

**ST. PETER'S CHURCH SHARNBROOK
ANNUAL MEETING FOR SELECTION OF CHURCHWARDENS
AND
PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL
TO BE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 20TH. MAY 2026 AT 7.30 P.M.**



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The Church of England

St. Peter's Church Sharnbrook

is a church which is the responsibility of a parochial church council duly constituted under the Parochial Church Council Powers Measure 1956 as amended and the Church Representation Rules

The Church is registered with code: 632387

in the diocese of *St Albans*

in the parish of *Sharnbrook*

The Parochial Church Council of *Sharnbrook*

is a charity for the purposes of the Charities Act 2011

The Church address is: Church Lane, Sharnbrook,
Bedford, MK44 1HR



Parochial Church Councils (Powers) Measure 1956

DIOCESE OF ST ALBAN'S: ST PETER'S CHURCH SHARNBROOK

The Annual meeting of Parishioners for the Election of Churchwardens and the Annual Parochial Church Meeting will be held on Wednesday 20th May 2026 starting at 7.30 pm in St Peter's Room and also via the Zoom link below.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83874011929>

Passcode: 727597

AGENDA

Prayers

MEETING OF PARISHIONERS:

- 1 Apologies of absence
- 2 To appoint a Clerk for the Meetings.
- 3 To confirm the Minutes of the Parishioners' Meeting of 21st May 2025.
- 4 To elect/confirm Church Wardens for the ensuing year.

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING:

- 1 Apologies of absence.
- 2 To confirm the Minutes of the 2025 APCM of 21st May 2025.
- 3 To receive the new Electoral Roll.
- 4 To receive the Secretary's Report.
- 5 To receive the Examined Accounts of the PCC for 2025.
- 6 To receive the Churchwarden's Report including the Fabric Report
- 7 To receive the following reports:
 - St Peter's Music/Musical Events/ St Peter's Choir, Ecumenical Link with Calpino
 - Sharnbrook Community Choir
 - Tower Captain
 - Ouse Valley Diocesan Mother's Union
 - Little Hearts
 - Sharnbrook Churches Together
 - Missions & Charities
 - The Review
 - Friends of St Peter's
 - Safeguarding
 - Deanery Synod
 - Rector
- 8 To elect/confirm the Deanery Synod Representatives
- 9 To elect/confirm PCC Members
- 10 To appoint Sidesmen
- 11 To appoint an Independent Examiner
- 12 To appoint Representatives for Sharnbrook Churches Together
- 13 To consider any other matters of parochial or general church interest.

The PCC Officers and Standing Committee will be elected at the first PCC Meeting after the APCM meeting and will be held on Wednesday 17th June 2026 at 7.00pm.

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF PARISHIONERS
TO SELECT CHURCHWARDENS FOR THE ENSUING YEAR
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 21st MAY 2025 AT 7.30 PM
IN ST PETER'S ROOM PLUS VIA ZOOM**

Present: Rev Paolo di Leo and a total of 16 parishioners attended in person and no one attended via Zoom.

Reverend Paolo welcomed everyone and then said the opening prayer.

1. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Viv Steiner, Mel Oxley-Boyle, Alison and Pul Monk, Caroline and Robert Evens and Fiona di Leo.

2. Clerk to the meeting

Mr Peter Scott was proposed to be the Secretary for the meeting by Roland Carpenter and was approved by all attendees.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 15th May 2024

Minutes were proposed by Roland Carpenter, seconded by Neville Adams and were unanimously agreed. There were no matters arising.

4. Election of Church Wardens

As no new nominations for Church Warden have been received, Roland Carpenter agreed to stand for a further year. Roland's nomination was proposed by Rev Paolo, seconded by Alan Morgan and was unanimously agreed by the meeting.

Consequently, we have a vacancy for the other Church Warden role.

Roland said it was a privilege and pleasure to serve as Church Warden, however he needs help or assistance with both Church Warden duties and his continuing role as Treasurer.

Rev Paolo thanked Roland for all that he does for the church as both the only Church Warden and Treasurer including the administration, pastoral work, paths to peace and the continuing work with the refugees in the Sharnbrook Hotel.

This concluded the annual meeting of parishioners.

**MINUTES OF THE 104th ANNUAL PAROCHIAL MEETING
OF ST PETER'S CHURCH, SHARNBROOK
held on Wednesday 21st May 2025 at 7.30 pm
in St Peter's Room and also via Zoom.**

Present: Reverend Paolo Di Leo and 16 Parishioners attended.

Rev Paolo welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Viv Steiner, Mel Oxley-Boyle, Alison and Paul Monk, Caroline and Robert Evens, Fiona di Leo.

It was noted that there was 1 attendee via Zoom.

2. Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting of 2024

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 15th May 2024 had previously been circulated by the Secretary. The Minutes were proposed for acceptance as a true record by Judy Lee, seconded by Joyce Scott and unanimously agreed.

3. Electoral Roll Report

A new Electoral Roll was compiled between 3rd February and 25th April 2025 and there were 9 new additions, 5 deletions and 2 failed to renew.

Therefore, the total number of members as at 30th April is 68.

Rev Paolo thanked Mel Oxley-Boyle for her support as Electoral Roll Officer.

4. Secretary's Report

Peter Scott advised he had nothing further to add to his report except to say we continue to seek new members to join the PCC and in particular another Church Warden and Treasurer. Rev Paolo wished to minute a vote of thanks to Mel for her contributions to the PCC over the last 3 years.

5. Examined Accounts

Roland explained that he had been unable to complete the full financial accounting report due to other priorities but he had produced a summary document which was circulated at the meeting. Roland proposed and the meeting agreed that we would delegate the responsibility of approving the Financial Statement to the next PCC meeting which will be held on 18th June.

From the summary report, Roland highlighted that, although in our budget for 2024 we had forecast a shortfall of £2,898.00, we actually made a net surplus on the General Fund of £3,002.00. This increase in our income was mainly attributable to increases in fees, donations and 'planned giving' by standing order.

Rev Paolo thanked Roland for his continued commitment as our Treasurer despite his many other responsibilities as Church Warden. He also thanked our congregation for their generosity in supporting the work of St Peter's.

Roland was asked whether the large increase in funerals in 2024 had had a negative effect on our 'planned giving' but this was not the case, as many of the funerals were for people who were not regular church goers.

The Treasurer's Summary Report was unanimously agreed by the meeting.

6. Churchwarden's report

Roland summarised the key events and changes which occurred through the year from his report which includes increased engagement between the church and the local community.

Roland highlighted that the re-introduction of St Peter's Fete at Sharnbrook House and also several coffee mornings which were held throughout the year, contributed to a marked increase to our income. Other musical events included the Sharnbrook Community Choir and 'Brookettes', a Lute Concert and also Chinese Music.

