

**THE PARISH OF  
ST ANDREW, NORTH SWINDON  
Annual Report 2024**



**ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETINGS**

**to be held in church**

**Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> April 2025 – 11.15am**

This pack includes

- (a) Agenda for 2025 meetings
- (b) Minutes and Reports for 2024
- (c) Accounts for 2024

**THE PARISH OF ST ANDREW, NORTH SWINDON**  
**13<sup>th</sup> April 2025, 11.15am**

**ANNUAL MEETING OF PARISHIONERS 2025**

AGENDA

- 1. Welcome and opening prayers
- 2. Apologies for absence
- 3. Minutes of previous Annual Meeting of Parishioners 2024
- 4. Election of Churchwardens

**ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING 2025**

AGENDA

- 1. Apologies for absence
- 2. Minutes of the previous Annual Parochial Church Meeting 2024
  - (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) 1 PCC vacancy for 2 years
  - (c) 1 PCC vacancy for 1 year
- 5. Consideration of Reports
- 6. Financial Report and Presentation of 2024 Inspected Accounts
  - (a) Adoption of 2024 Inspected Accounts
  - (b) Appointment of Independent Examiner
- 7. Incumbent's Report
- 8. The Grace

<b>CONTACT DETAILS:</b>	Tel: 07588 594410
St Andrew's Church	Email: <a href="mailto:revd.sally.robertson@nschurch.org.uk">revd.sally.robertson@nschurch.org.uk</a>
Lady Lane/Tadpole Lane	Website: <a href="http://www.nschurch.org.uk">www.nschurch.org.uk</a>
Blunsdon	Facebook: St Andrew's Church, North Swindon
Swindon SN25 2DW	

**MINUTES OF ANNUAL MEETINGS HELD 28<sup>th</sup> April 2024  
PARISH OF ST ANDREW, NORTH SWINDON**

<b>Present:</b>	<b>Sally Robertson (Chair) Patti Tomlinson Sally-Ann Lawson Brian Clegg Gillian Clegg</b>	<b>Tim Holliday Carol Avery Coral Napper Donna Wylde Lyn Jones</b>	<b>Wendy Luffman Anthony Jones Karen Vermeersch Diane Sly Helen Allen</b>	<b>Linda Pope Charles Pope Renate Neave Paul Zukiewicz Jo Prior (minutes)</b>
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**Apologies:** Susan Smith  
Peter Smith  
Donna Kelly  
Dave Templar  
Colin Clark

Agenda Item	Subject	Action
<b>ANNUAL MEETING OF PARISHIONERS 2024</b>		
1.	Welcome – Led by Sally Robertson	
2.	Apologies as listed above	
3.	Minutes of previous Annual Meeting of Parishioners 2023 were approved, agreed. There were no matters arising.	
4.	Election of Churchwardens: Helen Allen agreed to carry on. Proposed by Gill Clegg Seconded by David Hogg. Thanks were given to Brian & Helen for the support they give to Sally & Church.	
<b>ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING 2024</b>		
5.	Apologies as listed above	
6.	Minutes of the previous Annual Parochial Church Meeting 2023 a) To be approved and signed – by Sally Robertson, all present at the meeting were in agreement. b) Matters arising – no matters arising	
7.	<b>Presentation of Updated Electoral Roll</b> There are 74 parishioners on this year, this has increased from last year, with 38 residents in the parish and 36 not resident. Many thanks to Gillian Clegg for compiling it again this year and Gill has agreed to carry on with this.	
8.	<b>Elections: Thanks were given to Donna Wylde &amp; Donna Kelly who have both stepped down this year.</b> a. 3 PCC vacancies for 3 years: Brian Clegg nominated by Dave Templar, seconded by Linda Pope. Charles Pope nominated by Brian Clegg, seconded by Helen Allen. Tim Holliday nominated by Karen Vermeersch seconded by Coral Napper b. 2 PCC vacancies for 2 years: Paul Zukiewicz nominated by Coral Napper seconded by David Hogg	

c. 2 PCC Vacancy for 1 year

9.

**Consideration of Reports**

Changed report slightly to show our Good to Great – reflect what is happening. Sally asked if there is anything to bring up? CN expressed thanks to SR and all who takes on anything within church.

10.

