other offices are cleaned by a contractor. The sign-up sheet is on the back wall in the Trinity Room and training is given for new volunteers. If 2 people work together, it only takes an hour. Thanks

Gillian Redman

Friendship Teas

The Friendship Teas continue to flourish although the numbers do fluctuate from month to month. Some of our first guests still attend and we are supported by Leverstock Green W.I, Westwick W.I, and Jenny Chaney who has taken over sole responsibility for making the cakes after Women's Group closed. I am very grateful for their support. We meet on the fourth Thursday of every month from 2.30- 4. All are very welcome.

Pat Driver

The Men's Group report to the APCM 2025

We meet on the second Tuesday each month with an average attendance of 18, although our group remains at just over thirty, many of whom eat a pizza washed down with a drink – beer or otherwise.

We had six speakers whose topics ranged from a miscellany of unusual video clips; a talk on working at Windsor Castle; the life of a football referee; the story of a vintage car; 'The History of Money' and a return of the video clips at Christmas.

The group is not a club – it has no members but regular attendees who pay for their food and costs, any surplus being donated to the church and in 2025 we gave £900 to Holy Trinity.

We are a group of men who enjoy each other's fellowship and will continue to meet during 2025/6.

Dick Selby – coordinator

Trinity Women's Group

Trinity Women's Group met monthly throughout 2025, providing an engaging social space. During the year efforts were made to find someone who could take over from Cathy Ayling running the group, but as no one came forward it was decided to pause the group at the end of 2025. We are very grateful to Cathy and the committee for all their work in enabling this group to flourish over the years, and we will see what new things may flourish later in 2026.

Diana Stretton

Craft Group

The group meets on Wednesday afternoons, with an average of 18 members each week, and we continue supporting each other, much of it via our lively WhatsApp group. Sadly Chris, one of our earliest members died this year, missed by all of us. We have continued raising funds for the church with our various sales events at the Village hall, Cricket Club and here at our own Church events. We enjoyed our usual bring and share Christmas and summer lunches.

Jean Britt, Jenny Chaney, Pauline Lindsey and Carole Robson

Talking Elephants

Talking Elephants meets on the 3rd Tuesday of the month in the Trinity room from 11 to 1 o'clock and is a support group for the bereaved.

The meetings are run in conjunction with Neville's funeral services and the hospice of St. Francis. The meetings are well attended; we have some regulars who have been present since the group started over 3 years ago and newer people who have been recommended from a wide range of sources. Everyone is very supportive of each other and there's no awkwardness about conversations over tea and biscuits which can be informative, serious or funny.

Comfort, companionship and understanding are so important to all suffering the loss of a loved one. Please feel free to join us, all are welcome

Lesley Ripley

3.3 The Financial Statement of the Church

Treasurer's Report to APCM - Year ending 31/12/2025

Firstly, a big **thank you** for the contributions of time and money during 2025 which allow us to continue the work of this Church. We ended the year with a **running costs gain of £1314**. This was not as much as anticipated due to reduced fees and donations, together with expenses of nearly £8,000 more than expected. These expenses were mainly electricity (heating) and maintenance (car park).

Our total assets rose to £196,240 (£167,366 in 2024) and our CCLA investments could realise a further

£35,000 when we need them. We will need them for:

- Repairs to walls and windows due to extensive settlement cracks which are increasing.
- Replacement of rotting Trinity Room roof
- Redecoration of Church interior
- Increased insulation to reduce energy costs and to help preserve the environment.
- Increases in Parish Share to pay for Clergy and support from the Diocese

A building of this type will always be expensive to maintain, and we would like to extend the ministry of the Church in Leverstock Green – so we need to increase our reserves!

In comparison with 2024:

- Collections and Regular Giving decreased by £3,400
- Income from legacies was £20,250, reserved for projects – not used for running costs.
- Heater repairs and drain down, car park repairs, and maintenance cost £7,248 (2024 was £4,413)
- Our contribution to the Diocese for Clergy & central services was £69,745 (2024 was £65,836).
- Administration expenses were up by £393 to cover the office services provided by All Saints Church. These will rise further in accordance with national pay scales.

Highlights!

