



St Mary The Virgin, Frome

Innox Hill Frome BA11 2LN

Annual Parishioners' Meeting and Annual Parochial Church Meeting

Agenda & Reports



St Mary's Church

Sunday 19th April 2026

fundraising events, or practical help. Your generosity continues to make the work of St Mary's possible.

GIFT AID REPORT

As I stated in my Report for 2024 the method of giving, due to the introduction of the Parish Giving Scheme, has made my report redundant on Gift Aid via standing order donations. However, I will continue to produce a report of donations/gift aid, quarterly, through Gift Aid (amounts over £20) and Gift Aid Small Donations Scheme (GASDS) (amounts of £20 or less) amounts of £20 or less will be treated as 'cash on the plate.' Under this scheme donors do not have to be tax payers so a Gift Aid Declaration is not needed.

In addition claims are made on: donations received through SUMUP; Church collections; Gifts at Baptisms, Marriages and Funerals. Weekly Envelope and GA Envelopes. Those non taxpayers who wish to donate using SUMUP can give up to £30.00 from which we can claim Gift Aid (£7.50)

Below are the total donations received and amount of tax claimed for 2025.

Quarter	SUMUP	Collections	Weekly Env.	GA Env.	Totals	Gift Aid (Tax)
1	1116.85	127.50	20.00	Nil	1264.35	316.09
2	365.65	352.00	Nil	Nil	717.65	179.41
3	494.15	52.00	4.00	Nil	550.15	137.51
4	622.66	100.00	34.00	Nil	756.66	189.17
Totals	£2599.31	£631.50	£58.00	Nil	£3288.81	£822.20

The claims under GA/GASDS have now started and hope to be completed in the next six months.

Thanks to Glen for his assistance.

Gordon Mitchell

The church continues to support several charitable organisations throughout the year, reflecting our commitment to giving beyond the parish.

Although overall income increased during the year (with total receipts rising from about £39,276 in 2024 to £44,620 in 2025), we have managed to keep most expenditure broadly in line with the previous year.

One of the main financial challenges remains the Parish Share. For 2025 the Diocese asked us to increase our contribution by £4,310. Unfortunately, we could not meet the full amount and were unable to make payments in June and July. As a result, we effectively maintained payments at roughly the same level as in 2024. I informed the Diocese that we did not have the funds available to make up the shortfall and that we hope to continue paying at the current rate so that we can maintain regular payments during 2026. I have also raised concerns with the Diocese about how the Parish Share is calculated, and these were reported to the PCC.

During the year we also had an unexpected building issue. The chimney on the church hall required urgent repairs, costing just over £7,000. Thanks to a very generous anonymous contribution of £7,000, the work was able to go ahead without delay. Unfortunately, because the chimney is part of the hall rather than the church itself, we were not eligible to apply for grant funding. We were, however, able to reclaim the VAT. This support has been recorded in the accounts as an interest-free loan rather than a donation and therefore appears as a liability in the accounts. While there is no formal repayment schedule, we should aim to begin raising funds so that this amount can be repaid in due course.

At the end of the year the PCC held total net assets of £14,695, although this reduces to £7,695 once the chimney loan is considered.

Finally, I would like to thank everyone who contributes to the life of the church financially — whether through regular giving,

Agenda for the Annual Meeting of the Parishioners of the Parish of St. Mary's Frome

to be held on Sunday 19th April 2026 after the 10.30am service in St Mary's Hall

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Minutes of the last Annual Parishioner's Meeting
3. Election of Churchwardens (2)

Agenda for the Annual Parochial Church Meeting of the Parish of St Mary's Frome

to be held on Sunday 19th April 2026 immediately after the Annual Meeting of the Parishioners in St. Mary's hall

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Minutes of the last Annual Parochial Church Meeting
3. Matters arising from the Minutes.
4. Statutory Reports – *Available before meeting – please read.*
 - i. Report from the Chair of the PCC
 - ii. PCC Secretary's Report on the work of the PCC
 - iii. Churchwardens' Report
 - iv. Report on St Mary's Church Hall
 - v. Report of the Electoral Roll Keeper
 - vi. Gift Aid Report
 - vii. Deanery Synod Report
5. Presentation of Annual Accounts

6. Elections
 - i. PCC Members
 - ii. Appointment of an Independent Examiner
7. Parish Reports – *Available before meeting – please read.*
 - i. Choir
 - ii. Flower Arrangers
 - iii. Magazine
 - iv. Social Committee
8. Matters of interest from the floor
9. Date of next Annual Meetings
10. Closing Prayer

Agenda for the meeting of the new Parochial Church Council of St Mary’s Church

**to be held on 5th April 2025 in St Mary’s Hall following the
Annual Meeting of the Parishioners**

1. Election of a Vice Chair
2. The Following appointments are to be made: -
 - i. PCC Treasurer
 - ii. PCC Secretary
 - iii. Electoral Roll Officer
 - iv. Safeguarding Officer
 - v. Sidespersons
3. Date of next Meetings

the congregation in terms of their singing, flexibility and the interest they take in the music here.

We continue to use the computer for incidental music and for accompanying hymns. Thank you Jane, Glen, Pauline, Les and Diane who prepare and/or operate the computer on Sundays and to Rob for his practical and technical help. It was lovely to have live organ music at Christmas time and for some funerals. Thank you to Robert Saunders and Ann Burgess.