**Financial Report and Presentation of 2023 Inspected Accounts**

- a) Adoption of 2023 Inspected Accounts – SR spoke about the accounts, the PCC will look at the reserves, we are still a small congregation – if anyone has any question SS or PCC members are happy to talk through. All at the meeting agreed accounts. Susan has been treasurer since 2001 and is stepping down. A collection has been made for Susan where a Bird bath & gift vouchers have been purchased and will be presented to her & Peter to thank them for all the work they have done for St Andrews PCC. The PCC are about to take on Brian Clegg as Treasurer. Thanks were expressed to Susan for looking after the accounts for 23yrs and for Peter’s support to Susan during this time.
- b) Appointment of Independent Examiner – We have someone in mind. PCC to sort this out – all at meeting in agreement.

11.

**Incumbent’s Report**

Sally spoke about this in her sermon during the morning’s service.

Sally briefly reiterated the message of her sermon that we need to keep abiding in Jesus and bearing fruit as a congregation and this can be seen in the reports for last year, as we worked to your Good to Great priorities of Hospitality, Socialising, the churchyard and publicity. This is also very evident with the forthcoming May Fayre which is coming together beautifully thanks to the hard work of many people. There are so many people who work hard in the service of Jesus through St Andrew’s and Sally is grateful to all of them, but she particularly wanted to thank Karen, Brian and Helen for all their support on the leadership team and Jo for keeping us straight.

Sally then introduced a discussion on Children taking Holy Communion before Confirmation, which has been a practice within the Church of England since the 1990s, but in the Roman Catholic church for much longer.

Discussions were had re. children and communion. Concerns that were brought up: age, child & parent to decide, child should know & understand, would school teach this in RE? PCC will look at this at the first meeting in June.

12.

**Closing Prayer** led by Sally Robertson

**The Grace** – Sally reminded everyone of the words!

**APCM Closed at 12.06pm**

## REPORTS FOR 2024

### **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)  
Karen Vermeersch (Licensed Lay Minister)  
Helen Allen (Churchwarden)  
Colin Clark (Deanery Synod Member – re-elected May 2024)

##### Elected members

Brian Clegg (Treasurer – elected April 2024 for 3 years – term ends 2027)  
Tim Holliday (elected April 2024 for 3 years – term ends 2027)  
Charles Pope (elected April 2024 for 3 years – term ends 2027)  
Patti Tomlinson (elected May 2023 for 3 years – term ends 2026)  
Paul Zukiewicz (elected May 2024 for 2 years – term ends 2026)  
Donna Kelly (elected in April 2022 for 3 years – term ends 2025 – stepped down 2024)  
Donna Wylde (elected May 2021 for 3 years – term ends 2024)

##### Co-opted members

Cathy Foot (retired September 2024)  
Susan Jennings (joined September 2024)

##### Minute Secretary

Jo Prior (resigned October 2024)/Helen Allen (from November 2024)

#### **(c) Organisation**

The PCC met 6 times in 2024: in person

#### **(d) Proceedings of the PCC**

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

- Invitations to Bishops
- Policy reviews – safeguarding, GDPR, access
- Being an effective PCC – code of conduct
- Safeguarding
- Finance – 2024 Fees, Stewardship and Fundraising, community fundraising appeal leaflet
- Eco Champion – including decarbonisation audit and works proposed, Eco Church Bronze Award
- Planning and reviewing services – including Christmas, Lent, Easter, Harvest
- Planning and reviewing events – including May Fair, Heritage Open Day, Discipleship Day
- Good to Great development plan
- Sally's sabbatical
- Land adjacent to church

- Children and Communion
- Work when funds allow – bells, handrails, cleaning floor tiles
- Stained glass windows – grant application for cleaning; repair of opening sections
- Zoom contract renewal
- Churchyard – including grave plot reservations, damaged crab apple tree
- Large print bible reading sheets
- Appointment of PCC Secretary
- Charitable donations
- Alpha course

**(e) Facts and Figures for 2024**

Electoral Roll: 74

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

	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	36	33	36	26	24	14
Children	6	7	7	6	4	3

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

**(f) Log Book, Terrier and Inventory**

Checked February 2025, signed by Revd Sally Robertson and Helen Allen on 20<sup>th</sup> February 2025.

