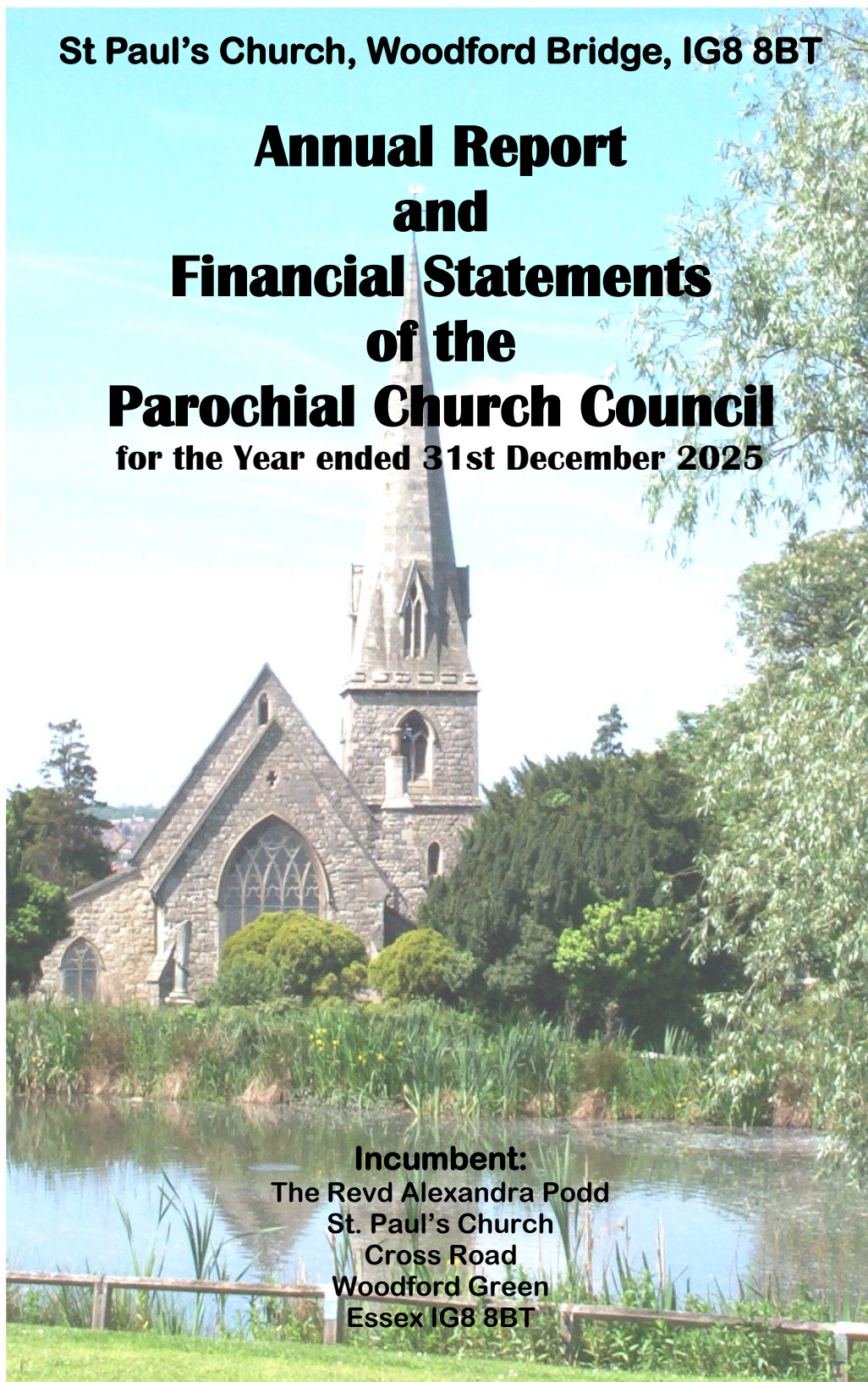


St Paul's Church, Woodford Bridge, IG8 8BT

**Annual Report
and
Financial Statements
of the
Parochial Church Council
for the Year ended 31st December 2025**



Incumbent:
The Revd Alexandra Podd
St. Paul's Church
Cross Road
Woodford Green
Essex IG8 8BT