As ever we had a few services where we sung unaccompanied, including outside processions on Palm Sunday and Easter Day.

The Carol Service in 2025 was a slight departure from previous years: a little more informal and with well-known carols and there were no choir items (as there are so few of us). It was well attended and enthusiastically sung!

Treasurer’s Report

2025 was a mixed year financially for St Mary’s, but there were several encouraging developments.

Firstly, the focus on increasing planned giving has been successful, with an increase of around 22% compared with 2024. The move to using the Parish Giving Scheme has also been very positive. It reduces the administrative work for the church and allows Gift Aid on these donations to be received monthly, which helps our cash flow.

With Gordon Mitchell’s help we have also been able to improve our Gift Aid claims on other donations, including those made through regular standing orders and through the SumUp card machine used at services. This has increased the amount we are able to reclaim from HMRC.

New fundraising activities have also helped. The coffee mornings that started during the year have been well supported and have raised additional income. The initial events were held specifically to help raise funds towards the car park repairs.

The VE Day events on Thursday May 8th would start at the Memorial Theatre and culminate at St John's for a 5.30pm service.

Whit Sunday was June 8th, but nothing had been arranged town-wide.

Hospital services were once again running, on the last Friday of each month at 2.00pm.

FACT prayers were held on the first Saturday of each month at St John's.

An update was then given on the 'Housing for Homeless' project. This was identified as a HOPE-type activity. Following on from the Green Pastures presentation in January a core group had been set up. They had applied for the 'More Information' package. A 'supported living' house has been financially adjusted to allow for the area's housing prices. Andrew Prout suggested that this should be a 'stand-alone' project, CIC or charity supported by FACT.

Green Pastures own the property, with people investing in it and receiving some interest. Frome Town Council may find difficulty working with FACT (as a Christian group), but may prefer to be associated with Green Pastures. Having invested £150,000, FACT may be called upon to support running costs of £2-3,000/year.

The core group will be meeting again and will inform FACT members of future action.

Andrew concluded by thanking Mike and Phillip for this year's work on FACT.

MUSIC AT ST MARY'S

"...singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs with thankfulness in your hearts to God" (Colossians 3:16)

Over the past year our choir numbers have dwindled somewhat for all sorts of reasons. As a choir we try to lead, encourage and support the congregation and hopefully we have achieved that even with only a few of us. We have great support from

Minutes of the Annual Parishioners' Meeting St Mary's the Virgin, Frome held on Saturday 5th April 2025 in the Church Hall

Present: Revd Liz (chair), Anthea Kemp, Allie Penn, Diane Ellis, Penny Saunders, Rob Lee, Len Taylor, Marilyn Burrows, Jenny Thomas, Jane Mitchell, Gordon Mitchell, Pauline Burgess, Tina Williams, Glen Schild, Pat Eames, Jenny Schild, Revd Ian Pearson, Sarah Eyles, Sue Matthews, Elizabeth Pearson.

Apologies: Sue Hiscott, Judy Harris, Sue Taylor, Robin Thomas

Revd Liz opened the meeting with prayer at 10am. All attending were welcomed and thanked for coming. Minutes of the 2024 Annual Parishioners Meeting were presented and accepted as a true record.

Proposed: **Glen Schild**

Seconded: **Len Taylor**

Agreed: **unanimously**

Matters arising from these minutes: **none**

Revd Liz took the opportunity to thank Diane Ellis and Len Taylor for their previous year as churchwardens. She had appreciated their support, good humour, ministry and faithfulness. The meeting expressed their appreciation.

Election of Church wardens for the coming year:

Nominated: Diane Ellis

proposed by Elizabeth Pearson;

seconded by Jane Mitchell

Nominated: Len Taylor

proposed by Marilyn Burrows;

seconded by Jenny Schild

There being no other nominations, Diane and Len were elected as churchwardens for the coming year.

The meeting closed at 10.10am

Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting

held on Saturday 5th 2025 in the Church Hall

The meeting opened at 10.14am

1. Present, in attendance and apologies as above.
2. Minutes from the 2024 APCM had been circulated to the PCC at the meeting immediately after the APCM
It was proposed by Glen Schild; seconded by Len Taylor and agreed unanimously by the meeting to accept the minutes as a true account of that meeting.
3. Matters arising from the minutes: none
4. Statutory reports: It was taken that people had read the reports prior to the meeting
 - i) **Chair's Report:** Revd Liz said that it had been another good year with some significant high points especially the priesting of Revd Harry Wainwright and the visit of the Archbishop of Canterbury. She expressed gratitude for the way that many people are committed and give generously of time and talent, but that the burdens of responsibilities were growing and being shouldered by increasingly few people. She acknowledged that the standing committee and the finance team had not been effective and that as a church we needed to be thinking strategically about the future.

Treasurer: Ian Crook

The treasurer's report was optimistic – as in it was in the black – holding about £1,000, but no FACT insurance was in place due to there being no activities run since Covid. Monies from the HOPE van fund were to be transferred to the general fund. This meant that the Oasis tent at the Independent market is currently being insured on HT's church insurance.

The accounts were accepted as they stood, even though they had not been independently audited.

There would be no Easter advert, as there had only been three responses to the request for details.

It was agreed that FACT needed a higher profile in the press, and it was proposed that the secretary be on the comms team.

