

**THE PARISH OF
ST ANDREW, NORTH SWINDON
Annual Report 2025**



ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETINGS

to be held in church

Sunday 17th May 2026 – 11.15am

This pack includes

- (a) Agenda for 2026 meetings
- (b) Minutes and Reports for 2025
- (c) Accounts for 2025

THE PARISH OF ST ANDREW, NORTH SWINDON
17th May 2026, 11.15am

ANNUAL MEETING OF PARISHIONERS 2026

AGENDA

- 1. Welcome and opening prayers
- 2. Apologies for absence
- 3. Minutes of previous Annual Meeting of Parishioners 2025
- 4. Election of Churchwardens

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING 2026

AGENDA

- 1. Apologies for absence
- 2. Minutes of the previous Annual Parochial Church Meeting 2025
 - (a) To be approved and signed
 - (b) Matters arising
- 3. Presentation of Updated Electoral Roll
- 4. Elections:
 - (a) 3 PCC vacancies for 3 years
 - (b) 2 PCC vacancy for 2 years
 - (c) 2 PCC vacancy for 1 year
- 5. Consideration of Reports
- 6. Financial Report and Presentation of 2025 Inspected Accounts
 - (a) Adoption of 2025 Inspected Accounts
 - (b) Appointment of Independent Examiner
- 7. Incumbent's Report
- 8. The Grace

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MINUTES OF ANNUAL MEETINGS HELD 13th April 2025

PARISH OF ST ANDREW, NORTH SWINDON

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|-------------------|---|--|---|--|
| Present: | Sally Robertson (Chair) Helen Allen (CW/Minutes) | Brian Clegg (Treasurer) Gill Clegg Dawn Davies- Lowde Frances Grimshaw David Hogg | Susan Jennings Anthony Jones Lynda Jones Sally Lawson Wendy Luffman Janet Plowright Derek Plowright Linda Pope Charles Pope | Diane Sly Patti Tomlinson Coral Van Der Kamp Karen Vermeersch Paul Zukiewicz |
| Apologies: | Colin Clarke | | | |

ANNUAL MEETING OF PARISHIONERS 2025

| Agenda Item | Subject | Action |
|--------------------|--|---------------|
| 1. | Welcome and opening prayers Led by Revd Sally Robertson | |
| 2. | Apologies for absence As listed above. | |
| 3. | Minutes of previous Annual Meeting of Parishioners 2024 Minutes of previous Annual Meeting of Parishioners 2024 were approved. SR signed the minutes as accurate. | |
| 4. | Election of Churchwardens There were two vacancies and two candidates: Helen Allen. Nominated by CP. Seconded by BC. David Hogg. Nominated by HA. Seconded by GC. Sally thanked HA and welcomed DH. | |

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING 2025

| Agenda Item | Subject | Action |
|--------------------|---|---------------|
| 1. | Apologies for absence As listed above. | |
| 2. | Minutes of previous Annual Parochial Church Meeting 2024 a. To be approved and signed – all present agreed the minutes and SR signed as an accurate record. b. Matters arising – Children and Communion – after last year’s consultation, our policy has been approved by the Bishop of Bristol. | |
| 3. | Presentation of Updated Electoral Roll GC explained that this was the 6 th year of the previous electoral roll and, therefore, a new roll had to be prepared and everyone had to re-enrol. She thanked all those who had re-registered this year. The new electoral roll consists of 58 congregation | |

| | | |
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| | <p>members being made up from 34 residents in the parish and 24 non-residents. This has decreased from last year. Many thanks to Gillian Clegg for compiling the electoral roll again this year. Gill has agreed to continue in the role of Electoral Roll Administrator.</p> | |
| 4. | <p>Elections</p> <p>a. 3 PCC vacancies for 3 years – Dawn Davies-Lowde nominated by CP, seconded by BC. No elections were needed as the number of vacancies exceeded the number of volunteers. SR thanked all members of the current PCC and Dawn.</p> | |
| 5. | <p>Consideration of Reports</p> <p>SR thanked everyone who had contributed and asked if there were any questions or comments. There were no questions.</p> | |
| 6. | <p>Financial Report and Presentation of 2024 Inspected Accounts</p> <p>a. Adoption of 2024 Inspected Accounts – BC thanked Susan Smith, the previous Treasurer. See financial report attached. We made a surplus last year. Charity donations to three charities will be made in the next accounting year. Electricity supplier was changed and the previous one hasn't charged us yet. The Reserves Policy changed last year. The APCM was invited to adopt the 2024 accounts. Proposed by BC. Seconded by KV. All agreed.</p> <p>b. Appointment of Independent Examiner – Tony Nash has agreed to continue. Proposed BC. Seconded PT. SR thanked BC for setting up internet banking and his other work for the church.</p> | |
| 7. | <p>Incumbent's Report</p> <p>SR reflected on last year's events, including the successful May Fair, and how community and worship efforts have strengthened St Andrew's. She will be away for several months on Extended Ministerial Development Leave, including a pilgrimage and a leadership programme focused on making church life more intergenerational. She shared her Vision for the future: encouraging more interaction across generations within worship, learning from younger members, and reflecting on how the church can grow in hospitality and outreach. SR invited the congregation to reflect on the church's future, its reputation, and how we can continue fostering community and worship. CvdK shared her experiences of hearing positive things about St Andrew's church from members of the community. KV shared her story of joining St Andrew's church. PT felt that St Andrew's is a welcoming church community. Tony: "happy church", Lyn: "a church full of love". CP shared that he felt supported by the church family. Dawn said Sally-Anne told her, "We are your family now". DH thanked Coral for organising social activities. SR thanked everyone and said she would miss us while she is away. SR thanked the leadership team and Phil Ashby for taking on extra work while she is away. The dates of her sabbatical are 28th April to 10th August.</p> | |