Bank:
Barclays Bank plc
Barclays,
Leicester,
LE87 2BB

**Charity reference
number 1128474**

Independent Examiner:
Mr Michael Green
41 Buckwoods Road
Braintree
Essex CM7 1DY

ST PAUL'S CHURCH, WOODFORD BRIDGE

**Annual Meeting of Parishioners and Annual Parochial Church Meeting 2026
Sunday 10th May in Church after Parish Communion Service**

AGENDA

1. Opening prayers

MEETING OF PARISHIONERS

2. To elect two Churchwardens

3. Apologies for absence

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

4. Draft Minutes of APCM held on 27 April 2025 (attached)

To note

5 (a) Presentation of the Electoral Roll

(b) To appoint 3 PCC members for 3 years, resulting from:
the retirement after 3 years service of Jill Leonard; the retirement after fulfilling 2 years of an un-
filled vacancy of Douglas Fulcher and the retirement after fulfilling 1 year of an unfilled vacancy of
Sue Malam.

(c) To appoint 2 Deanery Synod representatives

6. Finance:

(a) Treasurer's Report

(b) To receive the audited Accounts

(c) To agree that the PCC will decide who to appoint to audit the 2026 Accounts

7. To receive:

(a) Minister's Report

(b) Churchwarden's Report [attached]

(c) Deanery Synod Report [attached]

8. Any other business

9. Date of next APCM- TBC

10. Closing prayers

St Paul's Church, Woodford Bridge
Draft Minutes of APCM held on 27 April 2025

Present:

Cliffe and Sheena Adams, Antonia Armedo, Nathan, Aimee, Sophia and Oliver Ayres, Pauline Bolding, Yvonne Cartwright, Hazel Dawson, Christine Franklin, Shaun Frost, Dallas Fulcher, Douglas Fulcher, Allan Graveson, Renata Groves, Gill Haslam, Peter Hodges, Valerie Hodges Vera Hunt, Mac Leonard, The Revd. Esther McCafferty, Paul Malam, Sue Malam, Hermina Monk, The Revd. Ian Monks, Alex Pearce, The Rev Alexandra Podd (Chair), Eve Sarginson, Len Stevens, Clive and Avril Tate, George Varughese, Pam Varughese, John Wooden (Minutes) Yeliz Yadsan

Apologies Alan and Sue Clark, Janice Croke, Maria Lascelles, Jill Leonard, Peter McCafferty, Mary Wooden

Meeting of Parishioners

1. Election of Two Churchwardens

Two nomination papers had been received for churchwarden. One for Paul Malam (proposed by Shaun Frost and seconded by Len Stevens) and one for Nathaniel Ayres (proposed by Len Stevens and seconded by Alan Clark). There being no other nominations, the Chair declared that all the nominees were elected.

Annual Parochial Church Meeting

2. Draft Minutes of previous APCM held on 28 April 2024

The draft minutes of the previous APCM held on 28 April 2024 were duly noted.

3.(a) Electoral Roll

There are currently 55 people on the electoral roll. This was an expected reduction from 93 the previous year following the creation of a completely new Electoral Roll this year. The Chair thanked Sue and Paul Malam for their work in maintaining the Electoral Roll.

(b) PCC - appointment of new members

(i) To appoint 3 PCC members for 3 years:

Yeliz Yadsan – proposed by Paul Malam and seconded by John Wooden

Renata Groves – proposed by Hazel Dawson and seconded by Pauline Bolding

Aimée Ayres- proposed by Len Stevens and seconded by Alan Clark

(ii) To appoint 1 PCC member for 1 year following the resignation of Joanna Urbanek one year before the end of her term:

Sue Malam– proposed by Aimée Ayres and seconded by Nathaniel Ayres

There being no other nominations, the Chair declared that all the nominees were elected.

4. Finance

(a) Treasurer's Report

Len Stevens presented the accounts for 2024 and thanked everyone for their financial support to the work of St Paul's. The focus in recent years had been installing the toilet in the church but now that had been completed, the past year had returned to one of just regular maintenance. The APCM thanked Len Stevens for all his faithful service as Treasurer.

The audited accounts were received.

(c) To agree that the PCC will decide who to appoint to audit the 2025 Accounts

It was agreed that the PCC would decide who to appoint to audit the accounts.

5. Other Reports

To receive

(a) Ministers' Report

The report of The Rev Alexandra Podd had been circulated prior to the meeting and at the meeting itself she thanked everyone at St Paul's for the wonderful welcome and support she had received since becoming the Vicar at St Paul's last September. She said that St Paul's had a special culture.

