

ANNUAL REPORTS BOOKLET 2025

Introduction

Our Annual Meetings this year coincide with the launch of the new Holy Trinity Five Year Plan (2026-2030). Following a time of discernment which began at a PCC away day in the summer of 2025, we believe God is calling us to focus on particular priorities over the coming years. The Plan sets these out in more detail under the headings of our six Focus Areas.

There are many aspects of church life not highlighted in the Plan which continue to be important. The purpose of this booklet is to report on the past year, and you will find here details of the many activities of this remarkable parish, all of which contribute in some way to our vision of seeing lives changed through God's love. Of particular importance is our work in Safeguarding, which underpins all that we do as an expression of our Gospel values. The recent survey in the diocese, undertaken by an external auditor, has highlighted how essential this is, and I am grateful to all who took part.

I'm aware that everything described here has only been possible because of the contribution of many, many people, who are offering their gifts and time for the building of God's kingdom. I am often humbled by the remarkable dedication and generosity shown, and would take this opportunity to express my gratitude to everyone involved.

Particular thanks to all those who have written the reports and contributed to this booklet. Also to our PCC Secretary, Anthony Woollard for putting it together, and the office staff for printing and uploading it.

If what you read here prompts you to offer some of your own time or a talent for God's work through one of the churches in this parish, we would love to hear from you!

With my thanks and best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Patrick". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single horizontal stroke.

The Rev'd. Patrick Taylor
Vicar of Holy Trinity Stratford-upon-Avon
with All Saints 'Luddington
and St Helen's Clifford Chambers

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ANNUAL MEETING OF PARISHIONERS, SUNDAY 10th MAY 2026 (11.30am approx.)

AGENDA

1. Vicar's welcome.
2. Apologies for absence.
3. Minutes of 2025
4. Matters arising.
5. Election of churchwardens.
6. Parish charities.

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING, SUNDAY 10 MAY

(The Vicar's annual address will be given as the sermon at the Parish Eucharist).

1. Apologies for absence.
2. Minutes of 2025 APCM.
3. Matters arising.
4. Consideration of:
 - a. Electoral roll
 - b. Proceedings of PCC (see Report and Accounts)
 - c. Accounts and finance.
 - d. Planned Giving and gift aid.
 - e. Appointment of auditors.
 - f. Clerk of Works report
 - g. Deanery Synod report
 - h. Safeguarding
5. Elections to Deanery Synod and PCC.
6. Five year plan 2026-30.
7. Any other business of parochial or general church interest.

MINUTES OF ANNUAL MEETINGS 2025

MINUTES OF THE 2025 ANNUAL MEETING OF PARISHIONERS

The Annual Meeting of Parishioners was held on Sunday 11 May 2025 in the Parish Centre Hall, commencing at 11.30am. The Vicar, the Rev'd Patrick Taylor, took the chair.

1. The Vicar welcomed everyone to the meeting.
2. Approximately 50 people were present.
3. Apologies were received from the Revd Emma Harrington, George Reah, Tina Hillyard, Christine Cottrell, Ron and Faith Piper, Heather Fletcher, Eve Archer, Ursula Russell, Rebecca Mills and Trevor Colam.

4. Minutes of the meeting held on Sunday 12 May 2024 were approved.
5. There were no matters arising from the above minutes.
6. Election of Churchwardens. There were four nominations for four vacancies: Paul Lageu, Mike Warrillow, Andrew Boyes-Varley and Eve Archer, who were duly elected. The Vicar expressed his appreciation to the outgoing Wardens, particularly to Tim Raistrick who was not standing again.
7. Parish Charities. The Treasurer reported on these. His report is printed on page 30 of the Annual Accounts.

MINUTES OF THE 2025 ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

The Annual Parochial Church Meeting was held on Sunday 11 May 2025 in the Parish Centre Hall. Commencing at 11.45am, chaired by the Vicar.

1. Approximately 50 people were present.
2. Apologies were received from the Rev'd Emma Harrington, George Reah, Tina Hillyard, Christine Cottrell, Ron and Faith Piper, Heather Fletcher, Eve Archer, Ursula Russell, Rebecca Mills and Trevor Colam.
3. Minutes of the meeting held on Sunday 12 May 2024 were approved. There were no matters arising.
4. The Vicar's report was delivered as the sermon at the Parish Eucharist and is appended to these minutes.
5. Consideration of:
 - a. Electoral Roll. Time Raistrick reported that the renewal of the Roll had gone very successfully, and that 80% of respondents had answered the supplementary question on age, giving a better picture of the age profiles of the congregations. Total number had predictably fallen from 344 in 2024 to 292, but within this, 63 new members had been added.
 - b. Proceedings of Parochial Church Council. These are contained within the Financial Statements of the PCC as required by the Charity Commission. They were accepted unanimously. The PCC Safeguarding Officer, Helen Warrillow, supplemented this report with thanks to all those who had taken part in safeguarding procedures, which should be seen not as box-ticking exercises but as a contribution towards a cultural change in the direction of a truly safe and inclusive church.
 - c. Accounts and Finance. These were reported by the Treasurer, Mike Warrillow. He graphically illustrated that, whilst both the village churches showed a very small surplus, figures for Holy Trinity showed a £49,000 deficit; however, this

was primarily the result of £130,000 expenditure on capital projects, and there was a £42,000 surplus on day to day expenditure. The latter figure however in turn concealed a loss of some £70,000 on basic church activities, more than compensated for by around £100,000 net income from visitors and the shop. It was expected that the planned giving campaign in February 2025 would prove to reduce the “basic church” deficit by over £22,000, and there had also been already received (with more expected) some grants towards expenditure on the Parish Nurse. Mike referred also to the longer-term challenges of achieving greater cost-effectiveness in the use of the Parish Centre and the future evolution of church heating systems. He then proposed, and Bette Ashley seconded, the approval of the accounts, and this was agreed unanimously.

- d. Planned Giving and gift aid. The Planned Giving Officer, Christopher Kennedy, amplified these data; his report is towards the end of the supplementary volume of annual reports on church activities.
 - e. Appointment of auditors. Mike Warrillow proposed, and Diane Edwards seconded, that Mazars plc be reappointed in this role. This was unanimously agreed.
 - f. Clerk of Works report. This was given by David Neale, the PCC Clerk of Works, and is printed in the supplementary volume of annual reports of church activities.
 - g. Deanery Synod report. This, given by the PCC Secretary Anthony Woollard who is also Deanery Treasurer, is also printed in the supplementary volume.
6. Elections to PCC. The following were elected unanimously to the five outstanding vacancies: Heather Fletcher and Marie MacDougall (re-elections), Liz Roper-Kemp, Federica Leonardis and Jeremy Harrold. Two other people interested in possible membership – Dale Edgington and Danni Bengé – were commended to the PCC for possible co-option.
7. Any other business: a question was raised about the use of the King James Version (rather than a more modern one) in the daily Bible readings in church; it was pointed out in response that this had begun in 2011 as part of a national response to the 400th anniversary of the KJV, and was also seen as particularly appropriate given Holy Trinity’s literary heritage.
8. Conclusion. Patrick thanked all those who had served the church in 2024, with particular reference to Phil Harper’s outstanding ministry, Paul Lageu’s work as HR officer, and the important contribution of the retired clergy. In return, Tim Raistrick and the Revd John Hall-Matthews thanked Patrick for his ministry and

his family for their support. Andrew Boyes-Varley, on behalf of the Wardens, paid special tribute to the work of Pro-Wardens and Stewards and invited others to join their number.

9. The meeting closed with the Grace.

APCM 2025: VICAR'S ADDRESS (preached as sermon at preceding Parish Eucharist)

John 10.22-30

Many years ago, Laura and I had a spring break in a remote cottage on the edge of the Howgill Fells in Cumbria. As we arrived, a Shepherd who'd been working in the neighbouring field came and said hello. He was a lovely young guy, but he'd clearly been working hard helping a ewe to give birth to a lamb. He had blood on his hands and face and he smelt of sheep. Any romanticised idea I had of the job of a shepherd quickly disappeared!

In John's gospel Jesus says, "I am the Good shepherd". In passage today we heard him say, "My sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they follow me." Here [on slide] is a rather over sentimental picture of the Good Shepherd. Notice how Jesus **doesn't seem** connected to the sheep. He's very hands off and not even looking at them! This young shepherd [a second picture] on the other hand is the real thing. He's holding a lamb and there's a real connection. This is a Shepherd who's got his hands dirty caring for his flock, and is, I'm sure, going to smell of the sheep like the Shepherd Laura and I bumped into that time.

How wonderful it is that each of us is known by Jesus who is our Good Shepherd. But that's not the end of it. For each of us are called to be shepherds to others. What does that mean in reality? Like any good shepherd, it means reaching out to those on the edges, especially the weak and vulnerable. It means giving special attention to members of the flock who are not well. Shepherds help their sheep find food and water, and so we need to be offering spiritual nourishment to a generation who are desperate for some hope and a sense of meaning and belonging.

