



# **St Margaret of Antioch Wellington**

## **Annual Report 2025**

Cover photo courtesy of Mr Aiden Gibson

# **2025 ANNUAL REPORT**

## **PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL**

### **ST MARGARET OF ANTIOCH, WELLINGTON**

#### **AIMS AND PURPOSES**

Our primary aim is to work across our whole community to underpin the Church of England's over-arching ethos of promoting its mission – pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. We strive to do this by seeking ways to enhance the role of the Church within Wellington Parish, both in terms of worship and by the use of our building for other activities, so that it is of real benefit to the whole community.

#### **OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES**

The PCC wants to be able to reach out to as many people as possible and to develop ways to ensure that St Margaret's remains 'all inclusive' and is not seen just as somewhere only for the worshipping community. Our Priest-in-Charge, now two years into her incumbency, has overseen changes to our worship pattern which have reduced reliance on additional clergy to cover services.

Our historic building is Grade 1 listed with parts dating back to the 12thC – maintaining its fabric in good order has to remain one of our prime objectives; this requires our active involvement in repairs, general maintenance and grounds upkeep, much of which is done by volunteers. Previous repair actions continue to pay dividends as, once again, no unplanned maintenance was needed during the year.

Our outreach to our neighbouring school, which is not a C of E school, continues well. They have undergone a major management restructure and are very receptive.

Pastoral care remains a priority objective and a pastoral visiting team is now in place.

We continue work to provide community assets for Wellington, particularly the provision of a building that is open to wide community use and a churchyard that can cater for the needs of the village for the foreseeable future. This will include space for burials and space for a community orchard.

#### **ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE**

Our achievements for the year are:

- The revised pattern of services introduced last year is now well accepted. The lay leaders of the Café Church service have grown in confidence and the service continues to attract interest and support.
- The long-awaited toilet and servery are well on their way to completion. Following a concerted effort to raise the funds required, financial support was given by a number of charities and grant giving bodies and work was started in November with a target completion date of Easter 2026.

- The extension of the lower churchyard finally achieved (with much rejoicing) planning approval and work will commence in the early part of 2026 to convert the field to a burial ground and also provide an area for a community orchard.
- A very successful Christmas Tree Festival was held which was well supported by the community and brought many people into church.
- The 'A Church Near You' website continues to keep the public informed of our services and activities.
- Members of our Church participate in the wider charitable sphere coordinating collections for Christian Aid, The Children's Society, the British Legion Poppy Appeal, and Water Aid.
- We have financially supported a number of charities during the year.
- Our contact with the school remains very healthy. Assemblies are taken on a regular basis by the Priest-in-Charge and the 'Open the Book' team continued their activities. 'Experience Church' led by Benefice Open the Book teams was very well received.
- The church is also the Venue for the School's Harvest and Christmas Celebrations.
- A book swap facility is provided for community use, complementing the community library.

## **FINANCIAL REVIEW**

For the second successive year the financial outturn for the Unrestricted Funds showed a surplus of income over expenditure, this year to the tune of a little over £4,000 against an anticipated £600.

Income from Planned Giving was up by some 34% reflecting the result of the public appeal for support for the church made in late 2024. This consequently increased the value of Gift Aid recovered by 24%. Unplanned Giving was also ahead of expectations. We continue to receive a small amount of money through on-line sources although this is limited by the size of our online community. New participants would be very welcome and this remains an area ripe for development.

The healthy surplus actually came about as a result of a lower level of expenditure than expected, particularly with respect to Ministry expenses, fees and maintenance costs, the latter as a result of no unexpected repair items arising. In addition, whilst utility bills had been expected to decline following the hike after the Ukraine invasion, the drop was significantly greater than expected. A new supply contract indicates that these lower costs will continue.

The most significant element of our expenditure and the only one that we can really control is the Parish Offer which the PCC had decided to maintain at the level of the previous year. However, as a result of the budget surplus in 2024, the level of the Parish Offer will increase by an above inflation rate of 4.7% for 2026. The PCC also increased the level of giving to other causes reflecting the church's desire to not accumulate

money but to maintain a suitable balance that allows the treasurer to remain sane and calm.

We continue to hold in our account the bulk of the grant to establish the Community Orchard so although this money features in our total funds, it is designated for the orchard project. Plans for 2026 should see this money put to use.