(b) Churchwarden's Report

The report of Paul Malam and Len Stevens had been circulated prior to the meeting and was taken as read. The Chair thanked the churchwardens for all their hard work particularly during a period of interregnum and to Len Stevens who was standing down after many years as Church warden and who had been particularly helpful to the Chair in the run up to and following her becoming Vicar at St Paul's.

(c) Deanery Synod Report

The report of Mac Leonard had been circulated prior to the meeting and was taken as read.

Date of next APCM To be decided.

TREASURER'S REPORT 2025

2025 closed with a balance of £40,566, which is £14,796 lower than the 2024 figure due to the installation of a new bathroom and kitchen in the schoolhouse during the year at a cost of £31,000 ahead of letting to new tenants, plus the loss of four months rent whilst the property was empty. £15,000 of this cost was received by gift or legacy, reducing the impact on the parish budget reserves. Parish Share was £49,000, a reduction on £55,000 in 2024 and £68,000 in 2023 due to Rev Alexandra Podd being appointed to a 0.5 full time equivalent (fte) post. Balances continue to be healthy, and questions will be answered during the Annual Meeting. **Len Stevens**, Treasurer

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF ST PAUL'S, WOODFORD BRIDGE, IG8 8BT STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2025

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Endowment Funds £
Incoming resources				
<i>Voluntary income</i>	2a	76,210		
<i>Activities for generating funds</i>	2b	9,736		
<i>Income from investments</i>	2c	309		
<i>Church activities</i>	2d	37,840		
<i>Other incoming resources</i>	2e	11,618		
Playgroup	10			
		<u>135,713</u>		
Total incoming resources				
Resources expended				
<i>Costs of generating voluntary income</i>	3a	0		
<i>Fund-raising trading costs</i>	3b	0		
<i>Church activities</i>	3c	20,587		
<i>Ministry Costs</i>	3d	130,918		
		<u>151,505</u>		
Total resources expended				
Net incoming/(outgoing) resources				
gains/losses, inc. Playgroup				
<i>Gains/(losses) on revaluation of fixed assets</i>		-15,792		
<i>Gains/(losses) on investment assets</i>	5			
Net movement in funds	6			
Total funds brought forward at 1 January 2025		40,566		
Total funds carried forward at 31 December 2022		<u>40,566</u>		

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF ST PAUL'S, WOODFORD BRIDGE, IG8 8BT
CHARITY COMMISSION REGISTRATION NUMBER: 1128474
BALANCE SHEET AT 31 DECEMBER 2025

	Notes	2025	<u>2024</u>
		£	£
Fixed assets			
Tangible fixed assets	5	1,540,000	1,154,000
Investments	6	0	
Total fixed assets		<u>1,540,000</u>	<u>1,154,000</u>
Current assets			
Stock			
Debtors	8	0	0
Cash at bank and in hand			
		Covenant account - .	1824
		376	
Total assets less current liabilities			
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	9	0	0
Creditors: amounts falling due after one year	9	0	0
		<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Net current fluid assets		40,566	55,362
NET ASSETS			
Unrestricted Funds, including cash in safe (£900)	7	41,456	55,692
Endowment funds		0	0
Restricted funds		10	10
Covenant account - as above.		376	1993
<u>TOTAL HELD AT BANK:</u>		40,566	55,362

Approved by the Parochial Church Council on and signed on its behalf
 Revd Alexandra Podd, Chair.

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PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF ST PAUL'S, WOODFORD BRIDGE, IG8 8BT

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (continued) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2025

2 Incoming resources	TOTAL		FUNDS	2024
	2025	Restricted	Endowment	
	Unrestricted	Funds	Funds	
	Funds	Funds	Funds	
	£	£	£	£
a				
<i>Voluntary income</i>				
Planned giving	32,680			40,124
Collections at all services	5,096			7,577
Donations and appeals, incl. charities	10,537			15,800
Income tax recoverable	9,889			12,709
Grants	0			0
Legacies	0			0
	<u>58,202</u>			<u>76,210</u>
b				
<i>Activities for generating funds</i>				
Fetes, bazaars and other fund-raising events	9,730			9,736
Bookstall sales and magazine adverts	0			0
	<u>9,730</u>			<u>9,736</u>
c				
<i>Investment income</i>				
Dividends and interest	<u>50</u>			309
	50			<u>309</u>
d				
<i>Income from Church Activities</i>				
Church hall lettings etc	32,615			31,985
Occasional Offices-weddings, funerals,etc	4,280			5,855
Textile group / Seniors club	0			0
	<u>36,895</u>			<u>37,840</u>
e				
<i>Other incoming resources</i>				
Party deposits received	0			0
Insurance claims	0			
Rent - School House	19,200			11,618
	<u>19,200</u>			<u>11,618</u>
Total incoming resources	<u>124,077</u>			<u>135,713</u>