Our Annual Meeting today is an opportunity to look back on last year, 2024, and all that took place in this parish. As we do so, and as we think of Jesus the Good Shepherd, we might perhaps ask ourselves, what sort of flock we have been and how was our shepherding?

There have certainly been a number of comings and goings in the flock. We began 2024 with a group of us going up to Liverpool for the licensing of Steve Jarvis our previous

Associate Vicar to his new parish. Then later in the year we held interviews and (eventually) appointed our new Associate Minister for Outreach and Nurture, Matt Ford. Kay Dyer retired as our Associate Priest in May and she and Roy will soon be moving to Redditch to be closer to family, so this is a good opportunity for me to express our thanks once again for your ministry amongst us, Kay. Emma our curate was ordained priest in July and it's been wonderful to see her ministry continue to flourish. I'd like in particular to acknowledge the way in which Emma stepped up to fill some of the gaps left by Steve's departure. Thanks to Thomas Powell as well who is currently on study leave as he considers the shape of his future ministry.

Amongst our paid staff, we saw the departure of Sarah Cushing as Parish Administrator and the arrival of Michele Nicol Hilton into that role in July. It was also in July that our previous Director of Music, Douglas Keilitz left us, having steered us through the major task of rebuilding our fabulous organ. Our thanks to all those who led the fundraising and supported this project. We were most fortunate to secure the services of Ollie Edwards as our Interim Director of Music. There will be an opportunity to express our gratitude to Ollie when he steps down this coming June; but I do want at this point to say what a fantastic job he has done and what a pleasure it has been to have him on the team. We auditioned for our new Director of Music in November and I'm delighted that Colin Millington will be joining us in just a few weeks time.

We welcomed one other new member of staff to the flock last year, Julie Parry our Parish Nurse. Creating this role was something of a leap of faith and has stretched us financially. But you need look no further than Julie to see a fine example of someone with a Shepherd ministry, caring for the most needy and vulnerable of the flock and beyond. Another important way in which we care for our flock is through our Safeguarding work. So I want to thank our Parish Safeguarding Officer Helen Warrillow for all her work in this area.

We said goodbye last year to a number of dearly beloved members of the flock when their funerals took place here. But these were also wonderful opportunities to give thanks for their faith and celebrate the promise of eternal life into which our Good Shepherd ultimately leads us.

It was particularly encouraging to see two confirmation services take place here in 2024 and also admittance to Holy communion for children. We continue to see our congregation growing and the PCC are having to give serious thought to our seating capacity as a result, which is a wonderful problem to have! Another source of great encouragement has been the

response to our Planned Giving renewal earlier this year. Strictly speaking this doesn't come under our review of last year, but I can't let this opportunity pass without saying a huge thank you to all those of you who responded. We want everyone who worships with us regularly to make a commitment to serious regular giving, preferably by Standing order, so that the costs of running this church can be met. As a result of the campaign, the total of both new pledges and increases in existing giving has come to just over a £30,000 a year increase. This represents a wave of generosity and a real step of faith as we invest in the work of the Gospel in this parish. For this I am most thankful. It means we can plan our future ministry with much more confidence in the resources we have. There is still, however, a deficit in our current budget, even with this increase in giving, and so if you've not yet made a planned giving pledge we still need you to do so. Thank you.

The late Pope Francis once said that, "We must go out of ourselves and...be shepherds, with the odour of the sheep". It can be tempting to want our churches to be rather like that first picture: a place and community where all is lovely and calm and smelling of roses. A fantasy world where there is order and everything is in its proper place. But this is not the church of the Good Shepherd. As that second picture showed us, the church should be a place where we are each looking out for others and being Shepherds to one another. Where we're rolling up our sleeves and reaching out to the most vulnerable and lost in our community, being alongside them, following the example of our Lord the Good Shepherd. It might be a place that's a little more wild and unpredictable and a bit more ragged at the edges than we might like, but as I'm sure you'll agree looking at this picture it's still a place of beauty and wonder.

So, as we look to the future, let's continue to reach out to the people God sends us to the lost and struggling, and all those who are restless and long for something deeper and richer in their lives. One of the things that makes me most happy to be vicar of this church is that we're a flock which welcomes anyone and everyone with open arms. Through our care for others, by being Shepherds ourselves, we bear witness to the fact that all are loved and cared for by the one who is our Good Shepherd and out of whose hands we can never be snatched.

Amen

PARISH REPORTS FOR 2025

DEANERY SYNOD REPORT

As a parish we belong to Fosse Deanery, which stretches from Shottery to the Burton Dassett Hills, and is thus largely rural with just a few centres of population. We currently have four lay members on the Deanery Synod, along with our senior clergy – but elections are due this year which will give us two more lay places! Synod meets three times a year and discusses matters of common interest such as church finance and safeguarding, often with an input from the Diocese.

As reported last year, clergy shortages and other factors continue to delay planned Deanery reorganisation. Bishop Sophie is taking an interest in the problem, and her visit to the Deanery last autumn during her tour of the Diocese was well received, as is her ministry more widely. Meanwhile, our own retired clergy are providing much support for neighbouring parishes.

Our parishes may be dramatically different in size and styles of congregational life, but we have much to learn from each other, and much support to give to each other. We need new nominations for Synod at the APCM this May!

Anthony Woollard

OFFICE AND CHURCH STAFF

At the end of 2025, the PCC employed 2 full-time staff, 4 part-time staff and 15 Visitor Welcome Assistants on casual contracts. Ordained clergy are not included in these numbers as they are not employees of the PCC.

The 15 Visitor Welcome Assistants worked a variable number of shifts in Holy Trinity Church to enable it to open to Visitors. During the summer months the church was open to visitors every day. During the winter months the church generally only opened at week-ends. The number of visitors was insufficient to cover the cost of opening on weekdays.

Following the departure of the Director of Music in August 2024, former Holy Trinity organ scholar and choir member, Oliver Edwardes, was appointed as Interim Director of Music. Our new permanent Director of Music, Colin Millington, started work on 9th June 2025. We are indebted to Oliver for his time as Interim Director of Music, covering the period up until Colin's arrival.

In the latter part of the year, we unsuccessfully advertised for a permanent part-time organist. On 26th January 2026, Simon Taylor commenced a temporary contract as organist, until the end of August 2026, to allow time to recruit a permanent organist.

Julie Parry was appointed to the newly created position of Parish Nurse on 1st October 2024. After a very successful time getting this new initiative up and running, Julie left us on 15th August 2025, having being headhunted by a government agency. We were delighted to be able to recruit a replacement for Julie in the latter part of the year. Our new appointee, Karen, commenced work with us on 3rd March 2026, to coincide with the first available training course organised by Parish Nursing Ministries UK. A person cannot act as a Parish Nurse until they have completed the PNMUK training course.

In mid-October 2024, the PCC directly employed two people to undertake cleaning duties in Holy Trinity Church and the Parish Centre. Following the departure of both of these employees, a husband-and-wife team were contracted, on a 3rd party basis, to undertake the cleaning duties, on a financially neutral basis.

On a personal note, I am indebted to Simone Smith (Diocesan HR Manager) for her advice and support throughout the year.

Paul Lageu, Hon HR Officer

CLERK OF WORKS REPORT

CHURCH

- a) A new boiler flue has been installed this year, involving the adaptation of stonework, and a new cupboard/boxing constructed to house the new position of the exposed flue. Faculty obtained for construction, in oak, with stainless steel roof, and has now been completed.
- b) Following on from last year's report, the crossing chandelier has been motorised, which involved removing the flooring in the ringing chamber.
- c) The parapet gutters have been cleaned out on a number of occasions during the year, involving the hire of a cherry picker to get to the gutters on the North and South Transepts. It was utilised also to get to the lighting in Church which needed repair and replacement and which, due to HSE, is no longer accessible by ladders.
- d) Restraint wires and harnesses are currently being installed to provide safe access when working on the roof of the Church, which will allow us to get safely to the lights on the Tower; which have been defunct for some time.
- e) After some two years of negotiations with Diocese Faculties, Stone Masons who wrongly measured, and Conservation Builders availability - not to mention scaffolders, and requirement for roof alarm systems to be in place prior to work commencing; the North Elevation Parapet stones have been completed. Hooray!
- f) Following further movements in the structure of the Bier House, temporary restraint buttressing had to be installed, and the closing of the adjacent footpath. After application for faculty and Architect and Structural Engineers report, a scaffolding restraint structure has been put in place until funds might be forthcoming for its rebuilding. The footpath is now open.

- g) The Town Council, who have responsibility for maintaining the Churchyard, have indicated that they will be gravelling certain areas of paths, and we have provided them with several quotations for the sandblasting and painting of the main gate. They await current funding.
- h) Your Friday morning team continue to undertake the multifarious maintenance and repair items that constantly arrive for our attention.