| | | |
|----|---|--|
| | <p>KV thanked SR for support and encouragement in deepening our relationship with God.</p> <p>In other business, SR asked whether we want to put the carpet back now that the tiles have been cleaned. All those present said no. KV shared the cleaning regime – sulfate-free detergents may be used, regular wet mopping is needed. LJ reminded people to be vigilant of candle wax dripping.</p> <p>Coral thanked everyone who had arranged improvements to the church building this year.</p> <p>PZ thanked Mike Snow for the work he has done in the background, cleaning the stained glass, getting quotes for the window repairs, creating the book about our stained glass, helping Paul make a book about the history of the church, and asked that we would recognise the gift of his time and expertise. A local history book about Blunsdon, which is out of print, has been donated to us by someone in the village.</p> | |
| 8. | <p>Closing Prayer and The Grace Led by SR. APCM closed at 12:03.</p> | |

REPORTS FOR 2025

THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL (PCC)

(a) Its Role

The Council is required, as stated in the Parochial Church Councils Measure 1956, to co-operate with the incumbent in promoting in the parish the whole mission of the Church: pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. It is also a forum for debating matters sent down by the General, Diocesan and Deanery Synods. The PCC is responsible with the incumbent for the disposal of all monies collected.

(b) PCC Members

Ex-officio members

Sally Robertson (Vicar)
Martina Lewis (Curate)
Karen Vermeersch (Licensed Lay Minister)
Helen Allen (Churchwarden)
David Hogg (Churchwarden)
Colin Clark (Deanery Synod Member – Term ends July 2026)
Tim Holliday (Deanery Synod Member – Term ends July 2026)

Elected members

Brian Clegg (Treasurer – elected April 2024 for 3 years – term ends 2027)
Charles Pope (elected April 2024 for 3 years – term ends 2027 – resigned 2025)
Patti Tomlinson (elected May 2023 for 3 years – term ends 2026)
Paul Zukiewicz (elected May 2024 for 2 years – term ends 2026)
Dawn Davies-Lowde (elected April 2025 for 3 years – term ends 2028)

Co-opted members

Susan Jennings (joined September 2024)

Minute Secretary

Helen Allen (from November 2024)

(c) Organisation

The PCC met 7 times in 2025: in person

(d) Proceedings of the PCC

The main items which the PCC considered during the year included:

- Sally's EMDL and plans for covering her responsibilities
- Safeguarding policies, practice and training
- Children in Communion
- Building maintenance, repair and improvement: handrails, bell repair, roof tile repair, floor tile cleaning and repair, heater repairs and timer switch, metal window frame refurbishment, roof and gutter maintenance, damp in west wall of church building, church cleaning, Temporary Minor Reordering License (moving the bookshelf by the door)
- Churchyard management: gardening mornings, memorial garden proposal, reservation of grave space
- Events: May Fair, Alpha course, summer evening concert, Heritage Open Day, MacMillan Coffee Morning, Vicarage barbeque, Harvest Supper and Quiz, Social meals, Community Fetes Co-ordinator

- Services: Christmas, Lent, Easter, Harvest Festival, Zoom morning prayer, Street Pastors, Intergenerational church
- Administration: APCM preparations, election of officers and representatives, LLM Agreement, fees for weddings, marriage blessings, funerals and memorials
- Eco Church progress
- Pioneering Parishes
- Building hire request
- Land by church

(e) Facts and Figures for 2025

Electoral Roll: 58

Average Sunday Attendance (* = + uncounted watching on Facebook or video):

| | 2025* | 2024* In church | 2023* In church | 2022* In church | 2021 In church and on Zoom/FB | 2020 In church and on Zoom | 2020 In church only |
|----------|-------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Adults | 35 | 36 | 33 | 36 | 26 | 24 | 14 |
| Children | 7 | 6 | 7 | 7 | 6 | 4 | 3 |

| Occasional Offices | 2025 | 2024 | 2023 | 2022 | 2021 | 2020 |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------|------------------|------------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|
| Baptisms: | 9 | 18 | 24 | 23 | 16 | 5 |
| Funerals: | 9 (2 in church) | 10 (2 in church) | 10 (3 in church) | 9 (1 church) | 11 (3 church) | 18 (2 church) |
| Marriages: | 2 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 1 |
| Blessing after Civil Marriage: | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Confirmation | 5 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

(e) Log Book, Terrier and Inventory

Checked February 2026, signed by Revd Sally Robertson and Helen Allen on 4th March 2026.