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF ST PAUL'S, WOODFORD BRIDGE, IG8 8BT
 NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (continued) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2025

3 Resources expended	2025	TOTAL	FUNDS	2024
	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Endowment Funds £	£
a <i>Costs of generating voluntary income</i>				
Stewardship costs				
Covenant account				
b <i>Fund-raising trading costs</i>				
Fete costs				
Bookstall	nil			<u>0</u>
c <i>Church Activities</i>				
Missionary and charitable giving:				
Overseas:				
Kenyan Street Children, Utugi Centre	8,000			4,000
Home: including 13 PCC nominated charities	9,387			9,795
Senior's Social Club	0			0
Other:	0			0
Trussell Trust - Redbridge Food Bank	3,200			3,313
	<u>20,587</u>			<u>17,108</u>
Ministry costs:				
Diocesan Parish Contribution	48,282			55,214
other clergy costs	1,965			365
Church running expenses	21,161			11,948
House maintenance / insurance	34,952			12,269
Upkeep of services	0			0
Upkeep of churchyard	0			0
Parish magazine	0			0
Sunday Club / youth work costs	0			0
Church hall running costs	22,688			13,019
Bank charges / depreciation	525			440
Vicarage - utilities and decoration	580			217
	0			0
Toilet Costs	0			4,769
IT microphones, etc	765			872
Total resources expended	<u>151,505</u>			<u>116,221</u>
Other- Fees to Chelmsford Diocesan				
Board of Finance - wedding/funeral fees	<u>(1028)</u>			<u>1028</u>

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF ST PAUL'S, WOODFORD BRIDGE, IG8 8BT
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (continued) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2025

4 Staff costs	2025	2024
	£	£
a <i>Wages and salaries</i>	9,651	8,548
	<u>9,651</u>	<u>8,548</u>

During the year the PCC employed a hall cleaner, part time.

b

5 Tangible fixed assets	Freehold land and buildings	Church equipment	TOTAL 2024
	£	£	£
Cost or valuation			
At 1 November 2023	1,540,000		1,540,000
Additions			
Disposals			
Revaluation			
At 31 December 2023	1,540,000		1,540,000
Depreciation			
At 1 January 2014			
Provided in the year			
Disposals			
At 31 December 2014			
Net book amounts			
At 31 December 2019	<u>1,540,000</u>		<u>1,540,000</u>

The freehold land and buildings comprise the Church Halls and the School House. For accounting purposes these were revalued in 2023.

6 Investments		£
Market value 31 December 2024	<u>nil</u>	<u>NIL</u>

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF ST PAUL'S, WOODFORD BRIDGE, IG8 8BT
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (continued) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2025

7 Analysis of Net assets by fund

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Endowment Funds £	Total Funds	Comparison 2024
Church assets : insurance valuation hall- 1,320,000;house- 220,000	1,540,000			1,540,000	1,540,000
Investment fixed assets					
Current assets	40,566	9		40,566	55,362
Current liabilities					
Long term liabilities					
	<u>1,580,566</u>	<u>9</u>		<u>1,580,566</u>	<u>1,595,362</u>

8 Debtors -

Income tax recoverable (blue envelopes)		2423			2332
Prepayments and accrued income					
Other debtors (water rate)		0			0
		<u>2423</u>			<u>2332</u>

9 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

Deferred income - 2026 wedding fees		300		0	0
Accruals for utilities/ other costs - UWDC Dec energy used				0	0
Other creditors					
		<u>300</u>		<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>

Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year

Wedding deposits for 2027		nil			0
					0

10 Statement of funds

	Bal b/fwd 1 Jan 2025	Income	Expenditure	Transfers, other gains and losses	Bal c/fwd 31 Dec 2025
	£	£	£	£	
Unrestricted Fund					
Covenant account	1824	23879	102	25225	376
General accounts	52537	111834	151403	25225	40179
	<u>55351</u>	<u>135713</u>	<u>151505</u>	996	<u>40555</u>
Restricted Fund					
Organ/piano	10	1	0	0	11
Total funds	<u>55361</u>			21993	<u>40566</u>

Fees to Diocesan Board Finance shown in accounts

The restricted funds comprise the organ / piano fund which is monies dedicated to the maintenance of these assets and other musical provision.