**DISCIPLESHIP** (*Sally Robertson*)

Our focus for deepening our discipleship and learning in 2024 was the continuation of Bible book club which met 8 times (sometimes on 2 occasions to discuss the same material). In the first half of the year we stuck with books of the Bible, reading and discussing various Psalms, Matthew’s Gospel, passages from Isaiah and Paul’s letter to the Philippians. We then looked more thematically at the topics of Forgiveness, Generosity, and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming. Each month we were challenged and inspired by what we read and encouraged by our discussions as we learnt from one another and our different perspectives.

During Lent and Advent we encouraged daily Bible reading and weekly Evening Prayer, both on zoom and in church to enable as many as possible to join in. The sessions together were opportunities to discuss what we had been reading as well as to pray together. From April we introduced Zoom Evening prayer on Sunday evenings twice a month.

There was also an opportunity to think about how to be Well-prepared for our own deaths, practically and spiritually with a short course over the summer.

We continued to help parents understand the significance of bringing their children for Baptism in our discussion groups and it was great to have one adult Baptism and confirmation during the 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)*

Deanery Synod met 4 times during the year, with the Deanery Leadership team (DLT) meeting between synods to plan the agenda. Having launched our Deanery Vision in November 2023 we focused our synods in 2024 around our key priorities and on learning from one another, to give all synod members (and other interested people who are always welcome to attend) a chance to reflect on and be inspired by the areas the working groups will be focusing on in more detail.

In February we met at St John's Parks and Walcot to focus on education and how churches are already engaging in our schools. We heard about the Open the Book Team from the West of Swindon, the Year 5 RE enrichment pilgrimage in North Swindon and the Secondary school chaplaincy run in various schools by Simon Halls, Owen Green and Jamie Reeves. We also had the joy of hearing the powerful testimony of a young person herself.

In May, at St Mark's New Town, we looked wider than just the Deanery as Archdeacon Christopher Bryan joined us to help us see how the Diocesan strategy, Transforming Church. Together, can help us at both parish and deanery level.

In July, we had our annual barbeque, at All Saints Southbrook Street and prompted by a question at the May synod we took the time to hear from one another about the priorities of different benefices and how these connect with the Deanery Plan.

The final meeting of the year was at St Peter's Penhill in October and we picked up on the discipleship strand, hearing from and questioning Stephanie Hayton, the Advisor for Lay Ministry, on how the diocese is encouraging every member ministry.

At every meeting we heard updates on local and diocesan priorities, including Racial Justice, eco church and the cost of living crisis, as well as worshipping in a variety of styles and enjoying the hospitality of the host church.

We encourage anyone with an interest in the wider deanery and the topic under discussion to come to our meetings. The dates for 2024 are 27th February, 15th May, 16<sup>th</sup> July and 14th October. Please speak to your Deanery Synod reps if you would like to know more. They are Sally Robertson, Colin Clarke and Tim Holliday.

### **BUILDING AND FABRIC** *(Helen Allen, Churchwarden)*

The church building remains sound overall. Routine annual checks of fire extinguishers and PAT testing were completed. The gutters were cleared by a member of the congregation in the early autumn (the plant that grew in the downpipe at the time of the 2022 quinquennial inspection is no more). There were four church cleaning mornings held during the year, in March, May, July and September.

Some significant pieces of work were completed during the year:

Handrails were installed at the main entrance and beside the lectern, which fit so well with the church's interior design that they have gone almost unnoticed but are much appreciated!

The broken bell arm was repaired, and the metalwork of both bells was re-painted to make it weather resistant. The scaffolding erected to do that work caused some incidental damage to the roof tiles, which the scaffolding company repaired.

Maintenance of the stained-glass windows continued with Mike Snow, our local stained-glass expert and PCC member Paul Zukiewicz cleaning the Bryans window (St Peter, Mary and Jesus, St Andrew – north wall of the church) and fitting new window guards. Mike published a book about our stained-glass windows and made it available for sale at the Heritage Open Day event in September. Mike also sought quotes for repairs to the opening sections in the Bryans window and the mediaeval west window – more on that next year!

My thanks and gratitude to all the volunteers who made possible the work of maintaining the church building and fabric, which is far more than one person could manage.