DISCIPLESHIP (*Sally Robertson*)

2025 began with an Alpha course as 6 of us met weekly for a meal, video and discussion at the vicarage. We enjoyed the way the Christian faith is presented in the videos, with a mixture of teaching and testimony and had some interesting discussions as a result. It was great to be supported in this by people who cooked meals and helped on the day devoted to experiencing the Holy Spirit.

Our focus for Lent was a day of learning about and experiencing different ways of praying. Karen led this with input from several different ‘practitioners’ in different types of prayer and it was a very enjoyable and stimulating day.

Once I had been away on Sabbatical, experiencing a pilgrimage and studying intergenerational ways of being church the second half of the year included thinking about this as a congregation, through a sermon series about our pilgrimage of faith together and a re-think on the format of our monthly Children’s service, now re-named as the ‘Informal’ service.

We also had our first Intergenerational Confirmation preparation sessions with young and (slightly!) older people discussing faith together before 4 people were confirmed at St Mary's Rodbourne Cheney in October (as well as one person at the Cathedral on Easter Eve).

We concluded the year by relaunching the Bible discussion group, this time twice a month and with a morning and evening session to allow more people to attend. We began with a 5 week study of Paul's letter to the Philippians, using the practice of Lectio Divina which is a rich way of hearing God speak to us today through his ancient word.

We continued to help parents understand the significance of bringing their children for Baptism in our discussion groups and we also held Marriage preparation for the 2 couples married at St Andrew's this year.

Discipleship is not just about learning, Bible study and prayer. It includes all our worship and service of others, so you can see everything we do, and you read about in this report, as part of our ongoing desire to follow Jesus more closely.

SWINDON DEANERY SYNOD REPORT *(Sally Robertson)*

Our Deanery Synod meetings took a slightly different form for much of 2025 as we were able to combine 2 of our meetings with Pioneering Parishes training provided by the Diocese of Bristol and delivered by Church Mission Society. This allowed Synod members to meet with others from across the Deanery to discuss ways of taking church more deliberately into our communities.

In February and October, we met at Pattern Church and were led by Tina Hodgett and Greg Bakker from Church Mission Society as part of the Pioneering Parishes initiative. In February, we engaged with the need for a culture shift, lamenting our losses to allow newness to emerge, emphasizing our values and how to discern them through honest conversations and developing an abundant mindset, through seeing our contexts differently. The presentations and discussions were fuelled by an excellent buffet from Trenchers in Kembrey Park. In October, Tina and Greg led us in open conversations which encouraged us to discuss the questions we are grappling with around mission in our contexts and modelled ways of encouraging self-reflection through the help of perceptive questioning by others.

Each of these meetings was preceded by a short business meeting. In February we appointed Gill Leighburn and Tracy Mason as lay members of the Deanery Leadership Team and in October we elected Nick Orman from Wroughton and Wichelstowe as Lay Chair. In October we also heard from Stephen Sheridan, the Finance Director for the Diocese who is the member of senior staff in Diocesan Support Services (DSS) linked to our deanery.

The date set for the May meeting clashed with the end of the Pioneering Parishes course following on from the February meeting, so synod members were invited to come to Holy Trinity, Shaw and engage in prayer stations, focusing on Swindon, local schools, and peace, among other topics.

July was our annual synod barbeque and as well as networking with other synod members, those attending this synod at The Well in Abbey Meads also had the opportunity to contribute to the consultation about the appointment of the new Bishop of Bristol by answering questions on flip charts.

Sally Robertson, Colin Clarke and Tim Holliday have been our lay Deanery Synod reps over the past year, please ask them if you would like more information.

BUILDING AND FABRIC (*Helen Allen and David Hogg, Churchwardens*)

This year has seen significant progress being made in maintenance and repairs required for the building, with a number of pieces of work being completed during the year:

- The grille in the floor by the back door was insulated.
- The floor tiles were professionally cleaned.
- Heaters and the timer switch for the car park light were repaired.
- Minor roof repairs were made and the gutters cleaned.
- Routine annual checks of fire extinguishers and PAT testing were completed.

Also, some 'nice-to-have' jobs:

- The churchwardens cleaned the glass case of the external porch lantern, which contributed to a brighter welcome during the dark winter months.
- The old altar step carpet was replaced with comfortable cushions.
- A Temporary Minor Reordering (TMRO) license was approved by the Diocese so that we could move the bookshelf by the door to create a wider and more inviting entranceway.