PARISH HALL

- a) The heating system, with a few hiccups, seems to be functioning well, after a few visits from Grange Heating — who are now doing all our heating maintenance, including a new heater in the lounge and we are awaiting the replacement of a heater by the Altar in Church.
- b) Racking above the Guides cupboard has been installed for the 'Tree Poppies', which were so appreciated this year.
- c) The new furniture, kindly donated by NFU Mutual, has been installed in the meeting room, and the lounge.
- d) The team continue to erect the Christmas, and Easter, notification boards, and to erect and dismantle the Christmas Trees and light in Church. The trees this year cost £250; any donations next year would be gratefully received.
- e) The main item for Parish Centre is the large flat roof which may have been in place since 1965? It's now past its 'sell by' date and, following many repairs, is still leaking. Quotations are being sought for this work. Unfortunately, it is not one of those items that are glamorous — like the organ, or the new hearing systems — but our Lord approves highly good stewardship, and our appeal to help raise funds for this is imperative before next winter.
- f) The Town Council have done some work in the Garden of Remembrance to remove ivy along our adjoining boundary. We have a number of trees that need the crown lifting and reducing in height, and we hope to undertake this before birds are nesting.

I thank the team; Dr John Rees and Ian Johnson, and for all their work and support over the last year. We are looking for younger team members, retired, who could do Friday mornings 9.00 — 12.00, with a view to taking over from us 'oldies'!

David Neale, Clerk of Works

BELL-RINGERS

The condition of the bells and fittings remains good and we are grateful now to John Taylor Bell Founders of Loughborough who have taken over responsibility for the maintenance. We are grateful to Peter Bridges who stepped down at our AGM in

February from being Deputy Tower Captain and Steeple keeper. We welcomed Vicky McCarthy and Ian Taylor as joint Deputy Ringing Masters and are grateful to Rhod Mitchell and Nick Goodall who will be looking after the maintenance.

The ringing team continues to make progress and the bells are rung each Sunday morning, for weddings and on other occasions by request. The simulator which we installed has continued to be well used, with additional practice sessions arranged on a Saturday morning.

We were saddened that Alan Patterson has stepped down as a ringer, due to finding the steps up and down the tower increasingly challenging, and that his grip of the rope during ringing was not as good as it once was. Alan has been a very loyal ringer over many years and we are very grateful for his contribution he has made in the tower, and the team wish him well for the future. He will be missed!

Finally, I would like express my appreciation to all the ringers for their continued loyalty and support. We are very fortunate to have such a committed local band who ensure that the bells are rung regularly each Sunday. I appreciate very much their friendship and dedication.

Charles Wilson, Tower Captain and Ringing Master

ECO CHURCH

Given that our limited resources at Holy Trinity this past year have been so consumed in basic maintenance, there has been little opportunity to improve our carbon footprint. However, the Eco Church team continues to keep this under review, working with the Diocesan net zero initiative. Work on the Parish Centre, including roof repairs, could give opportunities for more ecologically friendly heating and insulation. Whether there could responsibly be a replacement of our church heating system by something more environmentally friendly remains a very open long-term question, though at least current gas consumption is reduced by our restrictions on winter opening hours. Suggestions for improvement in heat retention and the like are always welcome.

Anthony Woollard

SAFEGUARDING

The Safeguarding Team in 2025 comprised the following people:

- Rev'd Patrick Taylor – Vicar of Stratford-upon-Avon Parish
- Rev'd Matt Ford – Associate Minister for Outreach and Nurture
- Helen Warrillow – Parish Safeguarding Officer
- Liz Roper-Kemp – Safety and Compliance Officer

The Team addressed all Safeguarding Incidents, ensured all relevant data had been confidentially recorded and worked with Team Leaders and volunteers to raise awareness of safeguarding throughout the parish.

Safeguarding Incidents

There were 12 Safeguarding Incident Reports raised during the year, 9 of which were forwarded to the Diocese for their information and advice. The remaining three were handled as pastoral issues as they mainly involved mental health concerns.

Safeguarding Concerns seem to occur at a rate of approximately one per month. Most are brought to the attention of the Safeguarding Team either by the people involved or from vigilant parishioners. In 2025, cases usually involved situations external to the Church. They included several involving coercive relationships and others where people felt safe to raise historical issues, reflecting the aim of the Church of England and the Parish Safeguarding Team to provide an environment in which such issues can be discussed safely and in confidence. Other cases were raised where an uncomfortable occurrence may have been witnessed, reflecting the 'Recognise, Respond, Record and Refer' training from the Safeguarding Awareness Courses to report any incident which might trigger concern.

Where appropriate, the person identified in the report was given support to refer the concern to the relevant authorities or other organisations. Not all incidents were satisfactorily resolved as some people simply disappeared or chose not to pursue the issue. However, in all cases support was offered to the person until they felt comfortable with the situation. Where people continued to be part of the Church community, further pastoral support was made available.

Safeguarding Records

All Safeguarding Records are held electronically and securely within the Parish SharePoint System. Only the Safeguarding Team have access to these files.

Safeguarding Training

The Parish Safeguarding Officer and Safety and Compliance Officer continue to follow up on the training and Disclosure and Barring Service checks (DBS) for both our employees and volunteers. During the year, four in-person training sessions were held for those who found it difficult to access the courses online - these included two for the Basic Level Safeguarding Awareness, one at Foundation Level and one course run in conjunction with the Diocese on Raising Awareness of Domestic Abuse. I am pleased to report that the historical resistance to taking these necessary courses is reducing. Consequently, there are now very few volunteers who have not received the appropriate level of training, and we continue to follow up with these people.

The Parish Safeguarding Dashboard

The Parish Safeguarding Dashboard is software which monitors the progress of the safeguarding training and administration of the PCC and its Foundation Pathway Teams. These are teams which have significant involvement with children, young people and vulnerable adults. The Dashboard is visible to the Diocese. At the beginning of the year, our Parish was only at Level 2 (of 3) in our safeguarding achievements. However, much work has been undertaken during the year to bring the Parish Safeguarding Dashboard up to speed. This involved ensuring all Foundation Pathway Teams had completed their training, role descriptions, person specifications and risk assessments. Additionally, it was necessary to record that the PCC was regularly updated on its requirements to ensure that all activities within the parish, whether a PCC activity or an external hirer, adhere to the commitments within its Safeguarding Policy. The Dashboard is a working document which fluctuates as people and teams come and go. At the end of 2025, however, the Parish had improved to Level 3 on the Dashboard and was reported as 99% complete.

Other Safeguarding Actions in 2025

- A Media Policy incorporating a Photographic Policy was introduced. This aims to establish the safe use of Media, (including Photography, Livestreaming, Websites and Social Media), across all services, events and activities authorised by the PCC
- The Registration and Attendance Procedures for Under-18's introduced for the choir in 2024 has been extended for all Teams involving under-18's. It is also now suitable for use by any Work Experience or Duke of Edinburgh Award students who are supported by the parish.
- The Safeguarding Team has now agreed to meet regularly to review the progress of outstanding Safeguarding Concerns and other related activities. These occur approximately bi-monthly
- In August, there was a data breach at APCS, the DBS provider recommended by the Diocese. Nine of our parishioners were affected and have been supported in mitigating the possible effects of such a breach. Subsequently, the DBS provision was moved to a new provider, Thirtyone:eight.
- In keeping with the requirements to keep choristers safe, in September parents were asked as part of the registration procedure if they would consider becoming Choir Chaperones. Five parents volunteered their services and are undergoing Safer Recruitment to establish this new Team.
- The PCC ratified the use of the newly formed Dashboard Hub, an extension of the Parish Dashboard, which assists parishes in producing Role Descriptions and Person Specifications for each Team.
- It was identified in October that the Safeguarding Policy did not make it clear to external hirers that they must either have their own Safeguarding Policy, approved by the PCC, or undertake to adhere to the Parish Safeguarding Policy. Amendments were undertaken to the Policy to clarify this, which were approved by the PCC in January 2026.

Final Summary

The Safeguarding Team continues to be very active in support of our and the Church of England's aim to change the culture of people's response to safeguarding concerns. My thanks are extended to the whole Team for their invaluable advice and support in this endeavour. It is felt that 'the ship is turning' but the Team is very aware of the continuing amount of work to be done. As parishioners, your ongoing support with these objectives is requested and our thanks are extended to all of you who now engage with the processes so willingly. Together it is hoped we will continue to offer a parish where everyone can come in safety to find God's love.

Helen Warrillow. Parish Safeguarding Officer

OUTREACH AND NURTURE

Home Groups

Homegroups are a network of small groups (9- 12 people) meeting in people's homes on a regular basis, at a variety of times of day. Sometimes weekly or more often fortnightly. They are a way to learn more about growing as a Christian through discussing what the Bible means and how its content applies in our lives today. The format usually involves the group picking a topic that and then working through an accessible study guide (a video or a study book) which asks the group relevant questions aimed at provoking a discussion in a safe environment. Alongside this, the group members support each other pastorally, which is both a valuable and key part of the membership within groups.