There was to be the reinstatement of sub-committees, to explore various areas of interest/responsibility.

These would be:

Safeguarding: Under the leadership of Rev Andrew Prout. Most churches had responded to his request for details. All the safeguarding officers were to be approached for a joint meeting.

Communications: This would involve Mike Adams and Gary Lee, who would use the email list that the secretary holds to liaise directly with FACT members, but we also need a website (the previous one was defunct). Social media groups need to be more active; use the press for service details; determine the audience for different types of communication. Someone from each church needs to pass information to the FACT comms address.

A roadshow visit was suggested, as had been done in the past with the HOPE van.

Worship: Janet Caudwell announced that there would be the traditional short gathering at 9.00am in St John's forecourt on Good Friday, before everyone dispersed to attend to their own church's duties.

currently in poor conditions and thus rendered more than normally vulnerable. To offset this need, the council can offer few homes.

To explore possible solutions, Ian had invited along Pastor Pete, the founder of the Green Pastures organisation, which in 25 years has grown from two small flats for two homeless people to over £13 million pounds' worth of property across the country. The idea is to provide housing and light support for those leaving a homeless existence.

The organisation will buy the property – if the church(es) partnering the enterprise can jointly come up with half the purchase price. At the time of the meeting, and based on a suitable property which Ian found on a property web-site, we would be looking at raising £150,000. This was to be achieved by members of congregations investing in the project in amounts of £1,000. This would kick-start the process, as there were grants available to further support and ensure wise implementation. If funding was not possible then the interest would be logged, but placed at the bottom of the waiting list. The purchase would not be the end of commitment. A team of supporters would be required to ensure that bills were paid, food and cleaning items kept stocked, and that funds were being used wisely. People with complex needs would be referred to experts. Volunteers were not to try assisting themselves.

The first step would be to build a team to explore all the legal and financial aspects.

At The AGM in April, the group met at St Katharine's East Woodlands.

Mike Adams was stepping down as FACT chair, having served his year.

Andrew Prout, his successor as non-conformist representative, was at pains to point out that he would be unlikely to fulfil the role for a year as he'd had his Methodist remit extended dramatically.

Phillip Camacho, Secretary reported that due to work-load, he would only be able to send out e-mails from now on.

Rob Lee volunteered involvement with the finance team.

There was a question from Rob Lee about the prayer shed and if it was being used: The funding for the prayer shed was separate from St. Mary's funds and it hasn't been used over the winter because it has no electricity. It was hoped that it would be spring cleaned and reopened shortly after Easter.

- ii) **Churchwardens' report:** Gratitude was expressed by the meeting of the work done by the churchwardens over the last year. Thanks were also given to Jane Mitchell who has been PCC secretary for a number of years following her retirement in the autumn.
- iii) **Hall report:** The hall is being well used and maintained. Thanks were expressed for the work that Catherine does in managing the bookings and to Amy for the way that it is cleaned. It was recognised that the busyness of the hall sometimes made it difficult for the church community to hold events, but that we largely managed and were often able to use the church itself.
- iv) **Electoral Roll:** This was a revision year and thanks were expressed to Jane Mitchell for compiling the new roll.
- v) **Safeguarding Report:** Thanks were expressed to Sarah Eyles for her work as Parish Safeguarding Officer. Bishop Michael had commended her work when he visited the benefice earlier this year. Sarah explained how there had been more changes to the

way that people could check their ID when renewing DBS certificates and how the dashboard was a useful tool to help give an up to date picture of safeguarding in the parish. Sarah confirmed that PCC members as trustees of the PCC Charity need to have safeguarding training (different from DBS) and are responsible to ensuring that our safeguarding is up to date. Revd Liz explained that basic safeguarding training was about holding spaces in our community that are safe for everyone and meet the sometimes changing needs of our community members.

An observation about flower arrangers needing training was made.. Revd Liz explained that each church context is different but that we should be aware of and attentive to each other and know what to do if people make disclosures of abuse. This is not restricted to church leaders but could be made to anyone.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

Glen Shcild commented that he had found the training he had done, necessary and powerful

Rob Lee asked Sarah to bring the dashboard along to the PCC meetings:

Revd Liz, once again thanked Sarah for her hard work.

- vi) **Data Report:** Revd Liz explained how the parish computer was password protected. Work continues to bring together the finances and other accounts from people's own computers to be kept securely and in a way that is accessible to parish officers.
- vii) **Gift Aid report:** Thanks were expressed for the work that Gordon does in reclaiming the Gift Aid on the small /plate donations. It was hoped that the finance team could work alongside Glen and Gordon to offer support.

At Harvest, the now usual sunflowers were stars of the show with their cheerful yellow faces and branches of berries in the windows, and other various autumn foliage etc on the font, pulpit and not forgetting the harvest loaves and sheaves of corn up behind the altar. There was a whole car boot full of donations to take up to Fair Frome. The Garden Nursery donations were added to the haul, and once again were most gratefully received. Thank you everyone who donated, everything is so welcomed by the volunteers, and it is lovely to be able to take them up there.

Easter has a different feel to the flowers as they are 'donated' in the form of lilies and spring bulbs and small plants by members of the congregation in memory of loved ones departed. The potted primulas that go in the troughs on the wall are then planted in the grounds to flower year after year.