Roland wished to congratulate Alan Morgan and his sub-committee for their excellent work in progressing a large project to improve the accessibility to St Peter's – proposed plans are on display in the Lady Chapel. The Phase 1 plans are being finalised, planning approval being sought and once costings have been provided, we will then be seeking the necessary funding. Our architect has also been briefed on the proposed scope for a Phase 2 and we await his draft specifications for review. Rev Paolo also thanked Alan for identifying and progressing the need to improve the accessibility for all our parishioners which will be very welcome. Roland wished to thank everyone, including all the clergy, for their continued support for all that we do together at St Peter's.

7. St Peter's Music/Choir and Sharnbrook Community Choir

Colin Scott advised he had nothing to add to his music report but mentioned that he accompanied Rev Paolo recently on a busy visit to Calpino to meet with the new priest and also some old friends.

The relationship with Calpino has contributed to teaching us how to communicate/connect across other denominations both locally and internationally.

Rev Paolo wished to thank Colin, Kate, Janet and the choir for all the wonderful music which they provide throughout the year.

8. Sharnbrook Community Choir

Rev Paolo wished to thank the choir for their continued support of St Peter's and also acknowledged their many successes and concerts performed through the year.

9. Sharnbrook Benefice Tower Captain

Rev Paolo wished to thank the team which ring the bells at St Peter's and St Mary's for regular Sunday services as well as other celebrations. It was noted that the team are always looking for new members.

10. Ouse Valley Diocesan Mothers' Union

The group continues to prosper and Rev Paolo wished to thank Jackie, Hazel and Viv for their continued support.

11. Little Hearts

Little Hearts continued through 2024 providing a valuable space for babies, toddlers, parents, grandparents or carers to relax, connect and have fun. Rev Diana continued to lead the group through the year but now that she has left in Spring 2025, the group will continue to thrive under the joint leadership of Louise, Leanne and Ruth. The selection of toys/games was reviewed earlier in the year and new toys and replacements were able to be purchased following a grant from the local council Ward fund.

12. Sharnbrook Churches Together

Rev Paolo advised that we share ongoing responsibility for 'Carers Together', Good Neighbour Scheme and Lunch Club which meets on the 3rd Tuesday of the month.

In addition, we share several joint services, Good Friday Walk of Witness, Harvest Supper and the Unlock Walk in London.

A request was made for volunteers to form a 'catering team' to meet in July to organise a simple and practical menu for the next Harvest Supper and allocate individual responsibilities.

13. Missions and Charities

Due to lack of time, the choice of charities was the same as the previous year under three headings i.e. Global Focus, Bedfordshire Focus and Paths to Peace.

It was highlighted that through the 'Ark' support group, contact has been established with the Bedford Fire and Rescue Service who are keen to undertake fire inspections in homes where there are vulnerable people and by having someone they know from the Ark group, they have been able to facilitate introductions and visits by the Fire Service.

14. The Review

Report was noted including the reduction in both advertising and subscription revenue. Rev Paolo wished to thank the committee for their hard work through the year and also the many volunteers who undertake the distribution of the Review each month. The Review does provide income for St Peter's and the group are looking at digitisation of the magazine to make it more accessible to a younger audience.

15. Friends of St Peter's

Now that Ivan Flack has retired as chair, Rev Paolo wished to thank Paul Monk, Robert Evens and Katie Hayes for taking the organisation forward. New committee volunteers will be very welcome. Apart from the 200 Club Lottery, other income streams have declined and therefore the new committee will be looking at how they raise money in the future. It was noted that the Friends committed £1,188.00 towards the cost of providing new flagstones in the Lady Chapel.

16. Deanery Synod

The report was noted. The meeting noted various changes in responsibility across the Deanery and it was noted that Rev Nick Munday will be stepping down as Assistant Rural Dean in 3 months when Kath Wilson returns from a sabbatical. In addition, as noted earlier, Alan Morgan has resigned as one of the representatives from St Peter's – Neville Adams will remain as our other representative.

17. Safeguarding

It was noted no incidents occurred during 2024 and all safeguarding training and DBS checks are up to date. Rev Paolo thanked Rosemary for her continued support for all aspects of our Safeguarding.

18. Rector's Report

Rev Paolo summarised the key points from his report. He wished to thank Rev Diana for her valuable contribution during her time with us a Curate and we wish her every success now that she is installed at Holy Trinity, Leverstock Green. He has recently started regular 'Home Groups' and 20 people attended the first meeting. Rev Paolo continues to work with both Sharnbrook Primary School and Sharnbrook Academy to provide valuable input to their RE curriculums. Rev Paolo thanked everyone for making his work so enjoyable and for allowing him to pursue the growth of the church and reaching out to many organisations.

19. Election of Deanery Synod representatives

Neville Adams agreed to continue as one of our Deanery representatives and Rev Paolo thanked Alan Morgan now that he is standing down as the other representative.

20. Election of PCC

Apart from Mel Oxley-Boyle, all current members of the PCC confirmed that they were happy to continue for a further year. Rev Paolo thanked Mel for her contribution to the PCC but was pleased to note that she will continue as the Electoral Roll Officer for a further year. Roland advised that Janet Norman was keen to rejoin the PCC and he proposed her, Judy Lee seconded the nomination and it was agreed unanimously by the meeting.

21. Other Appointments

- **Side people** – Roland advised that there are no changes to the current sides people. It was noted that Rev Paolo will be holding a meeting on 22nd June at 3.00pm with all Sides People and all 'Welcomers'.
- **Churches Together** – Janet Welsh, Roland Carpenter and Rev Paolo (co-chair) will represent the benefice as there were no new volunteers from St Peter's Church.
- **Independent Examiner** – Roland agreed to ask Rose Johnston FCA if she will continue in the role.
- **Vacancies** – The vacancies for Church Warden, Treasurer, Deanery Synod and Churches Together representatives will be discussed at the next PCC meeting in June.

22. AOB

Caroline Evens had raised a question via email and wished to know if St Peter's will be resuming receiving communion at the altar rail as was done pre-Covid.

Rev Paolo stated that this has been discussed at a previous PCC meeting and is definitely going to be introduced in the near future. There was some discussion on how this will best work from a practical level with having two chalices for the wine (i.e. one for sipping and one for 'dipping') and it was agreed that the bread and wine would be distributed along the line and it would be clear if the communicant wanted to either 'sip' or 'dip' by whether or not they still had the wafer in their hand.

23. Date of next meeting

The next PCC meeting will be held on Wednesday 18th June 2025 at 7.00 pm.

The meeting closed with the Grace.

Electoral Roll Officer's Report

As Electoral Roll Officer appointed by the PCC, I am responsible for maintaining and updating the Electoral Roll.

Being on the Electoral Roll is an excellent way to demonstrate commitment and support for the worship and work at St Peter's Church.