Our Restricted Funds or, more accurately one of our Restricted Funds, namely the West End Fund has seen a surge in holdings as the project benefited from a number of donations from Grant Giving bodies to enable us to hit the target so that work could be started in November.

### **RESERVES POLICY**

It remains our PCC policy to maintain a balance of unrestricted funds which equates to at least three months routine payments, roughly equivalent to £7,000. This is held to smooth out fluctuations in cash flow and to meet unexpected calls for cash. The balance of just over £19,000 held at the year's end exceeds this level but with £2,500 reserved for the Community Orchard, and £840 reserved for a memorial project, it brings uncommitted funds to around £15,800. Whilst this is significantly over target, the PCC are conscious of the, as yet unclear costs of establishing the lower churchyard extension. This, coupled with the desire to complete the West End development, led the PCC to agree the level of balance until these uncertainties are removed.

### **FUTURE PLANS**

The reordering of the West End of the Church is finally underway. The facilities that this will provide open the gate to enhanced use of the church building for both faith focused activities and secular activities

In the coming year we hope to develop ways of connecting with some of the younger members of our community. It is with the new facilities in place that we hope to engage with parents post school drop off with a drop in for 'toast and a coffee' and time to connect with other parents.

Also to have a regular games session for Secondary school aged teenagers as a drop in after getting off the school bus.

There are a group within the Church who are ready and willing to start a 'Messy Church'

And there is even a thought that we might begin 'Men's Breakfast'.

The completion of the West End Works has given rise to many thoughts and ideas and joy in being able to plan for such use.

## **RISK MANAGEMENT**

The PCC continues to see the major risk to St Margaret's future as not being able to meet its financial commitments, probably in common with many other rural Churches. We are working hard to mitigate this risk as best we can by having reached out to the community as a whole where we already know that much goodwill towards the Church exists but we face the continual misconception that the "Church of England is wealthy".

## **VOLUNTEERS**

The PCC owes a debt of gratitude to all the volunteers who give their time willingly to ensure that our house is in order. A dedicated team tackle the task of keeping our beautiful church clean, attractive and welcoming. But there is also a talented team of flower arrangers who continue to provide beautiful displays in the building at no expense to us at all, there are those who have tidied the churchyard, those who ensure that worship services are properly catered for and those who perform the many tasks that pass virtually unnoticed but without which things would grind to a halt.

## **TRAINING**

It is the continued intent of PCC members to attend training courses which are appropriate to ensure that we are apprised of all our legal obligations.

A group of Lay Worship Leaders and the Pastoral Care Team have been recently Licensed and receive training on a regular basis.

Many have been fulfilling their Safeguarding commitments which includes the on-line training.

## **STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT**

PCC members are appointed as set out in Church Representation Rules and membership normally comprises the Vicar, the Churchwarden(s) and elected members from the congregation who are on the electoral roll. We continue to encourage regular worshippers to register on the electoral roll.

The PCC normally meets quarterly, plus the Annual Meeting, and works from a published agenda with minutes issued in a timely manner after meetings so that those tasked with action can see what is expected of them. Decisions on general matters are taken and discussion held on the current financial position and expected expenditure. A financial statement is provided by the Treasurer at each PCC meeting along with a written overview.

The PCC is a corporate body established by the Church of England and operates under the Parochial Church Council Powers Measure. It is exempted by order from registering with the Charities Commission as gross income is under £100,000.

### **ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION**

St Margaret's of Antioch is located on the C1108 which is the main village street in Wellington, approximately half a mile from the A49 trunk road. It is part of Leominster Deanery and one of the Canon Pyon Group of Churches. The PCC's legal standing is covered under the section above. There are no existing committees within the PCC.

PCC members are: (all have been in post for the whole of 2025 except where indicated))

Ex-officio members:

Incumbent – Revd. Anne Price

Churchwardens –Mr Peter Manson (also Health and Safety Officer)

Elected members:

Mr Keith Brimley - Treasurer

Mrs Sue Hall – Electoral Roll Officer

Mrs Margaret Makin

Mrs Val Eversham

Dr Lee Seal – Deanery Synod Representative

Mrs Emily Wilson

Mrs Stephanie Ellis

Our accounts were independently examined by Mrs Rachel Scott; we bank with RBS Business Banking and have no specific retained legal representatives.

Day to day management rests with the Churchwardens.

**Report adopted at PCC meeting held 19 March 2026**

**Revd Anne Price, Priest in Charge, Chairman of meeting**