#### **FINANCIAL REPORT** *(Brian Clegg, Treasurer)*

Please refer to the PCC's Annual Accounts and the Financial Review at the end of this Report.

#### **SAFEGUARDING REPORT** *(Susan Jennings)*

I became the Parish Safeguarding Officer in September 2024. A big thank you to Cathy Foot and Jo Prior for their safeguarding work over the last few years.

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.

It is important that the church community know who I am and how to contact me. On 8<sup>th</sup> December 2024 I was introduced to the congregation at Morning Worship and gave a talk about my experience and the role of Parish Safeguarding Officer. My photo is on the website and I can be contacted at church or by email: [safeguarding@nschurch.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@nschurch.org.uk) or telephoned on 01793 250049.

Safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults from abuse or neglect is everyone's responsibility and we would like to request that all members of the congregation undertake the basic awareness level of training on the Church of England Website. Please follow this link: <https://safeguardingtraining.cofeportal.org/>

2024 was a challenging year for the Church of England with the publication of the Makin Report. Its findings led to the resignation of The Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of Bristol, the Rt Revd Vivienne Faull responded by saying, we owe survivors of abuse, "a commitment to real, lasting change within the Church".

On Safeguarding Sunday, 17<sup>th</sup> November 2024, Karen Vermeersch, our Licenced Lay Minister delivered a sermon about taking responsibility as Christians and the importance of speaking out against abuse or neglect despite the difficulty.



I work in partnership with the Bristol Diocesan Safeguarding Team. They have devised a Safeguarding Action Plan which we are working through, and they have a vast array of experience, resources and training to assist me.

The PCC has achieved Level 1 of the Safeguarding Action Plan – Safer Foundations. The PCC has approved a safeguarding policy that takes account of 'Promoting a Safer Church'; a physical copy is available in the church; the Safeguarding Action Plan and Safer Recruiting Policy are reviewed at least once each year. Safeguarding information is displayed in the church. PCC members have completed or are awaiting safeguarding training.

Having due regard to the safeguarding guidance issued by the House of Bishops, the PCC is now working towards Level 2 of the Safeguarding Action Plan – Safer Foundations and Safer Activities. We are now working towards ensuring that all our activities that might involve children and vulnerable adults are organised and conducted with due regard to safeguarding guidance.

Lastly, I would like to thank everyone for their patience as I integrate into this role and ensure safeguarding is a fundamental part of the Christian life of the parish of St Andrew's.

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

#### **Hospitality and Social events**

**Community Lunches** – We scaled back on the number of community lunches in 2024, as we focused on other priorities. However, the lunches held in April and October were popular with congregation members, whilst attracting only a little interest from the wider community. The lunch held on the heritage open day seemed to be warmly received.

**May Fair** – After a break of over a decade, we hosted a very successful May Fair this year. It was based on the theme of a 1950s fair, with traditional stalls and games, along with a Victoria sponge making contest. People dressed in 1950s outfits, and Wiltshire Police delighted everyone by bringing along an old-style Police car. Music was kindly provided by Swindon Brass Band. The event was attended by around 300 people, all of whom seemed to thoroughly enjoy it. All-in-all, the event was a great success, raising almost £975.

**Craft Club** – The needles and hooks were very busy last year. Apart from making lots of goldfish for one of our stalls at the May Fair, we have made over 70 Fidget Worms for our local care home as Christmas gifts and knitted enough squares, to make two blankets for Swindon Night Shelter. We also have one new member who has brought her crafting skills to the table, and has helped to put the finishing touches to those Fidget Worms. Butterflies, Hearts, Fidget Worms and Angels are our projects for 2025. We are happy to teach our skills to others, and welcome new members. We try to meet up over coffee and biscuits once a month for a natter while we work, pass on our skills and admire each other's handicrafts.

**Wall hanging** – Delighted to announce good progress has been made, and we aim to have it finished in time for our Heritage Open Day in September. The hanging is of our cross with surrounding leaves made out of fabric that has some personal meaning to members of our congregation. Wedding dresses, pillow cases, school uniforms, football club shirts, choir ties, girl guide uniforms, waistcoats, shirts etc, all feature as part of the leaves. Every leaf comes with a story. These stories are being typed up and placed in a file along with a scrap of the material, so their meanings can be shared with others.