Over this last year, we have seen a growth in the number of people joining a group and we would love to encourage more of you to join a group. We now have around 50 members across 5 different groups meeting regularly.

If you would like to know more, or would like to join a group, please contact Tim and Ali Berkley, or Matt.

Being With

Over the past year, three Being With courses have been held having superseded the Soul Space Course. The Being With course consists of ten sessions and has been developed by Revd. Sam Wells of St.Martin's in the Field London. It looks at the presence of God in our lives, with one another and creation and uses our own experiences and the teachings of Jesus to reflect His love. These sessions have been led by a team including Matt Ford, Esther Rambaud, Chelsea Pullen, Christine Ross and Jeremy Harrold.

The course is for those who have faith, those without faith and those who are looking at faith anew. In total there have been fourteen participants and it has been well received.

In addition, we ran a confirmation preparation course, Pilgrims, for those who were unable to join Being With in time. A further five people engaged with this, either in a group setting or through one-to-one preparation.

At our most recent confirmation service, seven candidates from Holy Trinity were presented to Bishop Sophie. We anticipate a similar number at the next confirmation service.

Home Communion

Home Communion is offered to those who are unable to attend church in person, ensuring they remain connected to the worshipping life of the parish. A dedicated team visits individuals regularly, typically on a monthly basis, bringing both the sacrament and pastoral companionship.

This ministry also extends, particularly within local care homes, to others who wish to receive communion. We currently visit residents at Highland House, Harvard Place, Trinity Manor, and Scholars Mews, offering a valued opportunity for worship, reflection, and connection. James Sorel-Cameron now supports this ministry as team leader.

Developing a new Pastoral Visiting Team

In 2025, a new Pastoral Visiting Team was established to make official church visits, as many recipients felt visits from friends did not represent the church. While such teams existed in the past, this is the first team for a few years. Recruitment followed current safeguarding standards under "Safer recruiting" guidelines.

Matt Ford (MF), Graham Hopkins (GH), and David Harrison (DH) were assigned to set up the new team, with David Harrison as leader. A Pastoral Care Response Team was also formed to co-ordinate pastoral care.

We sought people by discernment, rather than open request, and started with a list of c20 people whom we would approach. We then had a longlist of 15 with whom we met. We outlined the role description. From that process 9 people applied for the role and were interviewed. 7 continued to full team membership with one in reserve and another in an advisory capacity. The new team members are required to have DBS and have completed safeguarding training as agreed with our Parish Safeguarding officer. That is in progress with team members now reaching completion.

Our team will meet every term to learn, grow, and reflect as a group. After each visit, brief reports are submitted to the team leader, who maintains a log that is shared with the Pastoral Care Response Team to coordinate pastoral care efforts.

A team commissioning is planned for late spring or early summer (to be confirmed) during a main service, and further details will be shared with the congregation soon.

Pastoral Care Response Team

In 2025, the Pastoral Care Response Team was established to help streamline and better coordinate the church's pastoral care provision. The aim of the team is to ensure that key individuals are appropriately informed about support being offered, to provide

a clear point of reference for those seeking help, and to enable those in need to recognise that the church is formally involved in their care.

The development of the group coincided with a wider strategic review of pastoral care across the church, with these new arrangements forming part of the forthcoming five-year plan. The team participates in the monthly Pastoral Leaders meeting to support effective communication and coordination. Its formation was shaped in part by feedback from our previous Parish Nurse, Julie, who identified the need for a clear pathway of support for individuals once clinical care had concluded but ongoing pastoral input was still required. Following a period of reflection, the group was formally established as the Pastoral Care Response Team, comprising Matt Ford, Graham Hopkins, David Harrison, and our new Parish Nurse, Karen.

Working collaboratively, the team discerns and agrees how best to respond to specific pastoral care needs and works closely with other pastoral care ministries within the life of the church—such as the Pastoral Visiting Team and Home Communion Team—to ensure coordinated and appropriate support.

Confidentiality remains a central priority for the team, and careful consideration is given to the sharing of information to ensure that it is appropriate, respectful, and in line with safeguarding expectations.

Matt Ford, Minister for Outreach

SERVERS AND COMMUNION ASSISTANTS

No report has appeared at the APCM since pre-Covid times. Since then, the number of servers has remained stable, but there has been some change of personnel. During the past two years, five new servers have been recruited and it is particularly pleasing that all are young people, two of them under 18. Unfortunately, the only young woman amongst them has since left, but young males have been very difficult to find in the past and to acquire four is very gratifying and promising for the future.

The duties now include setting up the requirements for services of Holy Communion, and four of the servers, termed 'sacristans', are trained for this and lead the teams on duty.

There are two regular crucifers, with three reserves if needed, and the remainder of the servers act as altar servers and acolytes. It is the intention to have as many as possible able to fulfil different roles. Since the sad death of Kevin Hallworth, I am the only thurifer, but we hope to train others during the course of the year.

Pam Anson has been appointed Deputy Head Server.

All of the servers have recently received training following the ending of the practice of Holy Communion by intinction, and are familiar with the new procedures. They have also completed the required safeguarding courses.

There are now four Communion Assistants who, acting unrobed, help administer the chalice on Sunday mornings and at other services where large numbers are expected.

Everyone is enthusiastic and pleased to be part of such a friendly team, privileged to be serving the Lord at the altar and in the sanctuary at Holy Communion. It is a rewarding calling and we would welcome anyone who is thinking of becoming a Server or Communion Assistant to come and join us.

Chris Cornford, Head Server

AUDIO VISUAL TEAM

The team provide both the words on the screens and sound for the Parish Eucharist. They also livestream the service onto our church YouTube channel, after the service finishes, it is then uploaded to YouTube and Facebook. An important part of the team's role is the livestreaming, although hard to exactly calculate, there are approximately 30-35 people viewing online each week. There are also those who may watch part of a service. It has also provided a useful window to people to know what happens in church, there are people who began by watching online and now join us regularly in the congregation. They also occasionally livestream funerals and weddings, when requested by people.

Most people are aware of the issues with the current system, the unexpected squeaks, or lack of sound and the unpredictability of the hearing loop. Work began in late 2025 to replace the sound system, seeking quotes from suppliers and fundraising for the system.

I'd like to thank the team for all they do, their early starts on Sundays, sometimes the first ones there, and their commitment that even though they aren't trained sound engineers they do their best. We are always looking for new people to join the team, if you're interested, please speak to me.

Phil Harper

LAY CHAPLAINCY

"As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?"(Psalm 42:1-2)

Here the Psalmist succinctly describes the human condition! We have all been created by God to have this hunger and thirst for our creator. The tragedy is that not everybody realises how this need can be fulfilled, or some try to satisfy their inner desire with things that don't satisfy.

Every year the Lay Chaplains of Holy Trinity Church talk to the many visitors that find themselves in our wonderful building. Many will be tracing the history of England's most famous playwright, some just like visiting churches and others will intentionally be coming to our church to meet with God.

These 'pilgrims' may just want to sit in a pew and say a silent prayer, or some may have come to light a candle to say a prayer for a loved one and others may not know why they have come.

But a Lay Chaplain may be just the person to comfort those in need and we are on duty for 5 sessions per week during visitor opening times on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays & Saturdays normally between 11am & 1pm.

At this time we have 6 Lay Chaplains with a new recruit about to join our team. As well as the above duties, we may be asked to participate in Healing Services and will meet together 3 or 4 times a year to share experiences and support each other.

We hope to be able to engage these visitors whether by a welcome smile or greeting and hope to enhance their visitor experience. If we sense that a person has a specific need for prayer we can offer to pray with them or direct them to our prayer card resources. For those who want to find out more about the Christian faith we have other helpful resources such as 'Try Praying', 'Making the Connection' and a new booklet 'Christianity A starter's guide'. These booklets can inform seekers how to find God for themselves. Also, for those who don't have a Bible we have some gospels available.

If this ministry sounds like something that you could be involved in, please pray about it and talk to any of the clergy team or to Keith the Lay Chaplain Co-ordinator. A clean DBS check and enhanced Safeguarding training will be required. Other training needs are a Listening course and a Prayer Ministry Training course.

PRAYER MINISTRY

"And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the believers" (Ephesians 6:18)

For many years in Holy Trinity Church, Prayer Ministry has been offered to members of the congregation during communion at the Sunday morning service. Prayer requests may include family bereavements, accommodation problems, job interviews, physical/mental illnesses and anxieties about medical treatments. Some of the prayers are for the congregation member but many are for friends and family of the supplicant.