Independent examiner's report to the PCC of St Paul's, Woodford Bridge

I report on the accounts of the PCC for the year ended 31 December 2025 which are included in this report.

Respective responsibilities of the PCC and the examiner

The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an Independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to

- Examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act;
- Follow procedures laid down in the general directions given by the Charity Commissioners section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act; and
- State whether particular matters have come to my attention.
- The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Accounting Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities (SORP 2005), issued in March 2005, UK Accounting Standards and the Charities Act 2011'.

Basis of Independent Examiners Statement.

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from the management committee concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in a full audit, and consequently I do not express an opinion on the accounts.

Independent examiner's statement

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

- (1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements
 - to keep accounting records in accordance with s.130 of the 2011 Act; or
 - to prepare accounts, which accord with these accounting records have not been met;or
- (2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



25.2.2026

Fountain Cottage
Fountain Lane
Coppford
Bishopchester
Co. 6 125

VICAR'S REPORT

What a treat 2025 has been – my first full year as your vicar. I have thoroughly enjoyed getting to know you, spending time with you and growing together in our faith in God. Thank you for all you bring to our life as God's church in Woodford Bridge and beyond.

We started 2025 with some in-person safeguarding training, grounding everything we do in God's love and desire for all to be safe and cared for. In April, a new Parish Church Council (PCC) was elected to serve, with 2 new members. We also elected a new Churchwarden, welcoming Nathan. At Easter we celebrated the resurrection of Christ with Bishop Lynne, and alongside 10 children who were admitted to receive Holy Communion, confirming their existing practice of receiving, and investing in them and their learning. Going forward, this is something that will be a yearly invitation for all children year 3 and above.

We also remembered the life of Rosemary Monks, who died in March 2025 aged 89 and who is much missed. We were able to rejoice in the resurrection of Christ, knowing Rosemary resides at the eternal banquet we are all waiting for!

We spent some time as a newly elected PCC considering who God has called us to be, what we see as successes and challenges and what God is calling us into. We were delighted that the wider congregation joined us and shared their ideas and insights, and together we discerned that we are being called to focus on our welcome, our outreach and our children and young people. John 21, the miraculous catch & breakfast on the beach became our watch-passage that PCC returned to.

Through this, we saw that our ambition outstripped our resource – as we got used to having just half a vicar's time the PCC noted that in order to meet the call of God in our shared life we would need some more resource. We were encouraged to consider whether we can increase our giving, so that by the end of 2026, our regular giving increases by 15%, in order to meet the call of God.

September was a busy month for new ministries – Friday Club (yr6+) was back for its second term and growing in its identity for our young people, and Yeliz was recommended by us and by the Diocese of Chelmsford to train for Licensed Lay Ministry.

November was a rocky month for me personally, as I recovered from the burglary at the vicarage on Bonfire Night. Thank you for all your prayers and care. That day was also a testament to the way we are a team – and as I close, I want to thank some key people. Thank you to those who serve as Church Officers – Paul, Nathan, Len & Alan. Thank you to all on the PCC and the ministry team, and a particular thank you to all of you who do the unnoticed jobs – the cleaning & washing, the brass polishing, the gardening, the locking & unlocking, giving lifts, the care of others, the administration, and so, so much more. God bless you all.

The Revd Alexandra Podd, Vicar, St. Paul's Woodford Bridge.

CHURCHWARDENS' FABRIC REPORT

Churchwardens' Fabric Report

Church and Church Yard

No major works carried out this year apart from general maintenance. Our church yard has benefited from some tree pruning and our boiler house doors, having been made of wood had rotted to the point of some new ones being required which are of similar construction to the last set so an expected 10 year lifespan is in place for these.

We have identified some key projects that are required which we are working towards:

- Spire/Bell Tower access is requiring to be installed as the last set of ladders were removed due to possible Health & Safety concerns.

- Spire/Bell Tower inspection to include checking on the presence of insects (woodworm), window slats and wire/netting (to prevent pigeon and bat roosting) and the bell mechanism

- Bell mechanism greasing

- Audio equipment and Organ issues from requiring a service of the organ – at the time of writing a specialist is engaged in these works

- A crack in vestry door frame is causing the vestry door to jam, we have engaged a specialist to survey and fix the stone movement we believe to have occurred a number of years ago

- Carpet Moths have been identified within the new vestry carpet and to the rear of the church.