And two substantial pieces of repair work were begun:

- The metal window frame refurbishment has now been pencilled in for 2026. The Diocese had agreed to cover some of the cost with its Net Zero Grant; however, at the end of the year the grant fund was closed so other grant sources are being investigated.
- The church architect attended to investigate damp in the west wall of the church building and quotes were sought to affect repairs to damaged stonework.

There were four church cleaning mornings held during the year, in March, May, July, September.

The churchwardens are grateful to all the volunteers who made possible the work of maintaining the church building and fabric, which is far more than two people could manage.

FINANCIAL REPORT (*Brian Clegg, Treasurer*)

This review is to be read in conjunction with the Parish Accounts for 2025 at the end of the APCM Report.

The parish finances continue to allow us to support the ever-increasing ministry and mission work within this area with an increase in our parish share for 2025 of 10% above 2024, and to continue to give grants to those less fortunate than ourselves. Our receipts for 2025 have increased by 10%. This is almost all due to an increase in regular giving by standing order. Our outgoings have increased by 25%. This is partly due to the increase in parish share and a greater spend on maintenance. The expenditure increase was considerably higher than normal as we did not have to pay most of our electricity bill in 2024 due to a supplier error, and as a result of an accounting change that moved expenditure on designated charities into the year the payment was made.

For many years we have collected some of our regular giving using packs of envelopes. During 2025 only six congregation members continued to use them, but with a minimum order of 20 packs this both cost over £80 and resulted in waste of 70% of the packs. As a result, 2025 was our last year using the envelope scheme. In 2025 the bank started to charge us for paying in cash, making standing orders particularly useful.

A huge thank you should be given to all the 'behind the scenes' people who willingly give time to support the Church in this parish, in numerous ways. Their efforts are not recorded in the

accounts, but save the parish the need to employ people to cover the roles, reducing the total payments by, at a conservative estimate, £17,000 to £20,000.

A grant of 10% of the total regular giving received and collections from normal Sunday services, is shared between our designated charities. The charities we supported with grants of £590.10 in 2025 were Swindon Night Shelter, Christians Against Poverty and Disasters Emergency Committee (which temporarily replaced our Uganda link charity due to administrative problems in Uganda). As a result of the 2025 accounts, in 2026 we will give £642 to each charity, with our international charity returning to Nsawo School in Uganda.

We are also committed to giving annually to the Wiltshire Historical Churches Trust (£50.00 pa) and the National Churches Trust (£50.00 pa) for grants previously received, and to Swindon Youth for Christ (£120).

The PCC have a policy that all financial matters for this parish are crystal clear. There is a Statement of Accounting Policies and also Financial Rules and Procedures in place to conform to the various Charities' Acts. The PCC members, as Trustees for the Parish, are required to sign a Declaration for Fit and Proper Person when taking up office. The overall financial state of the Parish continues to be positive, however, during the next year we need to be careful with our limited financial resources. Thank you to everyone for their continued generous support.

PARISH RESERVES POLICY

The Charities Act requires that the PCC has a reserves policy to cover future shortfalls in income or unexpected expenditure. In 2025, the PCC decided to set the expenditure reserve at £6,000 representing three months of expenditure excluding the optional parish share, with a repairs reserve of £10,000, making the total reserves £16,000. This reserve is reviewed annually.

ST ANDREW NORTH SWINDON - STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTING POLICIES

The financial statements of the PCC have been prepared in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations 2006 together with applicable UK Accounting Standards, the Charities SORP 2019 and the Charities Act 2011, using the Receipts and Payments basis. The accounts are checked by our independent examiner Tony Nash ACMA, CGMA.

SAFEGUARDING REPORT *(Susan Jennings)*

My role is to ensure good safeguarding practice within St Andrews. It involves reviewing policies, procedures and publicity, responding to and reporting any safeguarding concerns to the Local Authority, Police and the Diocesan Safeguarding Team, following the Safer Recruitment processes and ensuring individuals involved in the work of the church have DBS checks (where required) and have attended the appropriate level of training in safeguarding for their role.

On 7th June we ran an in person training event at Church that was open to all. It was the Basic Awareness Safeguarding Training and there was lots of inaction, questions and a great lunch. We hope to repeat this again but in the meantime if you would like to increase your awareness of this important issue please follow this link:

<https://safeguardingtraining.cofeportal.org/> and you can access the online training.

Having due regard to the safeguarding guidance issued by the House of Bishops, throughout the year the PCC has been working towards Level 2 of the Safeguarding Action Plan – Safer Foundations and Safer Activities. This involves risk assessing all our activities that might involve children and vulnerable adults and ensuring they are run in line with safeguarding guidance.