We are a lovely friendly team and always welcome newcomers who like to lend a hand either regularly or on special occasions, we can usually arrange for tea and cake at these events! Lastly thank you everyone for the donations in the 'Flower Tin' which helps us to be able to get flowers for those extra occasions and the odd jug etc from charity shops, and to all the arrangers who give up their time and talents.

Jane Mitchell – Flower co-ordinator

FACT Report

The year started off with an inspiring meeting at Holy Trinity, to address the issue of homelessness in Frome.

Rev Ian Snares gave a brief outline of the problems affecting the homeless in the town, and the numbers of people involved. With information obtained from Somerset County Council (SCC), he told the assembled that there were around 230 families; 1,000 ex-offenders; asylum seekers, who when granted asylum are given very short notice to quit their temporary accommodation, and if refused disappear into the murky world of gang-run slavery; young people leaving the care system

In October the Revd Keith Johnson was welcomed to the benefice of Postlebury and Leigh with Stoke in the west of the deanery.

The parish of Hardington Vale remains in vacancy.

In December Revd Liz's resignation was accepted by Bishop Michael.

Diane Ellis

PARISH REPORTS

Flower Arrangers

We are still not using Floral Foam unless absolutely necessary, for large pedestal arrangements, which are only created for weddings and funerals, and mostly done by professional florists, thank heavens! The members of the congregation are getting used to the more informal look with jugs, vases, and baskets, and we are getting better at the non foam mechanics, it is surprising how inventive you can be!

The weekly flowers are arranged on a fortnightly rota by the core arrangers of myself, Pauline and Marilyn with Diane joining us for her creations in the porch and Sue has been really inventive with Pauline for the main windows for Christmas. This year we had stars in them complete with lights and tinsel, very festive but still not too intrusive with the lighted hanging trees behind the altar with the gold angels in the windows. The 'bling' was in the troughs on the wall between the main body of the church and the chancel, in the form of baubles which reflected the lights of the church. Thank you everyone who helped make it fun and not a chore, we did have cake!

viii) **Deanery Synod:** Revd Liz explained the importance of using the deanery Synod and of church structures to make our voices stronger and louder as we face growing challenges as a church especially around finance. There was much to be gained from networking, resourcing and encouraging each other over a wider area and she encouraged people to come along to Deanery Synod meetings.

5. Presentation of accounts. Glen Schild presented the accounts to the meeting and the meeting expressed its gratitude to Glen for producing such clear and informative accounts and such an accessible narrative to go alongside them. It was noted that whereas in past years we have 'been holding our own', the increase in Common Fund contribution, the increase in costs such as insurance, utilities, etc were very shortly going to be exceeding our income. There had been some major expenditure in sound system and courtyard works and building and tree maintenance, which was pushing us ever closer to the edge of solvency. Fundraising was one approach and so was increasing our regular giving. Both approaches were needed urgently.

The new common fund contribution means that we are £450 a month short.

A question was asked about raising the hourly rate for the hall use. This will be considered by the PCC at its next meeting. The meeting also learnt of work needing to be done to the copper beech trees to maintain safety and the resurfacing of the car park to the same. These expenditures come alongside a fall in the number of funerals and weddings across the benefice.

6. Election of PCC Members.

During the last year, Barabra Peto and Maggie Read had resigned and Pauline Burgess completed her term, This leaves three vacancies on the PCC and one Deanery Synod rep. Gratitude was expressed by the meeting for the PCC members and all that they do and the responsibilities that they hold.

Election of PCC members

Proposed: Sue Matthews

nominated by Glen Schild and seconded by Jane Mitchell

There were no further nominations, so Sue was welcomed to the PCC.

The deanery synod representation remains vacant.

7. Parish Reports

- i) Thanks were expressed to the flower arrangers, sacristans, welcomers and music providers. The magazine committee were thanked and everyone who contributes to the ministry of hospitality, welcome and worship.
- ii) The Social committee members were thanked for their imagination, and planning abilities to create a programme of social event that raise funds and build relationships especially between St. Marys and Christ Church.
- iii) The choir were thanked for leading the singing in services and Allie choosing the hymns for each Sunday. Glen wondered if we might use the screen for hymns on occasion. It was also encouraging that members of Christ Church choir regularly joined us when there was not a 10.30 service there.

8. Questions from the floor:

There was exploration of the potential to introduce the young teens from the Norton St Philip parish to those from Holy Trinity, with the possibility of arranging joint activities. It was also suggested that holiday clubs during the summer around the deanery could be run over 2 or 3 days, either in one venue, or at different churches/villages to spread the load of organisation.

The Anna chaplaincy was going well, with staff and residents at Rowden House, Rossetti House, Critchell Court and Belmont Villas all benefitting.

The Giant's Garden project was now in the final year of its 5 year run. Andrew and Elizabeth Alden had worked with 20-30 young people over that time. They had also welcomed some small school groups. Unfortunately the young adults had not remained a committed group.

Mary's House: A community following a life of prayer at the former St Mary's Vicarage, was waiting for the Charity Commission to validate the project. After this there would be the opportunity for expressions of interest re openings and a discernment process.

There would be 4 trustees.

Also on site there is a prayer shed, created from the tumble-down garden building, and which is available 24/7 via a booking system, and the Giant's Garden which will be incorporated into the enterprise.