In addition, at the APCM on 20th May 2026, there will be vacancies to fill for a Churchwarden(s), Treasurer, PCC members and a Deanery Synod representative.

Only those on the Electoral Roll can nominate candidates. Prospective candidates must have been on the Electoral Roll for up to six months.

Notice of Preparation of the new Electoral Roll was displayed on Notice Boards in the Church Porch and in St Peter's Room from 1st February 2026, allowing plenty of time for members and non-members who wished to be included or deleted, before the closing date for new applications, which was 24th April 2026.

The new Electoral Roll has now been prepared and was displayed at least fourteen days before the APCM.

In the fourteen days preceding the APCM no amendments were allowed to be made to the Roll, only rectification of mistakes.

The new Roll came into operation on 4th May 2026 and shows:

| | |
|------------------------------------|-----------|
| New additions | 2 |
| Deletions | 2 |
| Total on new Electoral Roll | 68 |

Therefore, as at 24th April 2026 we have an Electoral Roll of 68.

Mel Oxley-Boyle
Electoral Roll Officer

Secretary's Report

PCC meetings, usually held bi-monthly, were mainly held face to face but some were held on zoom. The meetings were all well attended.

We continue to seek new volunteers to join the PCC as we have vacancies for a Church Warden, Treasurer, Deanery Synod representative, Churches Together representative and up to 4 Lay Members. If anyone is interested, please speak to Reverend Paolo Di Leo or Roland Carpenter.

Please read all the reports provided by the many groups who work, often unseen, to make St Peter's Church a welcoming and happy place in which to worship.

The current PCC members are:

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Chair: | Reverend Paolo Di Leo |
| Churchwardens: | Roland Carpenter, Vacancy |
| Treasurer: | Roland Carpenter |
| Secretary: | Peter Scott |
| Deanery Synod reps: | Neville Adams, Vacancy |
| Electoral Roll Officer: | Mel Oxley-Boyle |
| Lay Members: | Colin Scott, Judy Lee, Wendy Armitage, Helen Taylor, Vivienne Steiner and Alan Morgan |

Peter Scott
Secretary

DATA PRIVACY NOTICE

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) of St Peter's, Sharnbrook

1. Your personal data – what is it?

Personal data relates to a living individual who can be identified from that data. Identification can be by the information alone or in conjunction with any other information in the data controller's possession or likely to come into such possession. The processing of personal data is governed by the General Data Protection Regulation (the "GDPR").

2. Who are we?

The PCC of St Peter's, Sharnbrook is the data controller (contact details below). This means it decides how your personal data is processed and for what purposes.

3. How do we process your personal data?

The PCC of St Peter's, Sharnbrook complies with its obligations under the "GDPR" by keeping personal data up to date; by storing and destroying it securely; by not collecting or retaining excessive amounts of data; by protecting personal data from loss, misuse, unauthorised access, disclosure and by ensuring that appropriate technical measures are in place to protect personal data.

We use your personal data for the following purposes:

- To enable us to provide a voluntary service for the benefit of the public in a particular geographical area as specified in our constitution.
- To administer membership records.
- To fundraise and promote the interests of the charity.
- To manage our employees and volunteers.
- To maintain our own accounts and records (including the processing of gift aid applications);
- To inform you of news, events, activities and services running at St Peter's.
- To share your contact details with the Diocesan office so they can keep you informed about news in the diocese and events, activities and services that will be occurring in the diocese and in which you may be interested.

4. What is the legal basis for processing your personal data?

- Explicit consent of the data subject so that we can keep you informed about news, events, activities, services, process your gift aid donations and keep you informed about diocesan events.
- Processing is necessary for carrying out obligations under employment, social security or social protection law, or a collective agreement.
- Processing is carried out by a not-for-profit body with a political, philosophical, religious or trade union aim provided:
 - the processing relates only to members or former members (or those who have regular contact with it in connection with those purposes); and
 - there is no disclosure to a third party without consent.

5. Sharing your personal data

Your personal data will be treated as strictly confidential and will only be shared with other members of the church in order to carry out a service to other church members or for purposes connected with the church. We will only share your data with third parties outside of the parish with your consent.

6. Your rights and your personal data

Unless subject to an exemption under the GDPR, you have the following rights with respect to your own personal data:

- The right to request a copy of your personal data which the PCC of St Peter's, Sharnbrook holds about you.
- The right to request that the PCC of St Peter's, Sharnbrook corrects any personal data if it is found to be inaccurate or out of date.
- The right to request your personal data is erased where it is no longer necessary for the PCC of St Peter's, Sharnbrook to retain such data.
- The right to withdraw your consent to the processing at any time.
- The right to request that the data controller provide the data subject with his/her personal data and where possible, to transmit that data directly to another data controller, (known as the right to data portability), (where applicable) [*Only applies where the processing is based on consent or is necessary for the performance of a contract with the data subject and in either case the data controller processes the data by automated means*].
- The right, where there is a dispute in relation to the accuracy or processing of your personal data, to request a restriction is placed on further processing.
- The right to object to the processing of personal data, (where applicable) [*Only applies where processing is based on legitimate interests (or the performance of a task in the public interest/exercise of official authority); direct marketing and processing for the purposes of scientific/historical research and statistics*]
- The right to lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioners Office.

7. Further processing

If we wish to use your personal data for a new purpose, not covered by this Data Protection Notice, then we will provide you with a new notice explaining this new use prior to commencing the processing and setting out the relevant purposes and processing conditions. Where and whenever necessary, we will seek your prior consent to the new processing.

8. Contact Details

To exercise all relevant rights, queries of complaints, please in the first instance contact: The Rector, Reverend Paolo Di Leo, 81 High Street, Sharnbrook MK44 1PE, Tel: 01234 782000, Mobile: 07968 606377 or email: rev.pdileo@gmail.com

You can contact the Information Commissioners Office on 0303 123 1113 or via email <https://ico.org.uk/global/contact-us/email/> or at the Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire. SK9 5AF.



20th July 2020

¹ Details about retention periods can currently be found in the Record Management Guides located on the Church of England website at: - <https://www.churchofengland.org/more/libraries-and-archives/records-management-guides>

FINANCIAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2025

2025 Financial Statements

The financial statements are summarised on the following pages. The detailed report is being issued as a separate self-contained document, together with the Independent Examiner's report.

2026 Financial Budget

My proposed 2026 Budget is also summarised below.

Review of the year

2025 was yet another challenging year for cash flow, requiring the eventual withdrawal of £3000 from our deposit account at the turn of the year.

Our budget estimate for 2025 had predicted a surplus of £7434 for the General Fund but there was a major reversal of fortunes and by the year end we were showing a shortfall of £9616, with expenditure exceeding budget by £2350, and income falling short of budget by £7266

The year-end General Fund situation is shown in the December 2025 Financial Statement.