- We welcomed our new vicar, Revd Dr Diana Stretton!
- During the interregnum we provided varied opportunities for worship, ministry and friendship every week. This was made possible by our members and Revd Jos Perris, to whom we are very grateful.
- We received grants from the Diocese for a card payment unit, Leverstock Green Religious Education Fund, and the Blakemoor Foundation towards our mission.
- Our members contributed £10,502 in fundraising through concerts, quizzes, tea towels, books, cards, etc.
- We held a Christmas Fair which raised £3,151

Charities

We contributed to Action Aid, The Children's Society, Mid Shires Search, Liberty Tea Rooms, Embrace the Middle East, Church Urban Fund, Cherished, GOSH, and the Leprosy Mission (Bishop's Harvest Appeal).

We have set aside £5,324 for Charities, 5% of our income, as in previous years. Suggestions for this year's distribution of the 2025 allocation will be most welcome.

The Future - 2026

Our Parish Share, fuel costs, and unavoidable expenditure continue to rise, so we would welcome an increase in income from regular giving and donations from our Members. We would strongly encourage members to join the Parish Giving Scheme, or to consider payment by regular banker's standing order. Anyone who is a taxpayer can Gift Aid their donations by completing a Gift Aid form, available from the Treasurer, to enable us to reclaim tax, which added over £16,000 to our funds in 2025

As Treasurer I am in the fortunate position of rarely having to handle cash as paying in and Gift Aid records are all handled by Kathy Perry and Sue Gouch. I would like to thank them for all their hard work. We are most grateful to Geoffrey Dix who has undertaken the task of Independent Examiner.

Martin Chapman – Treasurer

HOLY TRINITY CHURCH - LEVERSTOCK GREEN

FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR 2025

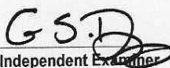
Year Commencing 01/01/2025

| 2,025 Full year budget | | To Date Actual | To Date Budget | To Date Exceeding budget | Difference | Last Year 2024 |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|
| £ | INCOME : | £ | £ | £ | £ | £ |
| 11000.00 | General Collections | 10,391 | 11000.00 | -609 | -2,270 | 12661 |
| 50000.00 | Planned Giving | 54,253 | 50000.00 | 4,253 | -1,166 | 55419 |
| 13800.00 | Tax Refund (with collections) | 16,789 | 13800.00 | 2,989 | 1,904 | 14885 |
| 7000.00 | Fees | 4,071 | 7000.00 | -2,929 | -826 | 4897 |
| 8000.00 | Donations | 6,541 | 8000.00 | -1,459 | 2,369 | 4172 |
| 11000.00 | Fund Raising | 10,633 | 11000.00 | -367 | 131 | 10502 |
| 2550.00 | Hall Hire (fund raising) | 1,405 | 2550.00 | -1,145 | 315 | 1090 |
| 2109.00 | Interest and Dividends | 4,595 | 2109.00 | 2,486 | -66 | 4661 |
| 105459 | TOTAL | 108,679 | 105459 | 3,220 | 392 | 108,287 |
| | EXPENDITURE : | | | | | |
| 2000.00 | Clergy Expenses | 1,750 | 2000.00 | 250 | 922 | 828 |
| 3100.00 | Church Servants | 3,122 | 3100.00 | -22 | 84 | 3038 |
| 1400.00 | Sacristy | 2,073 | 1400.00 | -673 | -1,397 | 3470 |
| 7600.00 | Administration | 7,963 | 7600.00 | -363 | 393 | 7570 |
| 10000.00 | Church Upkeep | 9,757 | 10000.00 | 243 | 15 | 9742 |
| 65836.00 | £69,745 Parish Share | 69,745 | 65836.00 | -3,909 | 3,909 | 65836 |
| 4284.00 | Repairs and Maintenance | 7,454 | 4284.00 | -3,170 | 3,041 | 4413 |
| 5272.95 | Charitable Giving (5% of income) | 5,501 | 5272.95 | 228 | 87 | 5414 |
| 99493 | TOTAL | 107,364 | 99493 | 7,872 | 7,053 | 100,311 |
| 5966 Gain | Operating Surplus >> | 1,314 | 5,966.05 | -4,652 | <Above Budget | 7,976 |