Green Pastures had now formed a core group to deal with the nitty gritty of such a project. Green Pastures would buy the house and local churches would draw investors from their congregations to raise half the sum needed. The idea is to firstly buy a 4bed property for homeless men, followed in time by a second for women (the majority of homeless people are men).

The Safeguarding team may be able to visit benefices to help them with safeguarding training.

follow up meeting from one at Trinity earlier, has been organised to drill down on the necessary action needed.

The next big piece of information was to look at the provision of youth work throughout the deanery, building on the research carried out by a team from Hardington Vale. To enable the spread of this work across the area, Tony Cook from the GO team at the Diocese would be visiting Trinity in February to help people think about ways to impact the lives of young people from the pre-school age to school leavers. Funding may well be available for the right projects. This initiative is The Big Dream.

People were reminded that the Revd Seamus Hargrave (new vicar of St John's) was to be installed on February 3rd.

The previous year's Alpha course had been a great success with more than 40 people completing the sessions. A follow-up course called HOPE Explored resulted in new Bible study groups.

At the May meeting in Beckington First School, Tony Cook announced that he was now our Deanery enabler, although he was keen to point out that he would still be involved with ongoing youth and young people's work.

It was generally acknowledged that there was much anxiety about the new Common Fund calculations and implementation. The Deanery council has been meeting with benefices and will present a full account of the situation to (ultimately) General Synod.

Ian Snares (vicar of Holy Trinity) then gave an update of the progress being made with The Big Dream. There had been 3 meetings to date to see what was already in place in the deanery: Open the Book is taking the Bible into schools, and it's planned to organise a 'Bring and Share' session in July to which school leaders would be invited, in order to increase awareness of its availability, and demonstrate its impact on young minds.

- i) Rob Lee asked about the income possibilities from charging people to use the car park on Market Sundays – it was felt that the state of the car park and the safety of the trees needed to be addressed first.
- ii) There was a further question about funding from the Diocese to resurface the car park. This is unlikely.
- iii) Anthea Kemp has started a Fibromyalgia support group.

The meeting closed at 11.55am

Minutes of the Meeting of the new PCC of St Mary's Church

held on Saturday 5th April 2025 in St Mary's Hall following the APCM.

- Election of Lay Chair: Len Taylor was Appointed unopposed.
- Appointment of the following Officers of the PCC.
 - o PCC Treasurer: Glen Schild
 - o PCC Secretary: Sue Matthews
 - o Electoral Roll Officer: Jane Mitchell
 - o Safeguarding Officer: Sarah Eyles, Len Taylor
 - o Side persons/welcomers Appointed en Bloc:
 - Jane & Gordon Mitchell
 - Jenny and Glen Schild
 - Sue Hiscott
 - Marilyn Burrows
 - Sue Taylor

All appointments made unanimously. There being no further business the meeting was declared closed.

STATUTORY REPORTS 2025

Background: St Mary's PCC has the responsibility of co-operating with the Incumbent in promoting in the ecclesial parish the whole mission of the church – pastoral, evangelistic, social, and ecumenical.

Membership: Members of the PCC are either *ex officio*, elected by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting, or *co-opted* by the PCC in accordance with the Church Representation Rules. During the year ended December 31st, 2025, the following served as members of the PCC:

Ex Officio members:

Vicar: Revd Liz Dudley (Chair)
Churchwardens: Mrs Diane Ellis
Mr Len Taylor (Vice Chair)

Ex-officio Representatives Elected to Frome Deanery Synod

Mrs Diane Ellis Ex-officio
Vacancy

Elected Members

Anthea Kemp	2026
Jane Mitchell	2026
Jenny Schild	2027
Sue Hiscott	2027
Glenn Schild (Treasurer)	2027
Marilyn Burrows	2027
Sue Matthews	2028
Vacancy	
Vacancy	

Serve Till

As a general rule, people are only permitted to serve 3 years on the PCC, then stand down for a year, before serving again. This does not apply to ex-officio members i.e., the Churchwardens or Deanery Synod representatives.

Data Protection There have been no incidents of Data Protection reported.

Rev Liz Dudley
Data Protection Officer

Deanery Synod Report

The first meeting, at St Mary's, was especially celebratory as it began with the official recognition of Len Taylor as Anna Chaplain in Frome, with Anthea Kemp, Gerry Phillips, Chris and Miriam Hare as Anna Friends. Len gave a brief report as to the importance of Anna chaplaincy which exists to bring faith and companionship to the elderly in isolation and care/nursing homes. At this meeting they were supposed to have been presented with their certificates of qualification, but there had been a delay with the printing. Len and Anthea received theirs the following Sunday during the morning service.