Total income (line 16) was **£7266 below budget**, and **£11101 lower than in 2024**. As is noted in the right-hand column of the table, the main contributions to this major turn-around were Parochial Fees (8), which, as previously recognised, had been exceptionally high in 2024, and Donations (5), which although still considerable, fell substantially short of the very generous 2024 levels. Reversing this downward trend were increases in planned giving by Standing Order (13), and increases from greater use of the Envelope Scheme (6)

Total expenses (45) were **£2350 ahead of budget**, but **£6020 below actual 2024 expenditure**. The departure of our curate early in April 2025 saw significant reductions in housing costs (20, 22 and 23) and we also received a full refund of the £1500 Tenancy Deposit (21), including a small amount of interest! The reduced cost for gas heating reflected the late refund of overcharged VAT from 2024, but the cost of other utilities and incidental expenses all increased by moderate amounts.

So the General Fund 2024 surplus of £2842 was almost exactly overturned in 2025 with a net loss of £2899.

Several of our **Specialist Funds** are worthy of note.

- a) The depletion of our **Fabric Fund (63)** continued into 2025, firstly in paying the balance for the emergency rebuilding of the collapsed Church Boundary Wall, and then in meeting the significant up-front costs to Architect and Principal Designer, in connection with Phase 1 of our **Inclusive Access to Heritage** project. At the end of the year the fund was in deficit by nearly £7800, but much of this has already been recouped by voluntary donations to the project.
- b) The **Ouse Valley MU Fund (61)** is not the property of the PCC. It provides a special holding location for local MU funds during the year, but all money is transferred to St. Albans at the year end.
- c) The £1200 deposited into the **Missions and Charities Fund (57)** by monthly transfers of £100 during the year, is distributed to mission or charity projects by the end of the year. However, in 2025 some additional transfers took place, leaving £793 still available for charity distribution
- d) Thanks to further very generous donations, the **Flower Fund (59)** recovered all of the shortfall reported at last year's APCM, and ended 2025 in credit to the tune of £130.
- e) In 2023 we launched a new designated fund to manage donations and payments in support of the work at the Sharnbrook Hotel by members of the **Sharnbrook Support Group (70)**. Although showing a small outstanding deficit at the end of 2025, the fund received further donations in the first quarter of 2026, thus restoring zero balance. At the end of April, as the Home Office contract comes to an end, the few remaining residents were relocated. This fund will disappear from the accounts in 2027.
- f) The **Music Fund (58)** receives regular income that is more than sufficient to meet the cost of our annual membership subscription to the Royal School of Church Music (RSCM) On the other hand, the **Organ Fund (60)** no longer receives regular income, but currently bears the annual cost of professional tuning. The PCC has agreed that these two funds can be combined into a single General Music Fund, still with restricted status (Res), with effect from the start of 2026.

In conclusion, I would again like to take the opportunity to gratefully acknowledge the continued generosity of all members of the Church family and local community, whether through planned or spontaneous donations.

R P Carpenter 01 May 2026

**ST PETER'S PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2025**

| | 2025 | 2025 | 2024 | Better / |
|------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|
| | ACTUAL | BUDGET | ACTUAL | (Worse) than |
| 1 INCOME | | | | |
| 2 CBF Deposit Fund Interest | 724 | 959 | 959 | -235 |
| 3 Collections - Bap, Fun, Mar | 58 | 31 | 31 | 27 |
| 4 Dividends / interest | 163 | 159 | 159 | 4 |
| 5 Donations | 6773 | 13930 | 13930 | -7157 |
| 6 Envelope Scheme | 605 | 215 | 215 | 390 |
| 7 Events Income | 6220 | 6303 | 6003 | 160 |
| 8 Fees | 4236 | 3957 | 9774 | -5538 |
| 9 Gift Day Envelopes | | | | |
| 10 Income Tax Recovery | 8956 | 9555 | 9100 | -144 |
| 11 Loose Collections | 2344 | 2635 | 2635 | -291 |
| 12 Sharnbrook PCC Review | 3500 | 3500 | 3500 | 0 |
| 13 Standing Orders | 27320 | 26979 | 25694 | 1626 |
| 14 St Peter's Room Fees | 1014 | 946 | 946 | 68 |
| 15 Items for Sale | 2 | 12 | 12 | -10 |
| 16 Total Income | 61915 | 69181 | 72958 | -11101 |
| 17 Actual minus budget 2025 | | -7266 | | |
| 18 EXPENSES | | | | |
| 19 Diocesan Common Fund | 43926 | 40095 | 35621 | 2662 |
| 20 Curate Housing (Diocesan) | 1408 | 3831 | 12375 | |
| 21 Curate tenancy Deposit | -1518 | 1500 | 0 | 1518 |
| 22 Curate Housing (Sharnbrook PCC) | 2124 | 429 | 2888 | 763 |
| 23 Curacy Water Rates | 464 | 160 | 633 | 169 |
| 24 Electricity | 1037 | 723 | 723 | -314 |
| 25 Events Expenses | 1465 | 1996 | 1901 | 436 |
| 26 Fire Extinguisher Service | 272 | 262 | 256 | -16 |
| 27 Gas-Heating | 1487 | 3251 | 3096 | 1610 |
| 28 Gas-Boiler Service / Repairs | 216 | 216 | 0 | -216 |
| 29 Hospitality | 261 | 45 | -26 | -287 |
| 30 Insurance and Licenses | 4490 | 4401 | 4192 | -298 |
| 31 Organists Honoraria | 1425 | 1400 | 1400 | -25 |
| 32 Postage/Printing/Stationery | 352 | 105 | 100 | -252 |
| 33 Clergy Expenses | 2387 | 1839 | 2350 | -36 |
| 34 Cleaning | 29 | 30 | 29 | 0 |
| 35 Repairs/Maintenance | 138 | 210 | 0 | -138 |
| 36 Security | 1105 | 1105 | 1140 | 35 |
| 37 Sundry Expenses | 126 | 295 | 281 | 155 |
| 38 Water Rates | 96 | 108 | 102 | 7 |
| 39 Wine, Wafers, Candles, Oil | 236 | 317 | 302 | 66 |
| 40 Broadband / Internet | 1012 | 929 | 885 | -127 |
| 41 Transfer to Missions/Charities | 1200 | 1200 | 1200 | 0 |
| 42 Transfer to Maintenance Fund | 360 | 300 | 360 | 0 |
| 43 Transfer to Boiler Fund | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 44 Property Expenses | 0 | 0 | 309 | 309 |
| 45 Total Expenses | 64098 | 61747 | 70116 | 6020 |
| 46 Actual minus budget 2025 | | 2350 | | |
| 47 Surplus/(Deficit) | -2182 | 7434 | 2899 | |
| 48 Actual minus budget 2025 | | -9616 | | |