BALANCE SHEET FOR 2025

| | | 2025 | Gain/(Loss) | 2024 |
|---|----------------|-------------------|------------------|----------------|
| ASSETS : | | £ | | Year End |
| CCLA Deposit Accounts | 4.5% | 112,041.17 | CB3033328 | 88,690 |
| Diocesan Board of Finance - Sygrave Fund | | 23,351.62 | Cannot use | 23,352 |
| Debtors | | | | |
| Inland Revenue | 0 | 10,737.25 | | 1,645 |
| Investments: Diocesan Brd. of Finance(Restrict | | 601.00 | | 0 |
| Cash : Bank Accounts & cash | | 29,509.75 | As Cash sheet | 7,229 |
| CCLA Investment Account | 23,488 | 10,000.00 | 378.66 shares | 0 |
| CCLA Global Equity Fund | 11,630 | 10,000.00 | 1899.44 shares | 0 |
| TOTAL | Value^^ | 196,240.79 | | 28,875 |
| | | | | 167,366 |
| REPRESENTED BY SOURCES OF FUNDS AS FOLLOWS : | | | | |
| General Reserve - Accumulated Surplus | | 84,477.40 | | 4,065 |
| Emergency Building Fund (Unrestricted) | | 27,078.73 | | 0 |
| Sygrave Capital (Restricted Endowment) | | 23,351.62 | Untouchable | 0 |
| Sygrave Income for Church Repairs | | 7,136.03 | Restricted | 1,879 |
| Creditors (Accruals) | | 5,324.12 | 2026 distributor | 178 |
| Charitable giving designated | from above | | | 0 |
| Organ Fund | | 2,000.00 | | -3,146 |
| Holding Account | | 34,735.55 | Restricted | 24,758 |
| Vicar's discretionary fund | | 489.91 | | 0 |
| Junior Church | | 692.83 | | -12 |
| Hall Hire (CA) | | 5,035.05 | | 1,405 |
| Toddlers Church | | 1,095.04 | | 130 |
| Youth Group TYG | | 198.07 | | 118 |
| Choir Fund | | 138.74 | | -2 |
| Traidcraft | | 0.00 | | -3,051 |
| Car Park Fund (Restricted) | | 0.00 | Restricted | -915 |
| Flower Fund | | 478.69 | | 138 |
| Poulter Grave Fund for churchyard | | 2,309.78 | Restricted | 310 |
| Craft Group | | 1,098.23 | | 0 |
| Sundry Trust Funds | | 601.00 | | 0 |
| TOTAL ASSETS | | 196,240.79 | 0.00 | 28,875 |
| | | | | 167,366 |

Signed



Independent Examiner

Date 27/1/2026

Income from Investment Funds

| | |
|-----------------------------|----------|
| Poulter (Churchyard Upkeep) | 364.93 |
| Child (organ Maintenance) | 5.53 |
| Sygrave (Church Repairs) | 5,383.88 |

£ Confirmed by DBF statements

The Benefice of Langelei

Parish of Holy Trinity Leverstock Green

**Independent examiner's report to the Parochial Church Council of Leverstock Green-
2025 Accounts**

I report to the Parochial Church Council (PCC) on my examination of the accounts of the Parish of Holy Trinity Leverstock Green for the year ended 31 December 2025.

Respective responsibilities of PCC and examiner

The PCC are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The PCC consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

Having satisfied myself that the charity is eligible for independent examination, it is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act;
- follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act; and
- state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of Independent Examiner's report

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

Independent Examiner's Statement

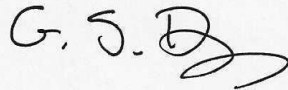
In connection with my examination no matter has come to my attention:

1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that, in any material respect, the requirements:
 - to keep accounting records in accordance with Section 130 of the Charities Act 2011; and
 - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act

have not been met; or

2. to which my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed:



Geoffrey Dix
Independent Examiner

Date: 27 January 2026

3.4 Report on the Fabric, Goods and Ornaments of the church

Summary of works, issues and actions over the last 12 months.

Mar–May 2025: The unused hot-water heating system was drained to stop it acting as a heat sink. Boiler and pipework were left in place as removal would cost more than scrap value.

May–Sep 2025: Quinquennial Inspection completed (20 June) and report received and shared with the PCC.

Power disturbance (night of 21 July) reset bells and clock. Bells recovered; clock required specialist access. Smiths of Derby visited (20 Aug) to reset the clock and check the system.

Car park entrance/exit resurfacing completed.

DAC Secretary (Emma Critchley) visited (26 Aug) to advise on possible Trinity Room redevelopment options (layout, concepts, potential architects, and reference sites).

Oct–Nov 2025: Cracks in the chancel and nave enlarged after the long dry spring/summer; two areas of live plaster noted high on the chancel walls.