 - While this is under control, the rear of the church carpet is looking threadbare in parts and has repaired patches so it may be necessary to replace.

- We have an eager number of parishioners who help with maintenance which we are finding essential to coordinate so as to avoid duplication, unauthorised activities and breaches of health and safety policy.

Our Church Halls and Schoolhouse Rental Property

Our thanks go out to Pauline Bolding and Len Stevens plus others who helped with the associated works in getting our schoolhouse rental property into a state where we can let it to tenants. It was decided to renovate the kitchen of the schoolhouse which was looking dated and tired.

Our church halls have benefitted from some re-painting, new LED lights and roof repairs (tile slip and rain gully moss removal).

There are some identified works required for the church halls which include:

- Rear drain unblocking

- Removal of wooden structures attached to the side of parts of the building which are bridging the damp course causing some damp ingress

- Two sockets are also being installed by our regular qualified Electrician to supply power to a new printer to save money on printing costs

- Damp investigation in ladies toilet roof is on going and may require some extended works while this is repaired.

Paul Malam and Nathaniel Ayres, Churchwardens

REDBRIDGE DEANERY SYNOD REPORT

Wednesday 26th February at All Saints, Goodmayes Lane, there was a presentation by Maxine Paul on the Mothers' Union's campaign against domestic abuse, including awareness efforts and awards.

Mike Power, the new Archdeacon of West Ham discussed his background, church growth, financial stability, and discipleship initiatives. The Deanery Treasurer reported a £3 million shortfall across the Diocese, with lower December income and trends in church giving. Education Scrutiny discussed trade disputes at Wanstead High School. The General Synod report highlighted safeguarding debates, votes on independent processes, and lay member opportunities; there were some emotional discussions and ongoing projects like 'Save Parish'. There was a Deanery strategy update on potential funding from National Church for projects, and Parish partnerships news included a new Area Dean Father James Gilder, who announced plans to walk from Wanstead to Canterbury in July, inviting participation, and the upcoming Vocations Day.

Wednesday 25th June 2025 at St. Paul's Woodford Bridge the Synod focused on strengthening church engagement in education, community outreach, and strategic growth initiatives within the Deanery. There was a presentation by Carrie Prior, Director of Education on Education in Chelmsford Diocese and Redbridge Deanery. She highlighted that only Wanstead Church School exists within the Deanery among 139 Diocesan schools. She emphasized the Diocese's support for all schools, including offering practical engagement opportunities such as assemblies, events, prayer spaces, and inclusion in prayer diaries. The Diocese ensures statutory compliance, theological rootedness, and funding support, with opportunities for churches to be present in schools to foster community and faith. Redbridge Deanery met approximately 86% of its funding target last year, with shortfalls expected to be addressed through lump sums. The Deanery's strategic focus included the successful £15m bid for Barking area projects, with Redbridge's initiative led by Wanstead Parish aiming to employ two staff to develop traditional and modern worship music, attract youth, and deepen discipleship. The Synod acknowledged recent retirements and welcomed new clergy. Discussions also covered safeguarding, record management, and the importance of maintaining a diverse and inclusive approach to church appointments.

Wednesday 25th November 2025, at St Alban's Church, Albert Road, Ilford the Rev. Sharon Quilter gave a presentation on Racial Justice, sharing her background, emphasizing her role in promoting racial awareness within the Diocese of Chelmsford, and focusing on practical actions aligned with the Church of England's six pastoral principles. She highlighted her work on addressing prejudice, ignorance, fear, and power dynamics through small-group discussions and resource sharing. The Treasurer reported that Redbridge is the largest contributor within the diocese, with some churches exceeding their financial commitments. The Diocesan Board of Education and recent Ofsted reports were acknowledged. Diocesan Synod reported that Bishop Guli's address at the Diocesan Synod covered sustainable ministry, the slow progress of Living in Love and Faith (LLF), and concerns over far-right Christianity infiltrating churches. Discussions included funding distribution and Deanery Projects like the SMMIB music initiative continue, awaiting funding to proceed with recruitment.

Copies of The Minutes are available macleonard@virginmedia.com.