Normally we have prayer teams made up of 2 people and most have had a long experience of this ministry. During 2025 we had 6 Prayer Team members and recently Val Payne joined the team and a further new recruit is about to join our team.

During 2025 the new evening service called Presence became a regular monthly feature and included the opportunity for Prayer Ministry. This means extra work for the Prayer Teams and in some months with 5 Sundays plus the Presence service we could use 12 team members. However, some members are happy to do a couple of Sundays per month.

If this ministry sounds like something that you could be involved in, please pray about it and talk to any of the clergy team or to Keith the Prayer Ministry Team Co-ordinator. A clean DBS check and enhanced Safeguarding training will be required. Other training needs are a Listening course and a Prayer Ministry Training course.

Keith Payne

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

A major new initiative, and part of our work with children and families, has been our new Bubble Church Service. Bubble Church is described as a “a Sunday church service especially for babies, toddlers, and young families. It is a puppet-packed, Jesus-centred, coffee-and-food-fuelled, 30 minute kids and families adventure.” I have assembled a team of thirteen people to take on different roles in the services, there is also a planning team of four people including myself. Part of the team joined a national Bubble Church training day at Ascension Balham, who created and support other churches in hosting Bubble Church. We held our first service in the Parish Centre on 5th October 2025. We meet on the first, third and fifth Sunday of the month at 9am, with breakfast served from 8.45am. We have already engaged with a lot of families who had no previous experience of church and are slowly building up a regular congregation of families. We helped launch Bubble Church by the puppets doing the reading at our Blessing of the Bags service and helping with the talk at our Christingle service.

I continue to find ways for children to join in and to feel part of our Parish Eucharist. In the Creative Corner there was a selection of items to help children engage with the parts of the service, which children could either use in that space or collect and take to their pews. Without someone to specifically lead the children in using them, they weren't being used as effectively as they could. I have adapted them into worship bags. There are ones for pre-school age and ones for those at Primary. Inside each bag are a selection of items to use in each part of the service, as well as instructions for how to use them. For those using them they seem to be going well. The next stage is for them to be highlighted more by those leading the service and on the slides. I have also put in place a system so the bags can be checked after being returned.

As part of the Parish Eucharist there continues to be a Breakout Group once a month. The group is held in the clergy vestry during the service with age-appropriate teaching and activities for the children. It's also provided an opportunity for more time with the

children and to build relationships with them. At times things can become a bit tight trying to fit so many children into the vestry.

We continue to offer children the opportunity to receive communion before confirmation and in the summer seven children were admitted to receive communion at a special Parish Eucharist, following a course of preparation.

There continue to be good relationships between us and the local primary schools, with all members of the clergy team taking assemblies and collective worships at them. We also hold a Eucharist at the end of each term for all the children at Holy Trinity School. At the end of the summer term, we had the Leaver's Eucharist, when all the Year 6 children were given a children's version of the Bible. The Bibles were paid for by the donations made to the Bible Gift Fund, a continued thank you to those who've donated. I've also been supporting Holy Trinity School with their Collective Worship planning and looking into new planning schemes. I have also visited to schools to help teach on specific parts of the Christian faith and have had schools visit church to do the same thing.

At the end of the summer term Holy Trinity School had their SIAMS inspection (Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools). The school received a glowing report, and it is testament to all the hard work they have put into both Collective Worship and Christian distinctiveness throughout the school.

As well as tours for schools I have also provided tours for the uniformed groups as part of the work for their badges, welcoming squirrel, beaver and cub groups.

The Forest Church service has been paused for the time being. It was struggling to get a regular congregation. One of the issues was with the timing, being after school people struggled getting through the traffic, at the point we were running it there was an increased amount of road works around town, which didn't help. We tried just running it in the school holidays, but again it struggled because it didn't have the regularity needed for it to become part of people's worship. I'm hoping to relaunch it at some point, perhaps finding a time at weekends that may suit families better.

We continue to run two toddler groups each week, at the Ken Kennet Centre, Justin's Avenue on Tuesday morning and Trinity Tots at the Parish Centre on Thursday afternoon. The numbers fluctuate weekly for both groups, but the overall number we are engaging with is encouraging. At the end of the Christmas term each of the children, at both groups, were given a copy of the Christmas story – the ones at Trinity Tots had theirs given to them by Father Christmas.

These are just the highlights of the work being done across the parish with children and families. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has supported this work,

no matter how large or small your involvement has been you are helping to change children's and families' lives through God's love.

Phil Harper, Children and Families Minister

BEREAVEMENT TEAM

The Bereavement Team has 5 volunteers one of whom is Team Leader. Their purpose is to provide bereavement support to families that have had a funeral, burial of ashes or memorial service conducted by a minister from the parish or who are referred to us.

Pastoral care in the parish has been reorganized for better coordination and to introduce a new visiting team. The Leader participates in the coordinating group and monthly Parish Pastoral Team Leaders meetings. The Bereavement Team is an integral part of the new arrangements.

Many of the families are not directly connected with any of our three churches and our contact is a form of outreach as we offer pastoral support. This is a simple offer of loving care in response to their need. We offer support over the telephone, in a support group that meets monthly and where appropriate can refer to the Visiting Team for visits. Whatever the level of support offered recipients are generally grateful that the Church has remembered them, shown concern for their wellbeing and offered support to them.

We have contacted 38 next of kin following funerals etc. since the last report. We have followed up a further 8 referrals from Parish Office, Parish Nurse, members of the congregation and elsewhere.

The support group meets on the first Wednesday of each month. We have had steady numbers with a healthy mix of newly bereaved and those who have been coming for a while. Those who come find it useful to see how others are coping with their grief, realise that they are not alone in their struggles and can make new friends.

The team supported the All-Souls service in November and the newly established "Quiet Christmas" service in December.

All the members of the team are required to complete the appropriate level of Safeguarding training.

David Harrison, Bereavement Team Leader

davidianharrison@hotmail.com

HOLY TRINITY AT THE KEN KENNETT CENTRE

Every Tuesday morning since 2018 Holy Trinity have been offering tea, coffee, biscuits and homemade cake with a warm welcome at the Ken Kennett Centre from 11am, following on from Stay and Play. Of the people who come about half are members of the Holy Trinity congregation and half people from the local community. Several people

have subsequently joined Trinity Fellowship. We keep the seasons in food, making pancakes on Shrove Tuesday and serving hot cross buns in Holy Week and mince pies at Christmas. We tell the story of Jesus through the year and each session ends with a short time of quiet and prayer.

From last summer we began offering a short service of Holy Communion at 12 noon for anyone wishing to stay and this has proved to be greatly valued with perhaps three quarters of the people present staying for the service as well as one or two people coming especially for it. The main aim of the morning has always been to reach out into this area of the Parish and although inevitably over the years people come and go, numbers keep up well with often 20 or more people coming for coffee, cake and a chat.

Rev Diane Patterson

LENT LUNCHESES

On five Fridays in Lent, between 12 noon and 2pm, everyone was invited to the Parish Centre to enjoy a simple lunch of homemade soup, bread and cheese and a biscuit with tea or coffee. Each of our Homegroup leaders agreed to lead a team who provided and served the lunch, while another team set up and cleared the hall. These lunches proved an excellent opportunity for fellowship, especially for those living on their own, and for outreach into the wider community.

In addition to all these volunteers, we are grateful to our retired clergy who delivered a short "Thought for the Day", providing spiritual "food", much appreciated by all present. There was no charge for the lunch but attendees were invited to make a donation towards the Stratford Foodbank.

The Lent Lunches were first introduced in 2018 at the suggestion of Chris Cottrell. Chris has organised the lunches each year since then (excluding Covid). She has now decided to step back from overseeing the lunches. We would like to express our sincere thanks to Chris for both introducing and organising these lunches, which have now become a fixture in the Holy Trinity calendar.

Paul Lageu

SOUPER FRIDAYS

Another successful season of Souper Fridays has passed, though shorter than usual due to a very early Lent, when Souper Fridays gave way to Lent Lunches.

Following on from the success of Lent Lunches, Souper Fridays was set up as a place for people of all ages and any or no faith to sit down together for hot food and to have the chance for a social meal together at a very low cost. A suggested donation is

requested to cover costs, with any surplus sent to Holy Trinity funds. But there is no compunction for anyone to pay if they cannot afford to do so.

Soup, bread and butter, croutons, pudding and tea or coffee are served to people at the table. At our final event at the end of January, we trialled Tattie Friday, with soup being replaced by baked potatoes with a choice of fillings. Diners enjoyed the change. Watch out for what happens next year!

We have regularly welcomed between 30-40 diners, served by two teams of helpers, the better to ensure that service and tidy up happen seamlessly. Thanks go to everyone who helped on the day and, particularly, to all the people who made the delicious soups and puddings. Also, we could not do without Graham Hopkins and his set-up team who put out tables and set them attractively before the diners arrive.