In October our website was reviewed by the Diocesan Safeguarding Team and they were very pleased that it 'exceeded' the minimum requirements. Well done everyone involved in that.

On Safeguarding Sunday, 16th November I talked to the congregation about taking 'Action' on safeguarding. Jesus didn't just teach, he took action. I mentioned some of the actions we have taken at church such as having support materials, leaflets etc in the blue files by the door on the bookcase. Nationally the Church of England are taking action by providing more support for survivors of abuse. Are there any actions, you could take?

If you have any safeguarding concerns my photo is on the website and displayed in church so you can recognise me. I can be contacted at church, by email: safeguarding@nschurch.org.uk or telephoned on 01793 250049.

I would like to thank everyone for their commitment to safeguarding and making St Andrew's a safe and accessible place for all.

'Good to Great' Priorities (*Sally Robertson, Karen Vermeersch, Coral van der Kamp and Brian Clegg*)

Hospitality and Social events

Community Breakfasts – From March to July we held a Community Breakfast in church before the morning service on the 4th Sunday of the month, serving hot bacon rolls and toast. Whilst these were popular with the regular members of the congregation, they did not reach further into the community.

May Fair – This proved once again to be a popular event. The weather was not as forgiving this year, which did slightly affect footfall. However, those who attended seemed to enjoy themselves and the event raised almost £950, a figure similar to the previous May Fair. We were delighted once again to welcome Swindon Brass to play.

Craft Club – Our members were very busy last year knitting over 30 Christmas Teddies for the Boxes of Hope charity. We have also knitted blanket squares that have been made into several blankets, and made items for sale and as prizes at our May Fair, and other events.

We have both knitters and crocheters amongst us, who are happy to teach their skills to others, and we welcome new members. We meet once a month for a couple of hours, and work independently at home in between meetings.

Wall hanging – The wall hanging was completed and hung in the church in the autumn. Named The Tree of Life, it depicts our cross logo surrounded by leaves made from fabric that has some personal meaning to members of our congregation. Wedding dresses, pillowcases, school uniforms, football club shirts, choir ties, girl guide uniforms, waistcoats, shirts, etc, all feature as leaves on the tree. Every leaf comes with a story. These stories have been typed up and placed in a file along with a scrap of the material, so their meanings can be shared with others.

Lunch Club – Delighted to announce that our numbers have grown during the year so that we now have a core of 16 regular diners, and several ad hoc members who join us when they can.

After trying out several local venues, we have finally settled on The Heart In Hand in Blunsdon, where the staff look after us well, and where they serve a range of delicious dishes. Dining

together on a monthly basis has, I believe, helped to create a stronger sense of community within our church.

Macmillan Coffee Morning – Last September we ran our first coffee morning for this charity, and it was a great success. A total of £328 was raised by this event, and it was wonderful hosting so many people in our church and sampling all those delicious cakes!

Encouraged by its success we will be hosting it again in September 2026, when we hope even more people will come along and enjoy the warm welcome offered at St Andrew's.

Heritage Open Day – Apart from our usual, informative talks on the building, the history of our stained glass, and those buried in our church yard, this event took a step back in time to April 1871.

We took a peek at the people who might have been sitting in those newly installed pews from 1868.

Based on data taken from the 1871 Census, and further research from St Andrew's Birth, Death and Marriage records, and the Ancestry website, we took an educated guess as to which of those households were likely to be members of our congregation.

Pews were then allocated to these households using socio-economic factors for seating positions. Visitors were then introduced to those households and given as much information as we could find out about them. For example, they may have had a recent Baptism, or an upcoming wedding or birth to look forward to, or there may have been a recent death, etc, which would have made that household rather subdued.

The event was well attended, and we received some very positive feedback on the day. We also had some visitors exploring their own ancestors' connection to our church.

Community engagement

Schools (Sally Robertson and Karen Vermeersch)

Our good relationships with the many schools in our parish continues with Sally and Karen visiting local schools for Assemblies and RE lessons or the schools visiting church.

Abbey Park Secondary school continued their tradition of holding carol services at St Andrew's, but **Great Western Academy**, being without a music teacher, were not able to organise one this year. However Sally did meet the new Principal with the leaders of 2 other local churches to discuss how churches can best support the pupils and their curriculum. Sally and Karen contributed to Assemblies and/or RE lessons at **Red Oaks, Bridlewood, and Abbey Farm Primary Schools**.

Uplands Special secondary school welcomed Karen and volunteers from St Andrew's to a range of events over the school year, including assemblies and a very special prayer space event over three consecutive days.

Sally's involvement at **Tadpole Farm CE Primary Academy** has continued to be high with several assemblies and RE lessons. She continued in the role of Co-Chair of Governors, which is a slightly reduced role under Blue Kite Academy Trust. The handover from the old trust seems to have been completed smoothly and the school is getting used to the new policies and procedures. Sally was interviewed by the SIAMS inspector as part of the school's inspection in June and they were all delighted with a very positive report recognising the strong Christian ethos, values and impactful Collective Worship.