**Lunch Club** – A really successful year for the luncheon club. Seven members of the church joined our group during the year, so we are now a merry little band of about 12 regular diners, with a few more who come along when they are able. We meet once a month, Wednesday lunchtime, at a local pub and enjoy the opportunity to share our news, swap stories, and mull over the latest sporting triumphs. Plus, we have the added benefit of eating a good meal, in good company, without needing to do the washing up! Sadly, David Templar, one of our regular diners, passed away last September and we have missed his company. We now raise a glass to absent friends, before starting our meal.

**Heritage Open Day** – This is becoming a popular annual event and it is great that 50 more people joined us this year, as well as the many helpers making them feel welcome. Even though Paul, Mike and Coral were giving their history talks for the third time, they were still able to find new information to enthuse us with, focussed particularly on the opening service of the renewed building in February 1868. Mike Snow has written and published a beautiful book on the history of our stained glass and selling these proved very popular on the Open Day and afterwards.

### **Community engagement**

#### **Schools** (*Sally Robertson and Karen Vermeersch*)

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

**Great Western Academy and Abbey Park Secondary schools** both continued their tradition of holding carol services at St Andrew's, events which fill the church to capacity and beyond.

Sally contributed to Assemblies and/or RE lessons at **Red Oaks, Bridlewood and Abbey Farm Primary Schools**.

**Uplands Special Secondary School** continued to invite Karen and Sally to take Assemblies and Karen led an Easter Garden-making workshop for various classes in the school.

Sally's involvement at **Tadpole Farm CE Primary Academy** has continued to be high with several assemblies and RE lessons. She continued to help coordinate the Prayer and Worship team in school until July and then resumed the role of Co-Chair of Governors. Tadpole Farm ceased to be a member of the Diocese of Bristol Academies Trust at the end of the year, following the Trust's demise and from 1<sup>st</sup> January is now a member of Blue Kite Academy Trust. The handover appears to be going smoothly, but there is inevitably some upheaval, especially for school staff.

The second local schools Pilgrimage took place in May, on a very wet day. The Year 5 pupils and staff from Red Oaks and Bridlewood schools bravely battled through the rain 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 Rainbows to church on different occasions, and the Rainbows particularly enjoyed taking part in our Churches Count for Nature.

#### **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 and the staff bringing increasing numbers of residents to attend. 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. I am told an increasing number gather on Sunday afternoons to watch the video of our morning service too. This year I was privileged to share some of the material from the 'Well-Prepared' (for death) course with residents who wanted to discuss it.

**Priory Manor** – The monthly Communion service for residents at Priory Manor continued throughout the year with 8 people regularly attending. Our second annual carol service was also well received by a wider group of residents.

**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, hygiene products or 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 the December Toy service.

**Charitable giving** – During 2024 we heard about 2 of our 3 mission partners: The Swindon Night Shelter (local) and Nsawo School in Uganda (international) whom we support with a tenth of our regular income, at the end of each year. Our third partner is Christians Against Poverty, who are our national charity, but we are sometimes asked to provide support for our local branch based in Highworth as they provide debt support for clients in SN25.

#### **Churchyard** (*Helen Allen*)

This year we continued on 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 a local graveyard expert to create a map of our churchyard indicating where graves already exist, whether or not they are marked with monuments.

We were grateful to receive back the crab apple tree which was nursed back to health by Donna Wylde after the local deer made a meal of it in 2023. The tree will remain in a pot in a sheltered part of the churchyard until it is stronger.

Four gardening mornings took place during 2024, held in March, May, July and September. The north-west corner of the churchyard was planted with nasturtiums which flourished throughout the summer and autumn; other jobs included regularly clearing mud from the car park, weeding, pruning the rose bushes along the west wall and litter picking.

This year we took part in two nationally recognised events: during ‘No Mow May’, we refrained from mowing the grass during the month of May in order to allow wildflowers and pollinators to complete their lifecycles, thus contributing to and sustaining the biodiversity of the area; and in June, we participated in ‘Churches Count on Nature’, organised by the charity Caring for God’s Acre, during which we audited the wildlife in the churchyard and photographed plants and insects, using the iNaturalist app and website to contribute to an international citizen science project; and we welcomed a group of local Rainbows to help us.