Cat Berry

TRINITY FELLOWSHIP

Last year was a very special year for Trinity Fellowship as we celebrated our 80th Anniversary, the group being formed in 1945. The name of the group was 'The Church Women's Group' since then we have changed the name a couple of times and we are now Trinity Fellowship. We are no longer just a ladies group but we welcome men to join us, to make us more inclusive. We celebrated our birthday in July with a 1940's party. Food was provided by Marco's and we dressed up in 1940's clothes, the members really entered into the spirit of the celebration, we had bunting and 1940's music. We completed our celebration by attending Communion in the Guild Chapel at the beginning of November.

We had an interesting programme of speakers, put together by Barbara Bartos, these included: Warwickshire Search and Rescue, Guide Dogs for the Blind, The Alzheimer's Society, The Commonwealth War Graves. In October the Vicar gave us a spiritual tour of the church which the members appreciated. Our AGM was in November and we decided to give donations to the following: £150 to Holy Trinity for the Sound System, Warwickshire and Solihull Blood Bikes £100, Stratford Christmas Lights £50, Jonathan Toney for his Men's Welfare charity £100. The Rev'd Matt Ford led our Carol Service in December which completed our year. We also supported the World Day of Prayer in March.

I would like to thank our Committee for helping in the smooth running of the group, they are: Rev Diane Patterson as Secretary, Diane Edwards as Treasurer, Barbara Bartos as Speakers Secretary and Frances Walker as Almoner. Our refreshments group, whom we could not do without, are: Sian Wade, Ruth Davis, Sheila Hennessy, Sandra Davies and Norma Miller.

Our membership has grown over the past year and we look forward to a vibrant group in the year ahead.

Mrs Gina Lodge, Chair

MEN'S BREAKFAST

On Saturday 6th December we held the first Men's Breakfast. It was an opportunity for the men in our congregation, and beyond, to meet up and socialise together. Unlike other "Men's Breakfasts" the focus was not for the breakfast to be provided for the men gathered, but for everyone to work together to cook, eat and wash-up. During the breakfast a short reflection was offered by Rev'd Patrick. There were about 20 men at the breakfast; due to its success, the plan for the new year is to try to hold a breakfast on the 1st Saturday of the month.

Jonathan Toney

FRIENDS OF THE MUSIC

Our purpose

The aim of the Friends of the Music (FoM) is to support, principally through fund-raising, all forms of musical activity at Holy Trinity Church. This encompasses both music in worship and music for external audiences.

The FoM support music in worship by contributing to the provision of relevant staffing, musical instruments and other initiatives as agreed with the committee. Using the resources available to us the FoM also help to increase public access to classical music through the presentation of public concerts and recitals.

The Committee

In 2025 the Committee for the FoM comprised: Caroline Thomas (Chair), Elizabeth Murphy (Secretary), Martin Stanley (Treasurer); Stephen Dodsworth, Heather Fletcher, Liz Johnson, Carolyn Laverty, David Laverty, Tim Raistrick (as elected members); Sam Bridges, John Cohen and Josephine Walker (as co-opted members); and Oliver Edwardes (to June 2025, and Colin Millington (from June 2025) and Rebecca Mills (as Ex-Officio members).

Activities: i) supporting and celebrating music in worship

Music staffing: in 2025 the FoM continued to provide financial support for the role of Assistant Director of Music. We have also funded an Organ Scholarship. Between

January and August, the role was held by Gareth Lewis and from October 2025 by Nicolas McNab both, year 13 students at King Edwards School.

Instruments: the FoM funded the purchase of a KAWAI CA 701 digital piano for the Parish Centre. In addition, we paid for a replacement monitor for use with the organ in the church.

The Shakespeare Anthem: Jack Oades, Master of the Music at St Giles Cathedral, Edinburgh, was commissioned to compose a new work (*The Stratford Jubilate*) for the Shakespeare Service, which took place on 27th April. The Shakespeare Anthem for 2026 will be composed by Colin Millington. In addition, in Autumn 2025 the FoM sponsored a composition competition, open to all Stratford Senior schools and led by Colin Millington. The competition resulted in two Intros. These will be given their first performances at the services on Shakespeare Sunday 2026.

External choral Training: in August, supported by full bursaries from the Friends, four young choristers participated in the Royal School of Church Music's residential Summer School in Bath. The Friends also organised a visit of supporters from Holy Trinity to attend the services at which our choristers were singing.

Activities: ii) Music for External Audiences

Soundbites: in 2025 we held 41 concerts, with an average audience of 87. The net income for the Friends of the Music was £11,256.

In addition to wonderful contributions from many young performers from the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, we have been delighted to welcome students from King Edwards School and several local professional musicians including Clive Letchford, Gillian Parsons and Simon Watterton.

Shakespeare Organ Recital, given on 24th April 2025 by Martin Baker, formerly director of music at Westminster Cathedral. The recital marked both the re-establishing of an organ recital as part of the annual Shakespeare celebrations as well as the formal inauguration of the refurbished organ.

Luceat, Gloriana: on 7th June we were delighted to welcome James Fellowes, a former Organ Scholar at Holy Trinity, with his Oxford-based choir to give a unique choral concert which took the form of a reconstruction of the coronation of Elizabeth I.

Caroline Thomas, Chair, Friends of the Music

TRINITY PLAYERS

The first half of 2025 was extremely busy. Once again, our first performance was Witnesses when we tell the Easter story as part of a service rather than as a play. Pete

Cubitt has taken the role of Peter since our first Easter Play in 2008 and several others have claimed their own 'Witness' for almost as long. Kade McDougall, as a small boy, told of the agony in the Garden, along with his brothers - but for several years the now teenage Mark has been his own witness.

On the Friday before the Shakespeare Birthday Weekend, we held our annual celebration of the Bard's Birthday in Words, Song and Cake. We had such a large audience that unfortunately we ran out of the latter but have vowed there will be more cake next time.

In April we had great fun with a dramatised reading of Alice in Wonderland. A small team of Players gave a lively account of all our favourite characters against a magical backcloth painted by local artist, Ali Glover, much enhanced by Tony Guy's appearing and disappearing Cheshire Cat. I have dramatised Alice's Adventures Through the Looking Glass, which the same team will perform if we can find a space in the Parish Centre Diary.

For our major production we returned for the second time to Federico Garcia Lorca's The House of Bernarda Alba. Among the reasons for this choice was that several young actors who had worked with Trinity Players before were keen to return and here is a Play with superb roles for women as well as an important message about what happens when Piety and Purity are deemed more important than Christian Love.

There was more fun with our Mummers' Play, The Holy Trinity Play of St George which we offered for entertainment at the Community Fete. Energetic sword-play between Matt Ford as St George and actor Mark Spriggs as the Black Knight kept the audience on their toes, but all the slain were restored to life and we did our best to restore the cross of St George to the Saint.

The Players continue to meet regularly to read a Play or share readings we love thus ensuring all Players stay involved even if not acting any longer.

The only contra-indication in another successful year is that our huge stage wardrobe is housed under the Parish Centre stage, the steps to which are about to become inaccessible to the three octogenarians in the wardrobe team. Unless we can find alternative storage, this precious collection will need to be broken up.

Ursula Russell

TRINITY TIMES

The Trinity Times committee endeavours to reflect fully on all aspects of life within our parish. Each month (with two double-month issues) we consider what has happened in our three churches and we give information on events that are upcoming. Our aim is to

record parish life by including thought-provoking articles of interest, staff appointments, new arrivals in the parish and the work of our many volunteers. Changes to the church building are also featured, such as the alterations in the Beckett Chapel.

Our helpful and voluntary photographers catch the atmosphere of each event, so the photographs may be of children singing, of parishioners pancake-tossing, of floral arrangements or churchyard work. Of course, Christmas, Easter and Harvest Festival feature highly with pictures of crowds attending the popular walk-through carol service, children searching for hidden Easter eggs, the Shakespeare Sunday parade - just to name a few!

The magazine is produced by a small committee, edited monthly by one of our ministers, with Phil Harper's invaluable help as assistant editor. Last year Claire Clack resigned as Design Editor, due to personal circumstances. We would like to offer our grateful thanks to Claire for all her hard work. Following on from Claire's resignation, we were extremely fortunate to secure the voluntary services of Rev'd David Guest who lives in Glasgow and is a minister in the Scottish Episcopal Church with a working background in communications. David has taken on the role of Design Editor (joining our committee meetings by Zoom) and Trinity Times is benefitting from his computer expertise as well as his creative abilities.

Paper copies of the magazine are printed in the Parish Office and distributed through a combination of hand, home or postal delivery. The current subscription cost is £10 a year. Individual copies can be bought from the church shop at the price of £1.50 per issue. Electronic copies of the magazine are available, free of charge, through the church website.

Contributions are warmly welcomed from parishioners in all three churches and the deadline date for any articles for the following month's issue is printed in the current magazine. Articles can be submitted by email to trinitytimes@stratford-upon-avon.org. We look forward to hearing from you.