The 3rd local schools Pilgrimage took place in May. The weather was challenging again, but for a different reason. The day was extremely hot, and the entire team worked hard to ensure that pupils were able to enjoy the day in shade. The year 5 pupils and staff from Red Oaks, Tadpole Farm and Bridlewood joined together to reflect on their own journeys, pilgrimages around the world and to sing to God in church together. It was great to be joined by many volunteers and members of other churches to make this possible.

We welcomed Beavers and Cubs to church on different occasions and for different badges and Sally was delighted to lead the local Guides and Brownies event for Remembrance Sunday.

Residential homes and sheltered accommodation *(Sally Robertson)*

Ridgeway Rise – Ministry to the residents at Ridgeway Rise has continued with our monthly pattern of a Songs of Praise and a Communion service being well established. The support of members of the congregation at the Songs of Praise is much appreciated as are the gifts made by the craft club at Christmas. It was great that Helen Allen and Nick Atkins were able to take over Songs of Praise while I was away, supported by Phil Ashby for Communion and the service for residents continued uninterrupted. I am told an increasing number gather on Sunday afternoons to watch the video of our morning service too. It is also a privilege to visit and pray with some residents in their rooms when they are not able to join with communal activities.

Priory Manor – The Monthly Communion service for residents at Priory Manor continued throughout the year with 8-10 people regularly attending. Our 3rd annual carol service was also well received by a wider group of residents. I was very grateful to Revds Elveen Mead and Charlotte Stansfield from Stratton St Margaret for covering services when I am not able to.

Boxes of Hope

Gorse Hill Baptist Church runs the Boxes of Hope project to serve individuals, couples and families all over Swindon who for whatever reason are not able to afford basic essentials for a set period of time. They receive referrals from schools, social services and churches and deliver food every week for as long as is necessary. Much of the food is purchased through grant funding, but they are delighted to have extra special gifts to include, instant meals and seasonal treats, for example, and that is where our collection each week plays a valuable role. They are always extremely grateful for our donations and it is great that so many people remember to give each week and particularly at special appeals around Easter, Harvest and Christmas.

Churchyard *(Helen Allen)*

This year we continued the theme of managing our churchyard for people, wildlife and heritage. As always, we welcomed the families of those buried here, and a range of dog-walkers and ramblers; therefore, it is important to balance keeping areas of wild habitat and keeping the areas around memorials tidy, which is something we regularly discuss with our outsourced grounds maintenance crew.

Paul Zukiewicz worked with Mike Snow to repaint the lettering on one of the Victorian graves, with permission from a living descendant.

The potted crab apple tree became dehydrated during the extremely hot summer months, so Helen Allen took it home to make sure it was watered regularly. It is still not big enough to re-plant in the churchyard.

Four gardening mornings took place during 2025, held in March, May, July and September. Regular jobs included burning tree prunings, weeding the flowerbed beside the church door,

pruning rose bushes along the west boundary wall and litter picking. We also continued turning over the compost heap, which produced some usable compost in the autumn.

In June, we again participated in 'Churches Count on Nature', with a creation care-themed informal service during which many families went outside with Helen, Gill and David to take part in a bug hunt.

In August, David and Helen met onsite with Nick Orman, a drainage engineer connected with the Deanery Eco Church Group, regarding driveway and car park drainage.

My thanks and gratitude go to all the volunteers who made possible the work of maintaining the churchyard.

Publicity (Brian Clegg and Karen Vermeersch)

WEBSITE (*Brian Clegg*) – the website www.nschurch.org.uk is one of the main points of contact for the church. Due to changes in the software we use to maintain the site we can no longer report usage statistics, but there is no reason to assume that it fell back considerably from around 25,000 visits in 2024. This combines with our monthly newsletter email, which continues to grow, now having 182 regular subscribers, more than three times the size of our electoral roll, showing a healthy interest in parish activities.

Videos of the 10am services, and some special services, continue to get good audiences. Our most watched service in 2025, the Remembrance service, had 29 views, with more normal services getting around 7 views (up from 4 last year), though these can involve several in the audience, for example when watched by Ridgeway Rise care home – and each represents someone who was not able to get into church, expanding our outreach.

A CHURCH NEAR YOU (*Brian Clegg*) – The Church of England's *A Church Near You* site is a valuable resource for potential new members and visitors which typically gets around 1650 views a month – around 150 more than last year. During 2025, our *A Church Near You* page was refreshed and kept regularly up to date with news and special services.

FACEBOOK (*Karen Vermeersch*)

During 2024–25 Meta made significant changes to the Facebook Insights system, removing several automatic comparisons and altering how older data is displayed. Even so, the overall trends are clear and encouraging.