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

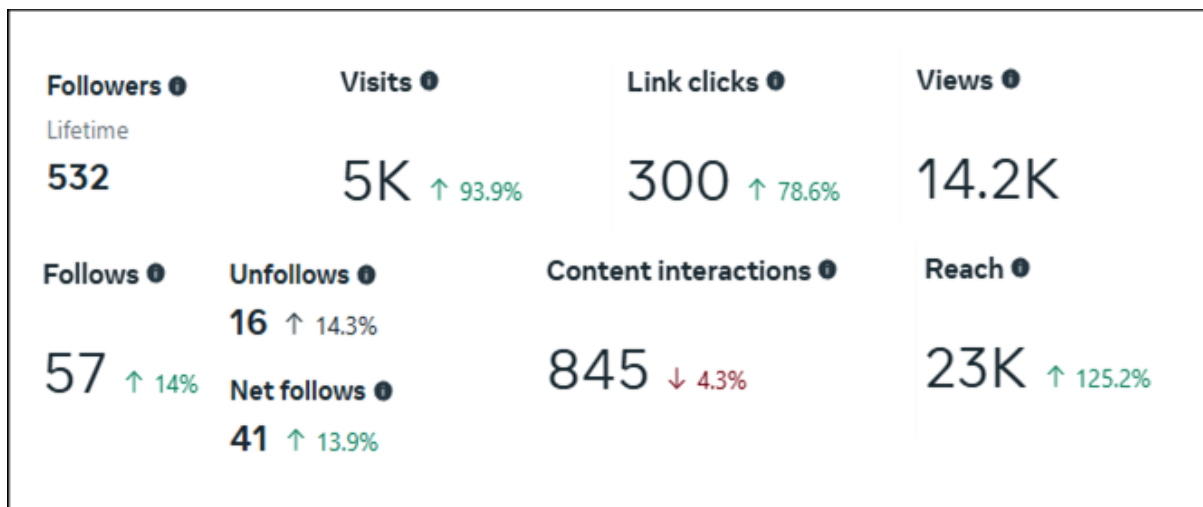
**Publicity** (Brian Clegg and Karen Vermeersch)

**WEBSITE** (Brian Clegg) – the website [www.nschurch.org.uk](http://www.nschurch.org.uk) is one of the main points of contact for the church, and I'm pleased to say that after some decline in previous years, usage has recovered. From April to December 2024, we had 17,174 views, compared with 6,433 over the same period in the previous year. This combines with our monthly newsletter email, which continues to grow, now having 176 regular subscribers, more than two and a half 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 2024, the Remembrance service, had 23 views, with more normal services getting around 4 views, 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 1500 views a month – around 100 more than last year. During 2024, our *A Church Near You* page was refreshed and kept regularly up to date with news and special services.

**FACEBOOK** (Karen Vermeersch) - *this has remained an effective means of communication, with an increase in both followers and engagement over the year. Although we have seen a slight dip in content interactions, this is outweighed by the increase in reach, visits, views and followers.*



### **Vicar's Report 2024** *(Sally Robertson)*

One of the comments we continually hear about St Andrew's is that people don't even know we exist, tucked away as we are down the track. This is part of our appeal, because our secluded location provides the sense of tranquillity and peace so many crave in the suburbs of a busy town. However, when we want to share God's love with the people in our community, we need them to know where we are and this is the impetus behind our priority on publicity. 2024 feels like a year when we raised our profile in pleasing ways.

The May Fair attracted hundreds of people who stayed and enjoyed the hospitality and attractions on offer. This spilled over into our Christmas services which also saw more people attending than we have been used to and each Sunday we are delighted to meet new people and get to know them over time. All of these are thanks to the hard work of many people, delivering leaflets, writing press releases and using Social Media. Not to mention the enormous amounts of work involved in organising the May Fair for which I am particularly grateful to Karen and her team of helpers.