| 51 | <u>SPECIAL FUNDS</u> | <u>Opening Balance</u> | <u>Income</u> | <u>Expenditure</u> | <u>Closing Balance</u> |
|----|--|----------------------------|---------------|--------------------|----------------------------|
| 52 | Benefice Admin, P&M S (Des) | 13377 | 0 | 0 | 13377 |
| 53 | Calpino (Res) | 101 | 0 | 0 | 101 |
| 54 | Churchyard (Res) | -78 | 173 | 151 | -56 |
| 55 | COVID-19 Relief Fund (Des) | 5437 | 0 | 0 | 5437 |
| 56 | Housegroup (Res) | 113 | 0 | 0 | 113 |
| 57 | Missions/Charities (Res) | 4 | 5494 | 4704 | 793 |
| 58 | Music (Res) | 1314 | 260 | 180 | 1394 |
| 59 | N Blackburn Flower (Res) | -63 | 538 | 344 | 130 |
| 60 | Organ (Res) | 85 | 0 | 216 | -131 |
| 61 | Ouse Valley MU Fund (Res) | 0 | 625 | 625 | 0 |
| 62 | Paths to Peace Pastoral Fund (Des) | 17354 | 4776 | 486 | 21643 |
| 63 | Fabric Fund (Res) | 2291 | 0 | 10059 | -7768 |
| 64 | Maintenance (Des) | 596 | 360 | 0 | 956 |
| 65 | St Peter's Guild (Res) | 2137 | 0 | 0 | 2137 |
| 66 | Gells Trust Fund (Res) | 1035 | 0 | 0 | 1035 |
| 67 | Sharnbrook Support Group Fund (Des) | -73 | 256 | 210 | -26 |

SHARNBROOK PCC BUDGET 2026

| | Budget 2026 | | Actual 2025 | Budget 2025 | Actual minus Budget |
|--------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------------------|
| EXPENSES | | See note | | | |
| Diocesan Common Fund | 48389 | a | 42518 | 40095 | 2423 |
| Curate Housing (Diocesan) | 0 | a c | 1408 | 3831 | -2423 |
| Curate tenancy Deposit | 0 | a c | -1518 | -1500 | -18 |
| Curate Housing (Sharnbrook) | 0 | a c | 3533 | 429 | 3104 |
| Curacy Water Rates | 0 | a c | 464 | 160 | 304 |
| Electricity | 1036 | a | 1036 | 723 | 313 |
| Events Expenses | 1539 | b | 1465 | 1996 | -531 |
| Fire Extinguisher Service | 272 | a | 272 | 262 | 10 |
| Gas-Heating | 1710 | b | 1487 | 3251 | -1764 |
| Gas-Boiler Service / Repairs | 0 | d | 216 | 216 | 0 |
| Hospitality | 45 | e | 261 | 45 | 216 |
| Insurance and Licenses | 4715 | b | 4490 | 4401 | 89 |
| Organists Honoraria | 1425 | a | 1425 | 1400 | 25 |
| Postage/Printing/Stationery | 370 | b | 352 | 105 | 247 |
| Clergy Expenses | 2173 | a | 2387 | 1839 | 548 |
| Cleaning | 30 | e | 29 | 30 | -1 |
| Repairs/Maintenance | 138 | a | 138 | 210 | -72 |
| Security | 1105 | a | 1105 | 1105 | -0 |
| Sundry Expenses | 132 | b | 126 | 295 | -169 |
| Water Rates | 101 | b | 96 | 108 | -12 |
| Wine, Wafers, Candles, Oil | 247 | b | 236 | 317 | -81 |
| Broadband / Internet | 1062 | b | 1012 | 929 | 83 |
| Transfer to Missions/Charities | 1200 | a | 1200 | 1200 | 0 |
| Transfer to Maintenance Fund | 360 | a | 360 | 300 | 60 |
| Transfer to Boiler Fund | 0 | d | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Property Expenses | 0 | a | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total Expenses | 66049 | | 64097 | 61747 | 2350 |

| | Budget 2026 | | Actual 2025 | Budget 2025 | Actual minus Budget |
|---------------------------|------------------------|-----------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------------------|
| INCOME | | See note | | | |
| CBF Deposit Fund Interest | 724 | a | 724 | 959 | -235 |
| Collections-Bap,Fun,Mar | 58 | a | 58 | 31 | 27 |
| Dividends / interest | 163 | a | 163 | 159 | 4 |
| Donations | 7450 | b | 6773 | 13930 | -7157 |
| Envelope Scheme | 605 | a | 605 | 215 | 390 |
| Events Income | 6531 | b | 6220 | 6303 | -83 |
| Fees | 4448 | b | 4236 | 3957 | 279 |
| Gift Day Envelopes | 0 | a | | | 0 |
| Income Tax Recovery | 9403 | b | 8956 | 9555 | -599 |
| Loose Collections | 2344 | a | 2344 | 2635 | -291 |
| Sharnbrook PCC Review | 3500 | a | 3500 | 3500 | 0 |
| Standing Orders | 28686 | b | 27320 | 26979 | 341 |
| St Peter's Room Fees | 1065 | b | 1014 | 946 | 68 |
| Items for Sale | 2 | a | 2 | 12 | -10 |
| Total Income | 64979 | | 61915 | 69181 | -7267 |

Surplus / Shortfall **-1070** **-2182** **7434**

Surplus/Shortfall % of Parish Share **-2.21%** **-4.97%** **16.92%**

Planned Giving - % of Parish Share **75.67%** **79.47%** **77.39%**

Notes:-

The basis for estimation of 2024 Budget figures is

| | |
|---|--|
| a | Based on 2025 2026 actual figures |
| b | 5% 10% 15% Increase compared with 2025 actual |
| c | Reduction compared with 2025 actual |
| d | Same as 2024 budget |
| e | Same as 2025 budget |

Churchwardens' Report

Worship

The alternating pattern of Sunday worship between St. Mary's Felmersham and St. Peter's Sharnbrook continued to work well throughout 2025, with the 10:30am communion service routinely being zoomed and supported by the combined Benefice Choir. In the course of the year there has been a gradual increase in the number of worshippers at St. Peter's. Since 2019, the average attendance at St. Peter's 10:30am Sunday service has increased by 35%

The fortnightly celebration of Evensong at St. Peter's took place every month bar December, with an earlier (3pm) start during the winter months, and has also been well attended. The Wednesday 9:30 am midweek communion continued to alternate between the two parishes, using the BCP format at St. Peter's and the CW format at St. Mary's, and Morning Prayer took place on ZOOM every Thursday morning.

Lent, Easter, Advent and Christmas again saw the same pattern of additional services as in previous years – Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, Compline, Christingle, Crib Service, Midnight Communion. Revd Paolo led the ecumenical Good Friday Walk of Witness to the open-air service on the Village Green, followed by refreshments in St. Peter's Room for around 90 participants.