Key Points

- **Visibility has grown dramatically.**
Views increased from a recorded **14,200 in 2024** to **nearly 40,000 in 2025**, showing a major rise in how widely our posts are being seen.
- **Our audience continues to grow steadily.**
We ended 2025 with **565 followers**, an **8% increase**, with most followers local and in the 35–64 age range.
- **Engagement from core followers remains strong.**
Total interactions dipped slightly from **755 to 588**, which is normal when reach expands rapidly. Reactions and shares remain healthy.
- **Photos continue to perform best.**
Over **80% of all views** in 2025 came from photo posts, confirming this as our most effective content type.

- **We are reaching well beyond the parish.**

More than **half of all views** in 2025 came from people who don't follow the page, showing strong outreach beyond the immediate congregation.

All of this helps us continue sharing the life of the church with the community we're here to serve.

Vicar's Report 2025 (*Sally Robertson*)

2025 felt to me very much like a year in 3 parts. Preparing to go on Extended Ministerial Development Leave (EMDL), being on EMDL and then returning from EMDL.

Clergy throughout the Church of England are entitled to apply for EMDL every 10 years and as I had been ordained for 15 years and will be retiring in 10 years' time, it was a privilege I was very grateful to be granted. I was able to spend the whole of May in Spain including 3 weeks on pilgrimage, walking the Camino de Santiago, which was a great reminder of how close God is to us all the time and that there is no challenge, physical or otherwise that He can't help us with. I also did a lot of reading and studying for the Growing Faith Strategic Leader's course which I took part in all year. This course is part of the Church of England's initiative to put children and young people instinctively at the heart of all we do as churches and has led me to look at the reality that St Andrew's already is an Inter-generational church and what more there is we can do intentionally to ensure the voices of all generations are heard, nurtured and learned from in all that we do.

My time away from St Andrew's was a re-energising gift, even though it is very strange being cut off from everyone and I do not underestimate the support of Karen as Licensed Lay Minister in holding the fort while I was away. Having Revd Phil Ashby back to lead services, as well as visitors from across the diocese was a necessary bonus and I was delighted to see how buoyant the congregation was on my return in mid-August.

Before I went on EMDL we had noticed an increase in numbers attending Sunday by Sunday and while numbers are by no means the best way of gauging the health of a church, it is always encouraging to have louder singing on a Sunday morning and more people wanting to grow in their faith and serve Jesus in different ways. It was great that this continued while I was away and through into the Autumn.

Learning about how to be a more intentionally inter-generational church when I was on my own felt rather disconnected and I was excited to return and be able to share my learning and thoughts about our direction as a congregation with everyone through a sermon series and in more depth with PCC. It has been really encouraging that people have engaged very thoughtfully with the ideas and we will continue to work on being a church in which all ages feel at home in ways that suit them best in the coming year.

Another bonus for the final third of the year was being joined by Revd Martina Lewis as part-time self-supporting Curate. It is good to have her fresh perspective and enthusiasm in all that we do here and her presence has already enabled us to try new things, such as the fortnightly Bible study group and a weekly Zoom morning prayer on Wednesdays. As Martina is priested in July 2026 and becomes more accustomed to us, we will all enjoy the fruit of her ministry even more. We have also benefited from Som Okonkwo's placement continuing throughout the year (except for his placement with St John's Haydon Wick when I was away) and been able to learn from him, as I trust he is learning from us as part of his training at Sarum College.

Having been away so much this year I am even more grateful than usual to Karen, Helen, David, Brian and many others for their unstinting support of St Andrew's and their commitment to welcoming everyone who walks through our doors and chooses to worship and follow Jesus with us. We continue to be a supportive and devoted family of believers who can always make room for others. Our love for one another is highlighted not just by the appreciative comments of newcomers, but also by the shock we feel when we lose someone; a shock we all experienced in May with the unexpected death of Susan Smith, who had served as treasurer for many years until 2024 as well as being a dedicated member of St Andrew's in so many ways. I continue to miss her.

At the beginning of 2025 my term as Swindon Area Dean was renewed for another 3 years, so I continue to mix being vicar with Area Dean. Thank you for making the vicar-role so enjoyable.