Advice from a visiting structural engineer highlighted that existing crack telltales should have been read and recorded monthly; no records have been found, leaving us without a reliable movement history.

Barry Reeves (structural engineer) recommended modern telltales with automated recording (e.g., Wi-Fi linked) to avoid ladder access and improve monitoring.

We will review options with our structural engineer and obtain prices for an automatic monitoring system.

Further informal advice suggests underpinning may be the only long-term solution if ongoing movement is confirmed.

Underpinning would be costly; once movement is recorded consistently, further professional advice and budget estimates will be sought to enable a PCC decision.

These concerns are noted in the context of climate change, which may increase seasonal extremes and therefore exacerbate ground instability and fabric movement over the longer term.

Alban Room: downpipe leak traced to drainage backing up; damaged drain cover/sump repaired. No further leaking reported.

Trinity Room flat roof: generally sound, but the felt is nearing end of life; one area above the Alban Room has suboptimal drainage. Recommendation is to monitor and only intervene if a further felt-related leak occurs, ideally in summer to minimise disruption.

Churchyard: Routine checking of gravestones led to some stones being laid down for safety. This caused some concern on social media that there had been vandalism, which was addressed.

Dec 2025–Jan 2026: Diocesan visit arranged to inspect and assess cracks in the chancel and at the organ.

Quotes requested for oak arch infills to the chancel windows to prevent keystone rotation and potential arch failure.

An access chamber is being considered to allow rodding/clearance of the Trinity Room roof downpipe and ground pipe to reduce risk of future leaks and internal damage.

Feb–Mar 2026: Following the diocesan visit, Clare Butterworth (QI inspector) was asked to provide a comparative review. She recommended further structural engineer input, including a revisit by The Morton Partnership (who installed the telltales). This work is now in progress. Quotes have been received for the oak arch infills; no decision will be taken until after consultation with The Morton Partnership.

Manhole well west of the Trinity Room rebuilt with a new cover; completed under budget.

Ladies' toilet: new siphon diaphragm fitted; now back in use.

Gents' urinal: new waste fitted to stop leakage.

Drone survey completed of roof and buttresses at nave/chancel east ends; report/photos awaited.

Survey relates to areas of live plaster at both ends.

Mike Heylin Deputy Warden/Fabric Committee

Fabric, Goods and Ornaments Report

The statutory fabric reporting will be covered by Mike Heylin (Deputy Churchwarden) in his Fabric Report. There have been no material changes to the inventory of Goods and Ornaments throughout the year. The logbook and terrier are up to date.

**Terry and Beverley
Churchwardens**

3.5 Annual Report on Diocesan Synod

The Diocesan Synod is the democratically elected, decision-making body of the Diocese of St Albans. Its membership comprises some 200 clergy and laity split approximately 50/50 and elections from the Deanery Synods to the Diocesan Synod are held every three years (known as a triennium). Hemel Hempstead Deanery is allocated four clergy and three lay member places on the Diocesan Synod. The president of the Synod is normally the Bishop of St Albans but as this post has been vacant this year following the retirement of Rt. Revd Alan Smith the presidency has been undertaken by the Bishop of Bedford. Hemel Hempstead's members on the Synod include the Revd Dr Diana Stretton and Colin Gage.

The Synod meets three times annually, one of which is now held online in order to reduce the need for travel as part of the Diocese's efforts to move towards its Net Zero Carbon target.

- The Synod's first meeting since our last APCM took place online on **14th June 2025** and was largely concerned with financial and governance issues. There were discussions on the Annual Report and Budget and what the financial projections for the next five years might entail. Reports were also included on the Safeguarding issues in the Diocese and a presentation of an application being prepared (the Alban Way Project) for central church funds to be obtained to finance expansion and diversity in three deprived areas of the Diocese, Hatfield, Luton and Watford.
- The Autumn meeting took place on **11th October 2025** at the University of Bedfordshire's campus at Putteridge Bury near Luton. The opportunity was taken to agree that the formula for Deanery Synod elections should remain unchanged, to agree a new table of fees for Occasional Offices and for the 2026 Diocesan Budget and stipend levels recommended by the DBF to be adopted. A detailed update was provided on the funding application to the central church, and an update given on Living in Love

and Faith. The meeting continued after lunch with a presentation on the activities of The Diocesan Board of Education and an explanation of the Listening Together project being rolled out to deaneries on shaping ministry in the Diocese. Mark Rodel from the Diocese subsequently conducted a detailed discussion on this topic at the Hemel Hempstead Deanery meeting held on 10th February 2026.