We are not, of course, aiming to be a tourist attraction or an interesting place for people to visit, so we just want to see higher footfall. We are here to share Jesus' love with our community and, through our hospitality, friendship and worship we want to show them that Jesus welcomes everyone and invites them to learn about him in a way and at a speed that suits their temperament and life stage. Through the publicity we have shared, the events we have organised and the prayers we have prayed God has brought us closer to more members of our community and we can be hugely thankful for that and expectant that He will graciously continue to do so. I am grateful that He has called you all to be part of Jesus' body here in North Swindon and to share your gifts and time in this way, making it possible to be the loving and welcoming church we are. Through our weekly and monthly routine services and through the special events that 'put us on the map', we see God's spirit at work in our lives and share that love and hope with the parish.

We are better able to share God's love with the parish when we love one another, so the people who form our regular congregation are very important to the life of the church. As well as getting to know new members better, 2024 was the year when we lost and mourned 2 long standing church members, Tony Hatter and Dave Templar and gave thanks for all that they had contributed to church life in different ways. We welcomed both Bishop Neil, the Bishop of Swindon and Bishop Viv, the Bishop of Bristol to lead services and it has been a joy as well to welcome Som Okonkwo and his family and to accompany him on his journey of training for ordination as a priest.

As I continue to serve Swindon Deanery as Area Dean, as well as St Andrew's as Vicar, I am hugely indebted to all the work and commitment from so many of you, but particularly want to thank Karen, Helen and Brian for helping me in leading St Andrew's and creating the vibrant congregation we enjoy being.

### **Financial Review 2024** *(Brian Clegg, Treasurer)*

The review is to be read in conjunction with the Parish Accounts for 2024.

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 2024 of 10% above 2023, and to continue to give grants to those less fortunate than ourselves. Our receipts for 2024 have increased by 23%. This is due to receiving more income from our overall giving and fundraising. Our payments have also increased by 19%. This is primarily due to the increase in parish share

and a significantly greater spend on maintenance. The expenditure would have been another 10% higher if we were not still waiting for an invoice from our electricity supplier between November 2023 and July 2024, and as a result of an accounting change moving 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 2024 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 will be our last year using the envelope scheme, with a number of options to replace them. Users will be individually consulted.

A huge thank you should also 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. This includes a new independent reviewer of our accounts.

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 were, Swindon Night Shelter, Christians Against Poverty and Afrinspire Ufund-Nsawo School. This year we are giving £590.10 to each of these charities.

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.

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. As the PCC's income is all unsecured, the reserve was previously set to at least 6 months expenditure as unrestricted funds. In addition, as the church is an historic building, funds need to be reserved to cover work identified in the periodic quinquennial inspection. The PCC agreed in 2018 to temporarily reduce the reserves to £6,000 to cover expenditure and £5,000 for quinquennial and emergency repairs, but to increase these, when able to. In 2024 this proved possible.

The Parish Resources website suggests that 3 months expenditure is sufficient for a basic reserve, which would be around £6,000. Noting this, the PCC decided to keep the expenditure reserve at £6,000 but to increase the repairs reserve to £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.