Judith Dorricott

WELCOME TEAM

The Welcome Team has been through a period of transition over the last year. Towards the end of the year, we managed to recruit a number of new members and held our first meeting in November when we organised a Rota for the start of the New year for the morning service. We now have a very new Team and are evolving and developing. We look forward to seeing the Team progress with a number of ideas and plans for our work. We currently have no leader, but the Team is being overseen by the Revd Matt Ford, and Team members contribute to the working of the Team in a number of ways.

The aim of the Team is to welcome parishioners as they arrive for the service, looking out especially for new members of the congregation, and to assist in helping everyone find a seat. We have a Welcome Screen at the back of the church and a Welcome desk below. We ask those interested in joining the congregation, to come and meet us at the end of the service so we can help introduce them to church life. We are also a focus for trying to signpost parishioners who want to know more about church life or need further information.

We have held a Welcome mingle after the service for several years and our plan is to hold these about three times a year. The mingle in January was very busy but we hope that the work that we do helps to contribute to fulfilling God's work.

Rev'd Matt Ford and Siân Wade

FLOWER TEAM

At Holy Trinity Church, we are lucky to have a group of about twelve dedicated ladies who enhance our enjoyment of the services with floral arrangements every week.

We work in four groups so that each team organizes the flowers every fourth week, although of course we have no flowers during the weeks of Lent and simply greenery during Advent. Our normal practice is to meet on a Friday morning to refresh and change the flowers and, within the budget provided by the church, we aim to provide a variety of arrangements, such as a large vase near the north door to welcome both congregants and visitors and a pedestal by the choir stalls. Shakespeare is not forgotten and there is always a posy (often including rosemary for remembrance) by his grave.

Christmas, Easter and Harvest Festival are "all hands to the pump" affairs when we aim to make the church as beautiful as possible. Christmas decorations now include stations with wooden mannequins to display the Christmas story as well as candles and even a photo booth! At Easter we give our parishioners the opportunity to donate towards Easter lilies in memory of loved family members and Harvest Festival includes a riot of colourful vegetables.

Weddings at Holy Trinity Church are extremely popular and while we usually provide the same number of arrangements, we work with the bridal groups in choosing colours, and in advising on extra arrangements such as pew ends and even arches.

Some of our members are experienced flower arrangers, while others are new to the group, but all of us find a great warmth, support and camaraderie in working together to make our church even more beautiful.

We are always delighted to welcome new members to the team, whether experienced or novice and anyone interested should contact me on judithdorricott@btinternet.com

Judith Dorricott

HOLY TRINITY CHURCHYARD MAINTENANCE VOLUNTEERS

We are a team of volunteers who meet regularly to keep the churchyard tidy. Our aim is to make the churchyard a pleasant place for everyone who walks through or comes to visit the church. Being there also provides opportunities to talk with visitors and to represent the church community.

Members of the team during 2025 were: Liz Johnson, Marion Mitchell, Bridget Sorel-Cameron, Valerie Thompson, Hester Hawkes, Sue Leitch, Melissa McLean and Lindsay MacDonald. We welcomed Phil Coldicott who joined in the summer. We had a two-hour session on alternate Monday afternoons, with a total of 20 sessions between February and November. The total time contributed over the year was 214 person-hours, with an average attendance of 5.4 volunteers per session. The team continues to be notable for its great spirit of cooperation and camaraderie, and for its “can do” approach. The award for best attendance was shared by Liz and Valerie, both of whom were present for 18 sessions.

In addition to removing things we decide should not be growing there, which we loosely describe as “weeds”, we add things tastefully to embellish the scene. Notable this year have been the forget-me-nots (*Myosotis sylvatica*) scattered by Liz at the base of the church walls, and the Mexican flea bane (*Erigeron karvinskianus*) around the perimeter of the mound near the south door of the chancel, brought by Sue. Both of these were in bloom for the Shakespeare birthday procession.

The team’s work during the year included all the routine jobs:

- Kept the main avenue and western avenue and pathways free of litter;
- Removed grass and weeds along the edges of paths and around church building;
- Picked up twigs and small branches that fall continually from the lime trees;
- Cleared leaves and debris from drain covers below the down pipes;
- Removed weeds from base of wall on Mill Lane and Trinity Lane (outside on road);
- Cut suckers from the lime trees up to a height of about four metres;
- Maintained the shrubs in the bed alongside the southern path;
- Maintained the enclosed garden behind the Parish Centre.

The experience of volunteering is always positive and we work very well together as a team. We collaborate with the ground staff from the Town Council, who mow the grass, take away our piles of twigs and branches, clear the leaves in autumn, and maintain the

gravel paths. The appearance of the churchyard is maintained at a high standard, and we receive many compliments from both visitors and members of the congregation. We welcome anyone who would like to join us, even occasionally, to assist with this satisfying activity in such a glorious situation.

Lindsay MacDonald

FAITH AND FILM GROUP

We have become established this past year, around the mission statement that artistic imagination, enjoyably packaged and made available as **Film**, renews our perception and understanding of **Faith**.

So, for instance: *Brighton Rock*, which is a gangland thriller and *film noir*, opens up to real understanding a mysterious idea (coming to us from our HT Lent course): namely, that ‘the sinner seeks the good’ – perversely so, but he does! Or again: our other Lenten film ‘Living’, though it doesn’t in the least *talk theology*, actually gives us a vivid and lively idea of what *resurrection life* might look like; and even puts within our imaginative reach the gospel notion of ‘*new creation*’. Before that, we viewed *Of Men and Gods*, portraying memorably the encounter in Algeria of a Christian faith-community with religious fanaticism and violence.

We have, in the past year, gathered a mailing list of some 35 attendees and hope to see a dozen or so of them at each session (that is the best number for lively and uninhibited discussion).

The enterprise has become inter-denominational, drawing folks from St Gregory’s and United Reformed Churches. Our technique of showing films in the Church Lounge has developed considerably: we have, for instance, added excellent cinema sound; and, more recently, interval refreshments. The discussion sessions get better and better as folks come to see the point of Faith and Film. We also have interactions with the Novel Theology Group; sometimes comparing films and novels of the same title.

The idea is to make authentic faith-understanding really enjoyable. Watch out for our [new Summer programme operating in June, August and September](#).

Founding Members:

Paul Gifford, James Sorel-Cameron, Leslie Albiston, Andrew Boyes-Varley and Anthony Woollard.

NOVEL THEOLOGY

Our small group, now over 20 years old, has continued to meet to discuss all sorts of literature (not just novels) in the light of our faith: from classic literature (Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* for example), via Richard Coles' church-based detective novels, to "spiritual autobiographies" such as Lamorna Ash's *Don't forget we're here forever* – and much else. Around the turn of the year, we started attracting some new members, partly through the Faith and Film link. There is room for more, and new or younger members of the congregation would be especially welcome. We meet at 1 Chestnut Walk at 8pm, normally on the first Thursday of the month, though this sometimes has to vary; for information updates contact me on (01789) 204923, or via email on:

agbw44@gmail.com

Anthony Woollard

PLANNED GIVING, GIFT AID AND SPECIAL DONATIONS IN HOLY TRINITY IN 2025

Members of the Planned Giving Scheme make regular donations to Holy Trinity either through a standing order arranged through their bank or by using personalised envelopes that are specially made for the church. The Scheme is of considerable value to the church as the certainty of regular donations assists it in planning for the future, in terms both of its ministry and the upkeep of its buildings. Planned Giving is one of Holy Trinity's main sources of income.

In 2025, following a campaign to increase membership, both the number of donors and the total donated increased considerably. Seven people left the Scheme over the course of the year, but 32 joined, so that at the end of 2025 membership stood at 188. Of these, 162 (86%) donated by standing order, while the remaining 26 used personalised envelopes or the white Gift Aid envelopes that are found in the pews.

The total donated to Holy Trinity through the Scheme in 2025 was £143,977, which represents a very significant increase of 23% on last year's total. It's also important to draw attention to the fact that the average weekly donation increased last year to £14.73, reflecting the generous commitment to Holy Trinity made by regular donors.

Most members of the Scheme also complete a Gift Aid declaration, which means that the church can reclaim tax on their donations at no cost to the donor; thus, for every £1 donated, the church receives an additional 25p from the government. The Planned Giving total in 2025 was boosted by a Gift Aid reclaim of £32,713 to give an overall total of £176,690.