Newer ways of reaching out to newcomers and welcoming them into St Peter's have continued to be very successful. In particular, the monthly ARK coffee morning, part of our Paths to Peace outreach programme, and Little Hearts, weekly during term time, on a Friday morning.

In 2025 there was 1 Baptism, 1 Wedding, 6 Funerals in St. Peter's and 3 in the local crematorium, plus 2 Burials and 7 Burials of Ashes.

Fabric

I am extremely grateful to Alan Morgan for taking the lead on Church Fabric – see his separate report. Under his leadership, a small PCC subcommittee has made very significant progress with a comprehensive project to provide inclusive accessibility.

We are currently awaiting a decision from the National Lottery Heritage Fund for more than £200,000 to cover the costs of the external work forming Phase 1 of the project.

Final plans for Phase 2, the internal works, have been submitted to the DAC who are due to meet again on May 14th, after receiving further input from external consultees.

Events

Our programme of events provides us with a further valuable opportunity for reaching out to the wider community,

2025 saw the very successful annual 'Petertide' Church Fete, for our second year in the beautiful setting of Sharnbrook House, following the gap that had been triggered by COVID

Thanks to our very generous hostesses, we were also able to enjoy reinstated monthly coffee mornings over the Spring and Summer months, either in private houses or in St. Peter's Room.

Sharnbrook Community Choir were again able to entertain us in concert on October 6th, a hugely enjoyable and financially very successful occasion which also included performances by the Primary School Choir that had also won their category in the local Music Festival in March 2025

In the course of 2025, with particular thanks to Chris Goodwin, we were able to continue our new style of musical entertainment, advertised more widely than our usual concerts, and featuring professional musicians with particularly unusual or interesting instruments.

On 7th November, Chris and his room mate combined with Jeni Melia to deliver a very special

CONCERT of ancient musicke

presenting a further opportunity to invite new faces into our church, many from rather further afield. The networking and social interaction over refreshments after these concerts is a particularly welcome and rewarding feature.

The climax of the year in terms of popular support, came at the beginning of December. The very topical title 'Peace and Goodwill for All' had actually been chosen by members of the wider community as the theme for our 17th Christmas Tree Festival on December 5th and 6th. 25 organisations exhibited trees. There were even more festival-goers this year than last and the occasion was further enhanced by community singing in the Church by the Learning For Pleasure singing group.

That same weekend we also hosted a very well attended Christingle Service and the traditional Ouse Valley Singers Carol Concert on December 7th. I am very grateful to all the many volunteers who contributed to the success of that very packed weekend

Looking ahead to 2026, we are aiming to continue with the monthly coffee mornings, to again celebrate Petertide with a Church Fete in Sharnbrook House and to offer further concerts in the new format.

Thank you

This is my ideal opportunity to say a very warm thank you to all those who contribute in any way to the smooth running of St. Peter's. Our particular thanks must go to Revd. Paolo for his outgoing and caring approach and inspirational participative team leadership and to all members of the Ministry Team.

We all owe a huge debt of gratitude to the members of our PCC, who have continued to manage our Church affairs so effectively.

We also continue to be deeply grateful for the continued commitment and support from so many other groups within the Church community.

And to the families of all our volunteers, we would also like to say thank you for allowing them the time and opportunity to commit to helping us in this way.

Our continuing challenge into 2026 is to find new opportunities for pastoral outreach through planned donation of time, talents and money.

Roland Carpenter

01 May 2026

Fabric Report

Accessibility Project Work has continued evolving the project which has been split into two phases. **Phase 1** includes a 1 in 20 York stone ramp to replace the steps at the south porch, new glass doors at the porch entrance, resin bound gravel paths along the middle of driveways and along the gravel path on the west side of the church, a new gate beside the kissing gate and low level bollard lighting along all footpaths, PIR controlled. **Phase 2** includes raising the chancel floor to the level of the nave, relocating the chancel screen on the north wall over the doorway, relocating the choir pews in the north aisle to replace the rudimentary pews where the old solid fuel boiler stood. Replacing the squeaky aluminium ramp with a York stone ramp with wrought iron handrails and adapting four pews for wheelchairs, two at the cross aisle and two at the front of the nave. The project sub-committee has been progressing this project as quickly as possible with meetings with the architect, the Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC) and by email, sometimes involving the whole PCC when potentially contentious matters have arisen.

Phase 1. External works. Our architect, David Llewellyn, has prepared drawings, specification and schedule of works which are on display in the Lady Chapel and on the church web site ([St Peter's Church, Sharnbrook - A Church Near You](#)). Three tenders have been received. A faculty has been applied for and received, we have received planning permission, and we are in the process of obtaining grants for the work which is estimated to cost about £230,000. Grants of £5,000 has been received from the Gale Family Trust and Mrs B L Robinsons Charitable Trust and the Friends have donated £5,000. Others are pending. We have the support of the Parish Council but as yet no financial commitment. We also have the support of the Bishop of Bedford in our application to the National Heritage Lottery Fund (NHLF). We hope to start work in June and complete late September providing the finance is in place. We anticipate a substantial grant from the NHLF which together with other grants will cover the full cost of the works.

Phase 2. Internal works. David has prepared drawings, specification and schedule of works together with a method statement for relocating the chancel screen, all of which are on the church web site. We are in the process of applying for a faculty and tenders for the work should be received by the end of April. We are also applying for grant aid. We have received negative observations to our proposals from Historic England, the Society for the Preservation of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) and the Church Buildings Council (CBC) who have to be consulted as part of the faculty process. Basically, they support our aims but do not agree with the work necessary to achieve them. They want to maintain the status quo. We have sent robust responses to Emma, the DAC secretary, for her to use in her replies to the external consultants. The drawings etc. will be displayed in the Lady Chapel in due course replacing the Phase 1 drawings.

Roof drainage over the east entrance to St Peter's Room. The architect has provided a solution to this problem, and three quotations have been obtained the lowest of which is £1,890 + VAT. A faculty has been obtained, and we are waiting to hear the result of our application for a minor works grant from the diocese but due to the ever-changing VAT position, which culminated in the end of VAT reimbursements for churches decisions on grant applications have been delayed. It has been decided to increase the upper limit on Minor Works and Improvement grants to £12,000 to include VAT.

Quinquennial Inspection & Report. Every five years our church architect is obliged to carry out a full inspection of the fabric of the church and produce a report highlighting any work that wants doing in order of priority. The next inspection is due this year. This will be the first quinquennial inspection that David has carried out for our church as he was only appointed in 2024.

Alan Morgan

31st March 2026

St Peter's Music

Organists

During 2025 I continued to attend meetings of the Beds & Herts Organists Association where I get the opportunity to speak to other organists in the area. 2025 was designated a 'Play the Organ' year with the aim of promoting the organ amongst all people especially young people. We had a special open day at St. Augustine's Church in Luton which gave an opportunity to anyone who wished to play the excellent organ there and find out more information about it.