Mac Leonard, Deanery Synod Representative

PCC SECRETARY'S REPORT TO THE APCM

MEMBERSHIP.

The membership included Revd. Alexndra Podd, Vicar, Chair From September 2024 *(Ex-officio); Revd Ian Monks, Curate; (Ex-officio) Mac Leonard, Licensed Lay Minister/Deanery Synod/Master of the Music/Lay Vice Chair (Ex-officio); Paul Malam, Churchward/Deputy Lay Vice Chair; Nathan Ayres, Churchwarden; Len Stevens, Treasurer/Deputy Churchwarden; Alan Clark, PCC Secretary/Parish Safeguarding Officer/Deanery Synod (Ex-officio); Aimee Ayers: Antonia Armero Salido; Shaun Frost; Douglas Fulcher; Renata Groves; Maria Lascelles: Sue Malam; Yeliz Yadsan.

*Ex-officio membership relates to Clergy and Deanery Synod Members elected for the three-year life of the Synod.

It is with much sadness to report that Jill Leonard resigned her role within the parish. At the request of the PCC the Secretary wrote to Jill accepting her decision and thanking her for the input and service Jill had given of many years to the parish and wider church family also looking forward to seeing Jill in the future.

PCC OFFICERS.

At the first meeting after the Meeting of Parishioners (Formerly APCM) the following officers were elected or re-elected. Mac Leonard was elected Lay Vice Chair; Pula Malam was elected Deputy Lay Vice Chair; Len Stevens was Co-Opted as Treasurer and Deputy Churchwarden; and Alan Clark was re-elected PCC Secretary and Parish Safeguarding Officer: Following Jill Leonard's resignation the Parish Health & Safety Officer post remains vacant and is covered by the Deputy Health & Safety Officer Reverend Esther McCafferty.

MEETINGS.

The PCC met six times during the year. January, March, May, July, September and November with an average attendance 87% overall. The PCC meets in church and has a set agenda, which includes, Ministry Team comments, Finance, Safeguarding, Health and Safety, Church Fabric and planned events. There are also other agenda items as required as an example the Appointment Process for the new Vicar.

WORKING IN 2025/6.

In addition to the everyday management of the church and parish. The PCC reviewed and updated various policies to ensure currency and that where necessary were amended or rewritten to bring them into line with the Church of England House of Bishops requirements.

CONGREGATION.

The PCC wishes to express its grateful thanks to the congregation for the continuing steadfast support given by you as a member of the parish family throughout the year and to the volunteer leaders of roles you undertake, without which the church, church hall, churchyard and Sunday Club would not be the successes they are.

Alan Clark, Secretary to the Parochial Church Council.

PARISH SAFEGUARDING OFFICER'S REPORT

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) takes very seriously the requirement to safeguard children, young people and the potentially vulnerable adults who attend any activity organised by the parish and wider church. To that end throughout 2025 we have to the best of our knowledge and endeavours complied with the duty placed on the parish and its activities under Section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016, as amended.

The PCC has adopted the House of Bishop's Safeguarding Policies and Procedures, copies of which can be viewed by request to the Parish Safeguarding Officer. These policies and procedures form the basis for the Parish Safeguarding Policy which is displayed on the church and church hall notice boards and are reviewed regularly and re-adopted by the PCC at least annually or as and when major changes occur during the year.

All members of the PCC as trustees and others who Lead or have contact with groups who may be identified as being Vulnerable or potentially vulnerable, are required to obtain a clear

Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Scheme (DBS) report paid for by the Diocese. These Checks are now **renewed every three (3) years. This has changed from five (5) years following a review by the** Nation Church Safeguarding Body. Detailed records are kept and confidential documentation is kept in a locked filing system accessed only by the Vicar and Safeguarding Officer. Our parish officers and volunteers are offered free Basic and Foundation Training either via the on-line C of E Training Portal or face to face basis.

Most of the time in church we are one big happy family. However, even if the happiest of family's people can have a bad day, even people we know and trust. We want to help everyone to have good days as much as possible. We try to make sure that people who have a responsibility in the parish are always as helpful as possible. We never want anyone visiting us to feel frightened, confused or worried about something happening or something someone is doing. The Vicar and the Safeguarding Officer (PSO) are specially trained and are good at safeguarding who you can talk to, and you can ask for advice of help. Caring for people is a very important part of our Christian life. Our Lord Jesus said, "Love one another as I have loved you".