The meeting went on to update everyone on the Deanery Mission and Pastoral Group, whose aim is to find ways of building relationships among all the churches in the Deanery: a network of treasurers, wardens, maintenance, finances etc. The group of about twelve people will meet a month before each Deanery Synod meeting to set the agenda, finalise minutes and plan information to be sent to deanery reps

This was followed by a presentation on the work of Green Pastures – an initiative to help with homeless issues all over the country. It started 25 years ago with the purchase of two flats to support two homeless people. The project has proven so successful that the initiative now owns over £15 million pounds' worth of property and has been asked to advise and help churches in Frome with the acquisition of a house in the town. A

4. Parish Dashboard. I have continued to use the parish 'Dashboard' to record safeguarding measures that are being taken in this benefice. The parish 'Dashboards' are administrated by the safeguarding team at the diocese of Bath and Wells. This is a live online way of storing all safeguarding information. The team at Bath and Wells can read it and see how we are doing in terms of following the Church of England's safeguarding policies and help us if needed. It became compulsory to use this in 2024 and it continues to be updated to help parishes to understand what to do to comply with the law. It provides a check list of the requirements and a record. The different levels have now been removed and each PCC within the benefice needs to meet the requirements as much as possible, eg by adopting the policies and making sure that people have the required training for their roles. The safeguarding records for each parish are held only on our 'Dashboard', which is much more secure than on a personal computer to comply with GDPR. Also, it means that when the safeguarding coordinator changes, the records all remain, and nothing should be lost in handing over the role.

Finally, please remember that if you are a member of the new PCC or are appointed by them at this AGM, you need to have your training up to date within 3 weeks after the AGM, so not long. Please make sure that you provide a current email address and check your emails, so that I can send you a help-sheet and a link to know where to start on the Bath and Wells website. Training does take up time, but most people find it informative and helpful and hopefully it does make us all better at our roles as we interact with others. Thank you to everyone who has done training for the time and effort that you put in and please do ask for help if needed.

Sarah Eyles email: hse.eyles@gmail.com

Churchwardens can serve a maximum of six years before standing down

Safeguarding Officer: Dr Sarah Eyles (Benefice Safeguarding Officer)

Mr Len Taylor- assistant for St. Mary's

Data Protection Officer: The Revd Liz Dudley

PCC Committees: The PCC operates through a number of committees, which meet between full meetings of the PCC, and which are:

Standing Committee: This is the only committee required by law. It has authority to transact the business of the PCC between its meetings, subject to any directions given by the Council. The committee consists of:- The Incumbent, Churchwardens, the PCC Secretary, and the Treasurer
Chair Revd Liz Dudley

Finance and Fund-Raising Committee: Specifically looks in depth at the finances of the church. The committee also considers the proposals for necessary work to be completed on the church and is responsible for applying for grants and fund-raising activities.

It is a sub-committee of the PCC and has no executive powers.
Chair Revd Liz Dudley

Parish Hall: The day to day running of St Mary's Hall operates by a system of online bookings for the use of the hall by the church and outside organisations to maximise income for parish funds. We are fortunate to have an excellent cleaner called Amy.

The new system is proving effective and income has increased. We have formed good and positive relationships with many of our hirers.

Outward giving (Charitable Donations): Outward Giving is discussed within the PCC and voted for by the members on the congregation. Donations are shown in the annual Accounts.

Social Committee: Made up of members of both churches in the Benefice, Christ Church and St Mary's Organises and co-ordinates the social events of the 2 churches. It has no executive powers.

Worship: Common Worship is in general use and there is a range of seasonal and special service booklets. These have been added to with additional services held throughout the year. Communicant figures have averaged 23 per Sunday considering both the 9am and 10.30 services.

Communicants on Wednesday average 7

Provision is made in the form of worship for major feast days and occasions when a larger number of people may attend eg Christmas Day, Easter Day, Harvest, etc.

12 people attended the dawn service arranged by St Mary's at Easter and 27 at Harvest.

Over the Christmas period there was a total of 132 attendees, with 47 at the Carol Service, 46 adults and 14 children at the Crib Service and 25 on Christmas morning.

The Remembrance Service was attended by 17.

The Garden Nursery held their Nativity and Harvest services at St Mary's, and there were 1 wedding and 3 baptisms.

Funerals, including interment of ashes and memorial services numbered 7.

There were 3 Lay worship morning services with an average of 17 attendees and 34 people attended the Christmas service for people living with memory loss.

Dissemination of Information and news: The members of the Congregation and wider community are kept informed of activities and events through weekly notice sheets, notices in the church, hall and external notice boards. There is also a Monthly News Sheet which is available at the beginning of each month. In August it was agreed to discontinue the quarterly magazine as it was difficult to produce something that was relevant and current. Maggie Read who was a member of the small team resigned and moved away, and it was felt that this was a good opportunity to try something new.

2. DBS applications. We are continuing to make applications through a company called Thirty-one:eight and a few aspects of this process have changed, but if anyone needs to make an application, they still start by letting me know. If anyone requires DBS clearance for their role in the church and their certificate is out of date (more than 3 years old) they need to please contact me as a matter of urgency and stop taking part in that role until the application is in progress. Similarly if you are doing something new and you don't know whether you need DBS clearance, please check.

3. Training. Some of the training requirements have changed this year:

- a. It is still the case that DBS holders and PCC members must have online training accounts and complete the 'Basic' and 'Foundation' courses. However, they now need to complete the course 'Raising Awareness of Domestic Abuse'. (At one time this was recommended but it is now expected.)
- b. In addition, anyone who is involved in the recruitment of people, particularly to remunerated roles in the church (not clergy) eg. Parish administrator needs to do the online 'Safer Recruiting' course.
- c. From May 2025, anyone appointed by a PCC must have an online training account and complete the 'Basic' training course. This new requirement affects all sidespersons aka members of church welcoming groups, typically people on the rota to greet people at the door and hand out the books and service sheets. These are also often the people who help strangers or newcomers to find their way through the services. If you intend to continue on a rota for this role and have not already set up an account and completed the training, please do. Ask if you need help.