At a recent meeting we were given some depressing facts about organs in our Churches. Every day sees the closure of one of our Church buildings and 2-3 pipe organs every week are taken to landfill sites. Despite this, our branch is continuing with a successful YOTS (Young Organists training Scheme) which currently has 20 students and 9 tutors willing to teach from around our two counties. Hopefully, some of these will continue our great tradition of Church organists who of course usually also lead our choirs.

I wish to thank Janet and Kate who complete our benefice organist team for their continued support, playing and expertise. We would be very pleased to assist in training somebody to continue our roles which someday soon we may well need. We have further contacts for those who wish to continue their learning and qualifications. Please speak to any one of us if you are interested.

The Benefice Choir.

We continued our Weekly pattern of singing for our main 10.30 Choral communion services. We also sung for two choral Evensongs at Knotting and the Patronal Service and Carol Service at All Saints, Souldrop. Also, for a number of funerals at the request of their relatives, one being for Pat Rowe, a long-time member of our congregation. Weddings however requiring a Choir are in short supply at the moment although there is one possible for the coming year.

On Mothering Sunday March 30th, we said goodbye to our curate Diana who had been an occasional asset to our choir while she was with us. Together with one or two other local choristers we were invited to join the choir for her Licensing Service at Holy Trinity Leverstock Green on 24th. April where she was to become their Team Vicar. At Diana's request we assisted singing the anthem 'Be Thou My Vision' by Bob Chilcott and enjoyed a very nice service with refreshments afterwards. Several other parishioners from our Benefice had used the 'Villager' to join us. We wish Revd. Diana all the best for her future ministry.

The Deanery Ascension Day Evensong at Milton Ernest on May 29th did not have a robed choir although several of our members attended.

Unfortunately, Mel Oxley-Boyle has not been able to continue as a choir member for some time now. This is for medical reasons and at the advice of her doctor. We are sad that she cannot join us although she continues her attendance at our services. Consequently, we are now a little short of Sopranos and indeed a few more men would be welcome. Due to family commitments, we cannot always ensure a full choir so your help would be very welcome. If you would like to help, please have a word with Janet or myself.

The Christmas season was soon upon us and we practised for our three Carol Services, which took place on the 14th, 21st and 24th of December.

My thanks to Janet and all the Choir members for their loyalty to our Churches.

Musical Events

Our first Concert of 2025 in St. Peter's featured our Learning for Pleasure Choir on Friday 16th May and one of their sing-along Concerts with Val Cox doing a great job of introducing and conducting. The audience joined in with enthusiasm for some well-known songs and completed an enjoyable evening.

Together with the Ouse Valley Singers and Kempston music society, we performed a concert of Passion Music on the 5th April in St. Mary's. Another OVS concert with Janet conducting took place at St. Mary's on Saturday 17th.

On 10th. October we were delighted to welcome the year's winners of two categories in the annual Bedford Music and Drama festival. Namely Sharnbrook Primary Music Club from our lower school and Sharnbrook Community Choir, led by Mike Gibbons and Evelyn Sutherland. We had many parents join us, mainly for the first part when their children were performing. Following a joint item together, the remainder of the evening was covered by the Community Choir followed by refreshments at the end. Thanks to both the choirs and to the background staff who helped with wine and refreshments.

On Friday Nov. 7th Chris Goodwin arranged a concert of 'Ancient Musicke' by Angie Hicks (Vocals and Harp) and Kristina Watt (Theorbo and Baroque Guitar).

On Sunday 7th December, Janet with Derrick as accompanist and Jeni Melia as Guest Vocalist, directed our Ouse Valley concert of Advent and Christmas music. This raised excellent funds for the Children's Society together with the collection and donations from the Christingle service.

Our Benefice Ecumenical Link with Calpino, Italy

Very little this year to report as apart from our more personal greetings at the festivals to each other there has been little communication.

We were approached just after Christmas with a plan by don Fabio to set up a ZOOM link during their joint Unity service on the Saturday Evening of 24th. January. This took place at the 'Santuario del Sacro Cuore' in Urbino. Unfortunately, the Sanctuary did not have WiFi so this was not possible.

However, we were asked to arrange for a message to be shared with them during their service.

Therefore, with our Methodist friends' permission, I arranged to make a short Video during our own Unity Service at Park Lane on Sunday 18th. January. This included our Calpino Prayer and a message in Italian from Revd. Paolo.

If you haven't seen this video, please click the following link or 'Copy and Paste' it into your Browser. (As it is a link you cannot just type it in)

[Unity Message 2026.mp4](#) You will need to use maximum Volume for the sound at the beginning. If no sound is heard close the Video and Re Call it.



We said goodbye at the end of the Video.

Colin Scott, Organist

Sharnbrook Community Choir 2025

The choir enjoyed its annual concert at St Peter's which was well-attended particularly because of the new collaboration with Sharnbrook Primary Academy. After this successful (if crowded!) event, the school and choir sang together again at the 2026 Bedfordshire Festival of Music & Drama recently in the Corn Exchange Bedford where they came second in the Community Choirs class. Thank you to St Peter's for the generous support from the concert last autumn which hopefully was a useful donation to funds.

SCC were winners of The Harding Bowl at the 2025 Bedfordshire Festival which was a good start to the year. The choir gave a concert in St Peter's Harrold during the summer and went on tour to Bristol and Cardiff in the autumn joining with the Totnes & Bridgetown Community Choir to give concerts in Somerset and Wales hosted by local choirs. 2025 ended with the usual Sharnbrook Fayre events in Sharnbrook House and (in the deluge) around the Christmas Tree on The Green followed by singing at the St Paul's Bedford Christmas Tree Festival. Then, to round off Christmas preparations, the choir joined with Bedford Choral Society to perform a joint concert for Bedford Park Rotary funds at Bedford School Chapel.

Mike Gibbons

Sharnbrook Benefice - Tower Captain's Report

The Benefice band has continued to provide bells for all the major services at Sharnbrook and Felmersham throughout the year. Whilst our number are fewer than I would like, we have been regularly supported by several ringers from Bozeat, for which we are grateful. We still have had problems when services do coincide as we don't have enough ringers to split into two bands and on these occasions, I have left it to the Rector to decide which one we support.

We have a vibrant practice night with ringers catered at a wide range of abilities and continue to be very grateful for the support we have had from our regular experienced visitors from Goldington, Kempston, Rushden and Bozeat.

During the year we welcomed two new members to the band; Jane's son Felix and Amy George, both of whom are making good progress.

Our outing this year was organised by Simon. In early June we visited five towers in the Leighton Buzzard area, with a pub lunch. As always, the bells, pub and weather were all good! Thank you Simon.