Planned Giving Scheme donations since 2024

Year	2024	2025
Holy Trinity Planned Giving (including non-Gift Aid)	£117,478	£143,977
Members at year end	163	188
Average weekly donation	£13.86	£14.73
Tax reclaimed via Gift Aid	£27,355	£32,713
Total	£144,833	£176,690

The church also gathers donations for specific causes. In 2025, £645 was donated through the Christmas card amnesty, which, along with a Gift Aid reclaim of £146, was included in the total distributed to Holy Trinity's Christmas charities. In addition, the church received donations for its own special causes totalling £19,485, which realised another £4,420 in Gift Aid. This comprised £17,171 to the fund for the new sound system, £936 for new votive and other candle stands, £678 for a chasuble and £700 for the Food Bank. A newly instituted Bell Ringing Fund received regular monthly donations totalling £125 last year plus £31 Gift Aid. The Gift Aid scheme is also used by visitors to the church who donate using the white donation envelopes; in 2025 this came to £1,995, which added £498 in Gift Aid.

Finally, under the Gift Aid Small Donations Scheme the church can reclaim tax on offertory donations up to a total of £8,000, and we were able to claim the maximum of £2,000 from this source.

Each year, Holy Trinity contributes an amount of money known as the 'Parish Share' to the diocese, and for some time this figure has been taken as a yardstick for the Planned Giving Scheme. Although the Scheme's total exceeded the Parish Share in 2025, the Share will rise in 2026, and it is to be hoped that Planned Giving donations will increase alongside it so that we can continue to keep pace with the church's obligations.

The church is always pleased to welcome new members to the Planned Giving Scheme, especially those who are on Holy Trinity's electoral roll but do not currently participate. Any donation, large or small, is greatly valued, and giving through the Gift Aid scheme – which is open to all UK taxpayers – is a simple way of boosting Holy Trinity's revenue, as well as enlarging the charitable donations that the church itself makes on special occasions. Although tax cannot be reclaimed on their donations, many non-taxpayers also participate in the Planned Giving Scheme and their membership is no less valued.

Please consider joining the scheme if you are not yet a member. If you would like details of how to join, please contact me through the parish office or direct on 01789 299785.

Chris Kennedy, Planned Giving Officer

ALL SAINTS' CHURCH, LUDDINGTON

A quiet year at All Saints'. We have a slightly reduced congregation and, as with most churches these days, could do with more support keeping the church going, both socially and structurally. However, we seem to be fairly well funded although there are various expenses on the horizon. We are also very lucky with our Flower Team, now led by Rosalind Winter, and enjoy some lovely arrangements at services and the festivals.

We very much appreciate the help by volunteers in the churchyard which has meant it has looked lovely all year and a great asset to the village. The gate is in need of renovation and there are plans to replace the fence missing from the end of the drive.

In 2026, we will have the third bell restored to use. Thank you to Eileen Geldard for all her bell ringing through the year. There is also work to be done to keep rainwater out of the church and some replastering.

We have celebrated a wedding, enjoyed a community focused pancake party, and Easter Egg hunt/crafts. We have also held charity fundraising events during the year and are grateful to members of the congregation and the wide community for both the help received and to those who have joined us on these occasions.

Our Carers Café coincided with similar meetings in town so was changed into a Make It Café making bird boxes for the Folly Fields village orchard, yarn bombing the trees on the green at Remembrance and making Christmas decorations for events. It is currently involved in a River Project collaboration with Stans café and the RSC. All our events are advertised in the Luddington Newsletter and we would warmly welcome anyone who wanted to join us.

As always we are very grateful to have weekly services and for the visits of the retired clergy who help to make sure they can happen.

We also enjoy the visits of the choir from Holy Trinity for Harvest and Carol Service and welcome anyone who would like to join us for any of our services.

Jane Beeley

ST HELEN'S CHURCH, CLIFFORD CHAMBERS

We continued to have services on the first and third Sundays each month (with extra feast day services when these fell outside our normal pattern). The overall average attendance numbers have again improved. In 2022 we had an average of 11 people attending and this has now risen to 22 in 2025. We do however still have concerns that we have no young people or families among our regular congregation

At Christmas the Carol and Christingle services were particularly well attended with full capacity congregations.

During the summer the Clifford Chambers 'Crafters' dusted off their knitting needles and made poppies to put in church for the Remembrance Service. It was a wonderful display which we hope to add to next year.

Our main 'maintenance' project in 2025 was the refurbishment of the five heaviest bells. After managing to raise the necessary funds through events and grant payments, the bells were taken down from the tower in January and transported to Taylors foundry in Loughborough. Six months later they were returned and after three weeks of hard work they were deemed ready to ring.

During the Christmas season two temporary floodlights were erected in the churchyard to illuminate the church tower.

Financially, although the fabric fund is reasonably healthy our day-to-day account once again showed a small deficit at the end of 2025 despite a small increase in Standing Order commitments.

The St Helen's team continue to be grateful for the support of Patrick and his clergy.

Pat Woolvin

HOLY TRINITY CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

The school continues to thrive and is now oversubscribed.

Our clergy team took regular Collective Worship at the school in 2025 and each a term there was a School Eucharist. The Foundation Governors (elected by the PCC) are Laura Taylor and Jane Coles, in addition to the Vicar who is ex-officio on the Governing body.

A SIAMs Inspection ('Statutory Inspection for Anglican and Methodist Schools') took place in June 2025. The subsequent report is full of praise for the school, celebrating the 'passionate' inclusivity, 'powerful sense of belonging' and aspirational curriculum. It found that 'behaviour is exemplary' and 'respectful and trusting relationships are at the heart of the school'. It went on to report that the school motto of 'Rooted in Faith we Reach for the Stars' inspires a curriculum which celebrates the school's locality and acknowledges its place in the town's rich historical roots: 'learning, therefore, extends beyond the classroom and drives pupils to explore and expand their horizons.' Well done to Mrs Hererro (Headteacher) and all the staff for their hard work to achieve such a fabulous outcome!

FRIENDS OF SHAKESPEARE'S CHURCH (FOSC)

OBJECTIVE

'The Friends' is established to advance the Christian religion by the restoration, preservation, repair, maintenance, improvement and beautification of the Collegiate Church of the Holy Trinity, Old Town, Stratford-upon-Avon in the Diocese of Coventry and of the monuments, fittings, fixtures, stained glass, furniture, ornaments and chattels in the Church and Churchyard belonging to the Church.

Diana Owen OBE stepped down as acting Chair in May 2025 and Gillian Cawley (Vice Chair) agreed to take on the role in an acting capacity for the coming year. Our AGM was held in September 2025 and the following appointments were confirmed:

Rev'd Patrick Taylor, President, Gillian Cawley, Acting Chair, Mike Warrillow, Acting Treasurer, and Cait Fannin Peel, Clerk & Secretary. Richard Hyde's appointment to the Board as trustee was also confirmed.

During 2025, the Trustee Board met four times in addition to the AGM and additional trustee meetings were held to review and plan events and administration. In addition, the Board spent time reviewing its needs and requirements for a Chair of Trustees as it continues to seek a permanent appointment to the role.

As well as funding the annual grant of £10,000 for the on-going annual conservation and maintenance of the fabric of the Church itself, the Friends acquired an authorised replica of Shakespeare's Will from the National Archives to enhance the visitors' exhibition in St Peter's Chapel. In addition, the Friends supported the refurbishment of the Becket Chapel which included the cleaning of the sedilia and the commissioning of two new benches for private prayer. Work will be completed in 2026 when there will be a service to rededicate the chapel.

Friends' events in 2025 included a joyful celebration of Shakespeare's Birthday in the Chancel at which the quill, which stands throughout the year on Shakespeare's bust, was successfully auctioned off. In July, at St John the Baptist, Aston Cantlow, (where it is reputed that Shakespeare's parents were married) we continued a newly established tradition of Midsummer Evensong in a service led by Revd. Dr Paul Edmondson.

In August, our guest preacher at the Evensong to Commemorate the life of Anne Shakespeare was Professor Marta Cerezo Moreno, UNED (National University of Distance Education), Spain. We were also delighted to welcome the visiting choir from St Wulfram's Church, Grantham, to lead our singing at the service.

In October, our 4th Friends' Annual Lecture was given by Dame Joan Bakewell whose talk was entitled "Was Shakespeare a Tory?" and who answered questions from her entertained audience about her long career in the arts and media.

Gillian Cawley, Acting chair

MUNICIPAL CHARITIES OF STRATFORD-UPON-AVON

Over the last year we have maintained a high percentage of occupation in the 46 Almshouse properties. We have a waiting list for new residents, so the need for Almshouses continues to be a subject for future development by the Trustees. We continue to give financial support to local charities and individuals in need within the Stratford upon Avon area.

Our Warm Hub is open for morning coffee and biscuits at Office One, 11 Guild Street, Stratford-upon-Avon every Tuesday morning from 11am.

Outings have been planned for 2026 for our residents and families to the Black Country Museum on 29th May, followed by our popular trip in the summer to Weston Super Mare.

Trustees and Staff continue to aim for the highest standards in our 5 almshouse properties, with continued refurbishment of bathrooms and kitchens scheduled for this coming financial year.

Mark W Sayers, Trustee