ST ANDREW, NORTH SWINDON - Year ended 31 December 2025

| Expenditure | 2025 Totals | 2024 Totals |
|---|--------------------|--------------------|
| Parish Share | £14,668.80 | £13,335.30 |
| Fundraising costs | £486.26 | £419.58 |
| Fair | £216.26 | £122.47 |
| Other | £270.00 | £297.11 |
| Mission giving and donations | £2,090.30 | £295.00 |
| Local beneficiary | £500.10 | £0.00 |
| UK beneficiary | £500.10 | £0.00 |
| International beneficiary | £500.10 | £0.00 |
| Wiltshire historic churches | £50.00 | £50.00 |
| National churches trust | £50.00 | £50.00 |
| Swindon Youth for Christ | £120.00 | £120.00 |
| Other | £100.00 | £75.00 |
| Clergy and staff expenses | £1,765.50 | £1,513.85 |
| General | £735.83 | £511.04 |
| Travel | £617.26 | £559.19 |
| Telephone/Internet | £291.00 | £336.80 |
| Stationery | £121.41 | £106.82 |
| Mission and evangelism costs | £172.31 | £19.95 |
| Refreshments | £133.04 | £0.00 |
| General | £0.00 | £0.00 |
| Children | £39.27 | £19.95 |
| Church running expenses | £6,178.00 | £5,026.37 |
| Maintenance | £4,829.00 | £3,814.83 |
| Churchyard | £1,349.00 | £1,211.54 |
| Upkeep for services | £3,955.34 | £3,228.46 |
| Candles | £114.00 | £146.81 |
| Communion | £195.20 | £30.79 |
| Licences | £138.00 | £132.00 |
| Stationery, printing, online | £390.19 | £552.69 |
| Organists and vergers | £340.00 | £0.00 |
| Fees | £2,515.00 | £2,019.00 |
| General | £262.95 | £347.17 |
| Insurance | £1,729.66 | £1,576.64 |
| PCC admin | £89.21 | £112.91 |
| Utility bills | £1,160.96 | £252.52 |
| TOTAL | £32,276.34 | £25,780.58 |
| Income | 2025 Totals | 2024 Totals |
| Regular giving | £12,835.54 | £10,547.04 |
| Tax efficient | £11,239.04 | £9,157.04 |
| Not | £1,596.50 | £1,390.00 |
| Collections | £6,434.64 | £7,155.90 |
| Tax efficient | £6,289.52 | £6,520.10 |
| Not | £145.12 | £635.80 |
| All other giving including appeals | £2,048.20 | £1,175.53 |
| Tax efficient | 482.96 | £786.87 |
| Not | 1565.22 | £388.66 |
| Gift aid | £4,189.90 | £3,478.45 |
| Legacies | £0.00 | £0.00 |
| Grants | £500.00 | £530.00 |
| Fundraising | £1,185.57 | £1,614.13 |
| Interest | £629.70 | £444.65 |
| Fees (weddings etc.) | £5,635.00 | £5,409.00 |
| Weddings | £1,422.00 | £1,122.00 |
| Funerals | £3,656.00 | £3,304.00 |
| Memorials etc. | £221.00 | £512.00 |
| Banns | £336.00 | £471.00 |
| TOTAL | £33,458.55 | £30,354.70 |
| Surplus/Deficit | £1,182.21 | £4,574.12 |

Notes

1. Local/UK/International giving is based on 10 percent of giving and collections - was 0 in 2024 due to accounting change
2. Upkeep for services now includes fees paid to diocese, vergers and organists, previously in general/PCC admin
3. Low utility bill in 2024 due to unbilled winter
4. PCC Admin now includes bank charges (£5.32 for one pay in)
5. Local, national and international beneficiaries will receive £642 each (£1,927 total) - this will be paid in 2026

ST ANDREW NORTH SWINDON - Year ended 31 December 2025

Balance Sheet

| Date | Current 1 | Current 2 | Saving 3 Instant Saver | Saving 4 32 Day Saver | Saving 5 95 Day Saver | TOTAL |
|------------|-----------|-----------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|------------|
| 31/12/2024 | £1,746.25 | £491.83 | £12,307.42 | £10,104.63 | £10,168.21 | £34,818.34 |
| 31/12/2025 | £1,383.78 | £53.46 | £13,912.12 | £10,317.68 | £10,480.16 | £36,147.20 |
| Interest | | | £104.70 | £213.05 | £311.95 | £629.70 |
| 01/01/2025 | | Opening Balance | | £35,489.00 | | |
| | | Receipts | | £33,458.55 | | |
| | | Payments | | £32,276.34 | | |
| 31/12/2025 | | Closing Balance | | <u>£36,671.21</u> | | |

Notes

A detailed Inventory was taken in July 2012 recording all assets according to location and checked 20/02/25

Chair: *Sally Robertson*

Date: *15th February 2026*

PCC Member:

Hebin Allen

Date: *15th February 2026*

Out-standing cheques Receipts not cleared TOTAL

| | | |
|-------|---------|------------|
| £0.00 | £670.66 | £35,489.00 |
| £0.00 | £524.01 | £36,671.21 |

RESTRICTED/DESIGNATED FUNDS

| Fund 3 | Fund 5 |
|------------|------------|
| Restricted | Designated |
| Organ | Wall |
| £1,438.60 | £5,695.33 |
| £1,189.62 | CLOSED |

Fund 3 activity

| | | |
|------------|------------------|----------|
| 19/02/2025 | Keyboard repair | -£275.00 |
| | Interest accrued | £26.02 |
| | Total activity | -£248.98 |