We have a confidential dedicated Safeguarding telephone number available twenty-four (24) hours every day. 07903 733497. If you are concerned, however small, about anything in or outside church please do not be concerned about waking the Safeguarding Officer.

However, **if you are concerned that a child or adult might be in immediate danger, or requires urgent medical attention, call the emergency services on 999. Do not delay.** If you wish to talk to someone outside our church, you can contact the Diocesan Safeguarding team at safeguarding@chelmsford.anglican.org.

Alan Clark, Safeguarding Officer

KENYAN FEEDING PROJECT - REDBRIDGE FOOD BANK

We continue to support the Kenyan Feeding Project organised by the UTUGI children's home and school. Our Summer and Christmas Fayre proceeds are now shared between these two projects, raising £4,500, and with other generous donations we were able to send £8,000 to UTUGI during the year, and donated £3,200 to Redbridge Food Bank in addition to regular giving of groceries and also a half share of our harvest collection of groceries and cash, shared with Milbank children's home. thanks to the generosity of so many of the St. Paul's family. The Kenyan initiative and the Redbridge Food Bank are now further supported by a fortnightly quiz evening on alternate Fridays in the Church Hall, with proceeds to these feeding projects. We raise between £50 to £100 per evening.

Len Stevens.

SUNDAY CHURCH CLUB

We have 33 children on our register, some of whom we see infrequently but are delighted when they are able to be with us. We follow scriptural and Christian themes and work as two groups – older and younger—now known as SEARCHLIGHTS and SPARKLERS. Many thanks to the parents who stay in the hall to help us each week since with up to 12 -15 children we need lots of adults present. The weekly meetings involve Bible teaching, games and fun and a Kit-Kat to enjoy once we move to church to talk to Alexandra. We decorate biscuits in Lent to sell afterwards in church for Christian Aid and we plant bulbs in the autumn time to give to mums on Mothering Sunday. We contribute to all-in family services and respect Remembrance Sunday. We teach via video and games, craft projects and table – based written activities We learn by having fun. **Len Stevens.**

FRIDAY CLUB

Friday Club meets fortnightly between 7:00 - 8:30 and is for children in year 6 +. We talk about a theme from the Bible. We like helping to plan and take part in the Mother's Day and Shoebox Services. We also took part in a Quiz Evening with the adults. We like having a meal together, **fajitas, pizzas and veg etc.** We play table tennis and table football. We are growing a garden planting garlic, potatoes and onion sets etc. to help with items to make soup and **food. Some comments from the children.** " I like learning about Christianity as a community of young people" . "I like table tennis". "I like the food here because I eat with my friends and we talk and joke". I like leading the services in church ". "I like the talks we do." **Douglas Fulcher.**

MOTHERS' UNION – CARING FOR CHRISTIAN FAMILIES WORLDWIDE

We continued to meet regularly, on a monthly basis. Our meetings are on second Tuesday afternoons; our themes are both spiritual and social. We are a group of some 26 church members who enjoy one another's fellowship and company and are always keen to welcome new members and enquirers. Mothers' Union has a wider remit than just St Paul's, and to this end we welcomed Maxine Paul, our Diocesan President, to our March meeting to bring us up to date on projects within the diocese such as the Rise Up project challenging domestic abuse and modern-day slavery and preparations for the Mothers'; Union 150th anniversary year, which is this year – 2026. During the year we also enjoyed Sue Clack telling of her latest travels and had three speakers and two guide dogs visit us in the autumn.

We wholeheartedly joined others in our church community to raise funds for the Kenyan Street Children feeding stations, with St Paul's sending £6,000 last year, making a total of over £178,000 sent since 1998. Allowing for the cost of providing a meal in Kenya we have now provided over a quarter of a million meals to vulnerable children. The food is purchased and the meals prepared by Kenyan MU members, and the children receive one meal each week.

Maxine Paul from our neighbour parish of Holy Trinity, Barkingside, is Diocesan MU President (a three-year appointment), so we now have both the Diocesan President and Treasurer, Trish McCarthy, in Holy Trinity, Barkingside. Diocesan MU business administration comes closer! Whenever possible we like to introduce food into our meetings. In addition to the strawberries and cream in June, kindly provided Ian, and in loving memory of his wife Rosemary, who died in March, we were also treated to our bring and share Christmas party in December.

Should anyone have an interest in joining us please talk to myself – you are welcome to come along as a guest for “taster” sessions!

Len Stevens, Branch Leader.