- The most recent Synod meeting was held on **14th March 2026** at Putteridge Bury. The theme of this meeting was “Hope” and much of the time was spent on discussing the project being undertaken with the finance the Diocese has received from the Church Commissioners in response to our application to expand and diversify the church membership in the three identified deprived parishes, Luton, Hatfield and Watford. Members of the Synod were pleased at the outcome to date and felt that the receipt of the new funding provided hope that we will be able to develop the discipleship in the Diocese in accordance with God’s teachings. The Synod also included an update and discussion on the recent debate and outcome in the General Synod on Living in Love and Faith. From comments by members of the Diocesan Synod, it would appear that views are as varied and vocal as in the General Synod.
- Subsequent to the Diocesan Synod it was announced that Rt. Reverend Dr Andrew Rumsey, who is currently Bishop of Ramsbury in the Diocese of Salisbury, is being appointed as the new Bishop of St Albans. He will be formally installed at a special service in the Cathedral later in the year.
- Also, since the Synod, the Diocesan Nominations Committee has advised that they wish to help the Synod to grow younger and more diverse by co-opting potentially suitable additional members to serve on the Synod until the end of the current triennium which expires at the end of July 2027.

The next Diocesan Synod is scheduled to be held on 13th June 2026 and will take place online.

Colin Gage

Report of Deanery Synod proceedings (January 2025 to March 2026)

This report covers the proceedings of the Hemel Hempstead Deanery Synod for the period from January 2025 to March 2026. During the year there were three Deanery Synod meetings, covering a variety of different topics. The key areas of discussion are reported below:

Tuesday 11th February 2025 at St John’s, Boxmoor.

- The Synod met at St John’s where we welcomed the Director of Finance, Glyn Barker who gave a presentation on the finance in the diocese.
- Glyn started his presentation with a ‘thank you’ to our congregations and PCC members for their constant support and generous donations.
- This was a lengthy and insightful presentation where Glyn explained where our parish share goes, and the income and expenditure of the diocese.
- It was expressed that clergy members felt that they were having to budget for their parish share rather than paying towards repairs etc. There were concerns that as the cost of living is going up, this evidenced in a drop of weekly donations.

- Glyn explained that 2/3 of parishes in the diocese pay their share in full whereas 1/3 need financial help (roughly 92% of total requested share was received in 2024).
- Overall, the Synod members found it insightful to see facts & figures and were grateful for Glyn's time and knowledge.

Tuesday 8th July 2025 at St Peter's Church, Berkhamsted.

- The Synod met at St Peter's Church, Berkhamsted where we had a joint meeting with the Berkhamsted Synod members.
- We welcomed Bishop Rob Wickham who gave a fantastic presentation on the charity 'Church Urban Fund'. Bishop Rob stepped away from stipendiary ministry a couple of years ago and is now a Chief Executive of the charity. The charity works with people, churches and communities across the country to tackle urgent issues and provide life changing support. They have set up a brilliant, free service called the *Look Up Tool*. This tool helps churches and individuals gain insights into their communities and identify social challenges such as poverty, housing and education.
- Go to their website (www.cuf.org.uk), select Look up tool at the top of the page, add in your details & then you can look up your parish.
- As this was a joint meeting, the only bit of usual business we did was saying thank you to our current treasurer Peter Bladon for his many years of service, and we welcomed our new treasurer, Colin Gage. We are very grateful for all of the work Peter has done for the deanery.

Tuesday 10th February 2026 at St John's, Boxmoor.

- The Synod met at St John's where we were joined by Mark Rodel who led a corporate spiritual discernment session.
- Mark is the Deputy Director of Mission & Ministry for the diocese. He started the session by explaining more about the role he takes within the diocese. He plays a vital part in ensuring local mission & ministry flourishes, and in the development of training missional leadership. He has been leading listening exercises with different deaneries across the diocese to figure out how to support and sustain ministry & how we can grow. Mark will then feedback our thoughts which will be used to create a ministry strategy. This strategy sets out broad intentions for how the diocese can nurture, equip, deploy and care for those who serve in our churches and communities.
- Overall, everyone seemed really pleased with the evening.
- Carolyn Andrews is stepping down from the Synod so Mike thanked her for her many years of input and recent years of being Lay Chair.

Sam Stanbridge
Deanery Secretary