## ST ANDREW, NORTH SWINDON - Year ended 31 December 2024

<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>2024 Totals</b>	<b>2023 Totals</b>
<b>Parish Share</b>	<b>£13,335.30</b>	<b>£12,123.00</b>
<b>Fundraising costs</b>	<b>£419.58</b>	<b>£671.83</b>
Fayre	£122.47	
Other	£297.11	
<b>Mission giving and donations</b>	<b>£295.00</b>	<b>£1,464.82</b>
Local beneficiary	£0.00	£414.94
UK beneficiary	£0.00	£414.94
International beneficiary	£0.00	£414.94
Wiltshire historic churches	£50.00	£50.00
National churches trust	£50.00	£50.00
Swindon Youth for Christ	£120.00	£120.00
Other	£75.00	
<b>Clergy and staff expenses</b>	<b>£1,513.85</b>	<b>£881.85</b>
General	£511.04	£437.68
Travel	£559.19	Not separate
Telephone/internet	£336.80	£296.90
Stationery	£106.82	£147.27
<b>Mission and evangelism costs</b>	<b>£19.95</b>	<b>£168.92</b>
General	£0.00	£150.19
Children	£19.95	£18.73
<b>Church running expenses</b>	<b>£5,026.37</b>	<b>£1,510.07</b>
Maintenance	£3,814.83	£491.51
Churchyard	£1,211.54	£1,018.56
<b>Upkeep for services</b>	<b>£3,228.46</b>	<b>£1,121.66</b>
Candles	£146.81	
Communion	£30.79	
Licences	£132.00	
Stationery, printing, online	£552.69	
Fees	£2,019.00	
General	£347.17	
<b>Insurance</b>	<b>£1,576.64</b>	<b>£1,535.74</b>
<b>PCC admin</b>	<b>£112.91</b>	<b>£1,039.27</b>
<b>Utility bills</b>	<b>£252.52</b>	<b>£1,068.72</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b><u>£25,780.58</u></b>	<b><u>£21,585.88</u></b>
<b>Income</b>	<b>2024 Totals</b>	<b>2023 Totals</b>
<b>Regular giving</b>	<b>£10,547.04</b>	<b>£10,945.34</b>
Tax efficient	£9,157.04	£9,053.04
Not	£1,390.00	£1,892.30
<b>Collections</b>	<b>£7,155.90</b>	<b>£3,441.73</b>
Tax efficient	£6,520.10	£533.88
Not	£635.80	£2,907.85
<b>All other giving including appeals</b>	<b>£1,175.53</b>	<b>£2,869.71</b>
Tax efficient	786.87	
Not	388.66	
<b>Gift aid</b>	<b>£3,478.45</b>	<b>£3,338.71</b>
<b>Legacies</b>	<b>£0.00</b>	<b>£0.00</b>
<b>Grants</b>	<b>£530.00</b>	<b>£0.00</b>
<b>Fundraising</b>	<b>£1,614.13</b>	<b>£1,424.32</b>
<b>Interest</b>	<b>£444.65</b>	<b>£52.82</b>
<b>Fees (weddings etc.)</b>	<b>£5,409.00</b>	<b>£2,567.00</b>
Weddings	£1,122.00	
Funerals	£3,304.00	
Memorials etc.	£512.00	
Banns	£471.00	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b><u>£30,354.70</u></b>	<b><u>£24,639.63</u></b>
<b>Surplus/Deficit</b>	<b><u>£4,574.12</u></b>	<b><u>£3,053.75</u></b>

### Notes

1. Local/UK/international giving is based on 10 percent of giving and collections
2. Upkeep for services now includes fees paid to diocese, vergers and organists, some of which previously in PCC admin
3. Low utility bill in 2024 due to delayed billing - no bill provided for Nov 23-Jul 24
4. From 2024, tax efficient giving includes GASDS
5. Local, national and international beneficiaries will receive £590.10 each (£1770.30 total) - but this will be paid in 2025

**ST ANDREW NORTH SWINDON - Year ended 31 December 2024**

**Balance Sheet**

Date	Current 1	Current 2	Saving 3 Instant Saver	Saving 4 32 Day Saver	Saving 5 95 Day Saver	TOTAL
31/12/2023	£10,786.46	£5,107.79	£17,135.61	£0.00	£0.00	<b>£33,029.86</b>
31/12/2024	£1,746.25	£491.83	£12,307.42	£10,104.63	£10,168.21	<b>£34,818.34</b>

01/01/2024	Opening Balance	£30,914.88
	Receipts	£30,354.70
	Payments	<u>£25,780.58</u>
31/12/2024	Closing Balance	<u><u>£35,489.00</u></u>

**Notes**

A detailed inventory was taken in July 2012 recording all assets according to location and checked 27/3/2024

Chair: *Sally Robertson*  
PCC Member: *Helen Allen*

Date: *2nd March 2025*  
Date: *2/3/25*

Outstanding cheques	Receipts not cleared	TOTAL
£3,064.62	£949.64	<b>£30,914.88</b>
£0.00	£670.66	<b>£35,489.00</b>

**RESTRICTED/DESIGNATED FUNDS**

Old Organ Restricted Organ	Fund 5 Designated Wall	Fund 7 Restricted Fabric
£1,419.23	£5,618.65	£3,417.92
£1,438.60	£5,695.33	CLOSED

**Fund 7 expenditure**

16/08/2024	Window work	£624.71
25/10/2024	Bells	£560.70
11/11/2024	Bells	£615.30
02/12/2024	Scaffolding	£1,344.00
06/12/2024	Handrails	£612.00
		<b>£3,756.71</b>