The notice boards in the hall provide an ideal spot for sharing news and advertising events.

Revd Liz

Electoral Roll Report

The total number on the electoral roll at this time is 43 compared with 45 of a year ago. We have been saddened by the deaths of Arthur and Suzanne Bailey and Coral Williams.

1 person has left the roll as they no longer worship at St. Mary's.

We welcome Libby Dobson and Sarah Chabowska as new members on the roll.

Jane Mitchell (Electoral Roll Officer)

Safeguarding Report

1. Part of a wider system. In October, I attended 2 face to face sessions in Wells to complete the 'leadership in safeguarding' course. It was very interesting and informative to speak to members of safeguarding teams and clergy and lay people from other parishes, large and small, across the diocese. This is the third course of it's type that I have attended and it is clear that our understanding of how safeguarding can work to make our communities safer, more supportive and more effective has developed over the years. There were also reminders of why we need to keep taking safeguarding seriously, so thank you to everyone who has taken the time to do or renew their training and, where needed, DBS certifications so that it's all up to date.

Garden of Remembrance: The garden for the internment of cremated ashes facility for the parish. A great deal of time and effort, for which we are truly thankful, has been invested in the garden and continues to be so to ensure the dignity of the departed.

Main Churchyard and surrounding land: Day to day maintenance of the main churchyard and other land areas continues to be carried out. Many thanks are recorded to those who carry out this maintenance, which takes place unseen behind the scenes. With particular thanks to Len and Sue Taylor, Barbara Peto and Stewart Cooper. As Area Dean, Revd Liz agreed to hold the licence from the Diocese for the land at the bottom of the drive known as the Giant's garden. This is a three year lease and costs £1 per year. The Young Adult growing space has been taken on by Mary's House Community as the pioneer project led by Andrew and Elizabeth Alden ended in December. We are enormously grateful to them for their ministry and for laying such deep foundations that can be built on further.

Church Maintenance: Routine repairs and maintenance including the clearance of gutters are carried out regularly. Ongoing repairs and maintenance continues throughout the year. In particular this year to the repair of the hall chimney.

Damage to church: There are still signs of 'minor' vandalism around the church and churchyard, along with a quantity of litter.

Review of the year: The full PCC met five times during the year. Committees met between meetings and minutes were received by the PCC and discussed where necessary.

On behalf of St Mary's PCC Revd Liz Dudley Chair

Vicar's Report

Each year the annual meeting is an opportunity to gather and remember what has happened in the previous twelve months; to celebrate and to be encouraged as well as to plan for the next year.

The year began with sadness as Revd Harry left the benefice to take some time to reflect on his future ministry. His absence was keenly felt at the time and we still miss him.

In February I was elected as a member of General Synod, and with a degree of apprehension I set off for the Synod in London. By the time I had been to the second one in York, in July, I had found my feet and began to enjoy what was going on. Although it is quite intense when it is happening, there is not much in between work to do, and I have found it inspiring to understand the really big picture of our church and to believe that change is possible.

A second departure, this time later in the year, was when Catherine our administrator left after nearly four years with us. This has left a significant gap in the benefice and I have found myself doing much of the admin. In some ways this is in itself an important ministry, but there are only so many hours in each day and I am aware that sometimes things could be better. However, there has been a significant financial saving in admin costs which given our challenging financial situation should not be ignored.

Change also came about with the disbanding of the magazine team and a rethink about communication in the benefice. A monthly newsletter has been produced which has been received fairly positively.

In August it became clear that Mary's House Community was not in a position to take over the house as the renovations had been completed. There was disappointment around this but also a sense of relief. The vision remains and is evolving into something really exciting. When the pioneer project in the Giant's garden reached its conclusion in December, Marys House Community agreed to take on the garden and continue developing the space at the bottom of the drive. We were also able to negotiate with

The gutters have not yet been cleared, due to the specialists' workload. They will get to us!

The year was rounded off with delightful Christmas services – lots of joyous carol singing and the lovely scent from the fresh hay spread on the floor (and eventually over other areas of the church).

As ever, we'd like to pay tribute to Liz, with her quiet, wise leadership and advice – and occasional curbing of some of our more madcap ideas.

Len and Diane

Hall Report

The hall is used well by a mixture of regular hirers and occasional users. It was agreed by the PCC to increase the hourly rate and it has been £15 per hour for ad hoc users and £13 per hour for regular users. Hall usage connected to the church is not generally charged although it is getting increasingly hard to find vacant slots. Overall, the income from the hall has increased. Raising the rates did not result in loss of bookings. Hirers are able to use the outside courtyard and appreciate the improved surface.

There is a new online booking system which has made it easier for people to manage their own bookings and find information, This has reduced the admin. This has been important as in August Catherine left and Revd Liz took on the hall management. She is handing this on in 2026 but has gained good insight into how the hall works. Hirers really appreciate meeting and connecting with the church community and are grateful to Diane, Sue and Pauline for being willing to open up and lock up afterwards.

the bottom end, where the protective layer of chippings was being eroded. This has exposed the soil beneath and has created areas of 'poaching' – dips and ruts which fill with water when it rains. It also further exposes tree roots, which leads to their damage. A temporary fence was erected to prevent cars being driven over the worst section, but over time part of the fence has been flattened, and vehicles are seen at busy times reversing onto the susceptible areas. The recommendation of the tree surgeons is that the whole area be resurfaced with the same type of stone as was laid many years earlier, to provide adequate drainage (which prevents run off onto the road), and won't choke the tree roots. The nursery, which at one point thought they had responsibility for the parking area were minded to tarmac the whole place, which would have severely damaged the listed beech trees. When advised that they were not liable, they offered willing support to help finance the resurfacing. To that end we have been running monthly coffee mornings, and they came up trumps with a wonderful array of cakes and scones for one of them.

The trees which were surveyed during the spring had the dead wood removed early on, and the remedial work carried out in the autumn – this has addressed the problem of branches overhanging the road, which in some instances were brushing the roofs of delivery vehicles travelling up and down Innox hill, and also served to rebalance the trees, making them less susceptible to rocking in high winds.

The boiler in the crypt was serviced in October and a corroded feed-pipe successfully replaced. It's a good, but elderly boiler which means there can be delays in finding parts that need replacing. However, while it still works we'll hang on to it. Not all modern heating systems are an option for us.

The fire extinguishers have all been given a clean bill of health, with two having been replaced, as they had come to the end of their operational life (10 years).

the Diocese for the PCC to take responsibility for the Paddock (behind the garage)

At the same time, we were approached by Ben Still from Frome Loop who was looking for a new site for their compost making project. Conversations were had and the PCC agreed to offer hospitality to the project for five years. This has resulted in an area of hard standing and a level path to the prayer shed.

This year has been one of particular financial challenge despite the generous increase in giving and the extra fundraising efforts. I have been greatly encouraged by the commitment of the PCC to keep trying, not just to find money, but to stay focussed on the Gospel and to grow as a church. as we move into 2026, we have agreed to trial a monthly service of the Word and to explore Bubble Church. This will be costly in resources (not least energy and time) but there is a real desire to connect with families and children that is already evident in our Open the Book team and the deepening relationship with the Garden Nursery. Change is never universally welcomed, but I would encourage you all to pray about these ideas and to offer what you can.

During the year, my role as Area Dean became more onerous and by December, I was recognising that the demands being made were excessive. In December I offered my resignation to +Michael and was mightily relieved when he accepted it. This has given me a little more time to focus on what is important and where I believe God is calling me to be.

The year ahead will continue to present great challenges, but also opportunities and we know that God is good. I feel so privileged to be your vicar and to share in this part of the story of St. Mary's, and I am deeply grateful for the spirit of generous hospitality that makes our church so special. Thank you.

Revd Liz

PCC Secretary Report

During the year 2025 the PCC met five times. We endeavour to start each meeting with a time of reflection of scripture using Dwelling in the Word. The passage of scripture that we used was Isaiah 55. The rationale for this is to firmly root the business of our church in scripture and to never forget why we have all turned up and in whose name we are making decisions. It also enables everyone to speak to be listened too.

Safeguarding is always on the agenda. Sarah has an opportunity to update everyone on training requirements and occasionally we have a discussion around a scenario. This year we have updated the safeguarding policy and the policy for recruiting ex offenders.

The PCC takes seriously its care of the building and grounds. There has been numerous discussions about the copper beech trees, the state of the car park, the chimney repairs and general maintenance.

There have also been good discussions about worship and how we can develop our worshipping lives and opportunity for outreach. Recognising that the congregations are not growing and that the early service is not well attended, the PCC agreed to try a non Eucharistic service for six months, starting in Jan 2026. The coffee mornings and breakfast club continue to connect with people and to provide a space for socialising.

Finances always feature especially in what has been a challenging year. Thanks go to Glen for his work and the clarity that he brings to the meetings. The PCC agreed unanimously to support Glen in his discourse with the Diocesan Finance Team and although not paying the parish share for two months was regretted, there is a determination to grow and remain focussed on being a faithful worshipping community.

In August Catherine resigned as administrator which has impacted Revd. Liz's workload. The PCC have maintained interest in the activities of Mary's House Community even though they are not directly responsible.

The collaboration with Frome Loop Composting Project in the paddock led to the creation of a hard standing area and a level access to the prayer shed.

At the end of each meeting there is an opportunity to comment of what went well and what might have been better. Comments like *:Positive meeting • covered a lot of ground • there was clarity on a number of issues • planning and time keeping was effective • frank open discussion • made progress • on the same page • made decisions • glimmer of hope • worked really hard • seeing results • knowledge is power • jammy dodgers • talked honestly and openly* shows that being on the PCC is a really valuable and positive thing to do. Yes, it is a responsibility, but without the prayer, dedication and creativity of this group of people, our church would not be the church we love and are called to be. Please consider joining in the conversations and sharing the load.

Revd Liz (Chair)

Churchwardens' Report

The year kicked off with a visit from Bishop Michael, who came to gather more information about our church's activities in and around the communities in Frome.

As both of us wear more than one hat, we encountered him as part of a couple of different groups: Len as an Anna chaplain, and Diane as part of the 'Open the Book' team. Covering both ends of the age spectrum.

Our usual round of activities in the 'quieter' months involve such things as replacing blown bulbs; slipped roof tiles and clearing leaves missed during the autumnal purge.

As we moved into spring, it became apparent that continued heavy use of the carpark was causing damage to areas towards