Only two quarter peals were rung at Sharnbrook during the last year, both by members of the Tuesday night practice band. A personal milestone was first quarter, at first attempt, for Mary Laws, ringing the Treble to Doubles. No peals were attempted this year.

There have been further delays in processing the application for a floor over the bells, however, I believe that these have been addressed and hopefully we will be able to move forward on this in 2026.

We continue to be grateful to Tom for donating his copy of the Ringing World to the tower.

As in recent years we agreed not to ring the new year in at midnight but to ring at a more social time on NewYear's day.

P J S Albon

5/5/26

Ouse Valley Mothers' Union Diocesan Group

From small beginnings in 1876 Mothers Union was founded by Mary Sumner, the wife of a Hampshire rector. In 150 years, it has grown to be a women led world-wide Christian movement with over 4 million members in approximately 84 countries. Mothers' Union is a women-led, international Christian movement dedicated to ending poverty, violence and social injustice in communities in the UK and around the world.

We are a loving organisation open to everyone who supports our vision and mission and shares our passion for strengthening family and community life, whether you are female or male, a parent, grandparent, single, or married. You don't even have to be a church goer. Whoever you are, you have a valued place in our MU family.

Our branch here in Sharnbrook meets on the second Thursday of each month in St Peter's Room to enjoy interesting speakers, good company and delicious tea/coffee and cake. Visitors are more than welcome for a small donation towards the Mothers Union charities. Our meetings are advertised in the Review, on the pew sheets and posters elsewhere.

The highlights in 2025 were the Strawberry Tea and the Christmas Party where the spread never ceases to be amazing. Another highlight was the August outing to the John Bunyan Centre in Bedford where the guide was excellent as was the tea and cakes served in the church afterwards. At another meeting, where we had more visitors than usual, we were challenged to remember radio and television theme tunes from the 20th century presented by Paul Keeble from Radwell. We always welcome suggestions for new speakers who are prepared to give their time free of charge.

We are most grateful to our committee members for all their hard work and dedication and of course to our chair, Jackie Biggs, for all the time and effort behind the scenes ably assisted by Hazel Scott. We owe them all a huge debt of gratitude.

We also give our sincere thanks to the members who go on the rota to do the prayers at the start of each meeting and provide the tea and cakes, do the preparation beforehand and the washing up and clearing away afterwards.

We have some talented members who give up their time to make needlework and craft gifts. These are sold at various times throughout the year at our main church services at St Peter's and St Mary's and the proceeds go towards the Mothers Union charities. We are most grateful to them for using their talents in this way.

Our membership numbers continue to remain steady, and I am one of only four male members of our branch. We could always do with more members so please come along and give us a try.

Alan Morgan

Little Hearts Play Group

Little Hearts continues to be a joyful and welcoming presence at the heart of our parish ministry. Each Friday during term time, St Peter's Room and the Lady Chapel come alive with children aged 0–5, alongside parents, grandparents, childminders and guardians. The group offers a relaxed space for play, conversation, refreshments and community — freely open to all, with no need to book. It remains a genuine bridge between the church and the wider village.

Our heartfelt thanks go to **Louise Ince**, **Leanne Knapp** and **Ruth Boswell**, whose faithful dedication and loving ministry make Little Hearts the blessing it truly is.

Revd. Paolo Di Leo

Sharnbrook Churches Together

Sharnbrook Churches Together comprises the Methodist and Roman Catholic worshipping communities in Sharnbrook and the Anglican worshipping communities in Sharnbrook and Felmersham. A small committee including Anglican representation by Revd Paolo, Roland Carpenter and Janet Welsh, meets three times a year to help co-ordinate activities.

We have joint responsibility for the following 3 on-going activities:

Carers Together – afternoon meetings of Carers and those they care for, in the Methodist Church on the first and third Mondays of the month

Good Neighbour Scheme - Ginny Smith the current co-ordinator has recruited additional volunteers to the scheme. There has been a steady flow of requests for transport, the majority being for Doctor or Hospital appointments.

Lunch Club – on the third Tuesday of every month except August. Newcomers are warmly welcome for a friendly chat over home-made soup, dessert, tea and coffee.

In 2025 we shared the following activities and Acts of Worship:

Joint services marking:

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity (St. Peter's Church, 19th January), service led by the Methodist Team.

Christian Aid Week (Sharnbrook Methodist Church, 11th May), service led by Revd Nick and Neville Adams.

Global Education Week (St. Mary's Church, Felmersham, 23rd November), service led by the Methodist Team. This replaces the former service for One World Week, which previously took place in mid-October.

The World Day of Prayer, on March 7th in St. Peter's Room.

The Good Friday Walk of Witness (April 18th) culminating in a service on the Village Green led by Revd Paolo and followed by shared refreshments in St. Peter's Room.

48 people shared a very enjoyable **Harvest Supper** at the Methodist Church on October 1st, pioneering a new system of inter-denominational catering and collaboration and with a much simplified menu selection based around baked potatoes. A cheque for the net proceeds of £239.95 was donated to the Bedford Food Bank – almost identical to the amount in the previous year, despite 20% fewer participants.

With donations totalling £275.00, we jointly sponsored the **42nd London Unlock Walk** on 12th April to **Battersea, Kennington, Camberwell, North Brixton and Stockwell**. 8 walkers from our community took part.

So far in 2026:

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity joint service at Sharnbrook Methodist Church on Sunday 18th January was very well attended and led by Revd Paolo.

World Day of Prayer took place on Friday 6th March in Sharnbrook Methodist Church.

Good Friday Walk of Witness and Open-air worship on 3rd April.

This was led by Myles MacBean and Rev. Paolo. An estimated 90 worshippers from the Methodist, Catholic, Evangelical and Anglican churches attended. Refreshments were served in St Peter's room.

We are still collecting sponsorship money for the 2 walkers from our community who took part in the **43rd London Unlock Walk** on Saturday 12th April to **Hampstead and Kilburn**.

Future events

Christian Aid Week 10th to 16th May – A joint service will take place on Sunday May 17th at St Peter’s Church, and will be led by an Marian Blyth and the Methodist Team. Donation envelopes will again be delivered to every door in the three parishes, identifying several drop-off points for their return.

The 2025 **Harvest Supper** will take place at the Methodist Church, following similar arrangements to those launched last year. The date is yet to be confirmed, but likely to be either Wednesday September 30th or Wednesday October 7th.

Roland Carpenter 01 May 2026

Missions and Charities

The past year has again seen significant Mission initiatives, and high levels of Charity donation.

1. We have identified these **FIVE PRIORITIES in our Mission Action Plan**, updated in October 2020, which can be viewed in full at www.stalbans.anglican.org/maps/?id=25846

| |
|--|
| 1. To establish a creative digital identity and a hub/space within St. Peter’s church and the adjoining St. Peter’s Room, to facilitate our on-going mission to provide Care and Pastoral Support to our community, and to foster the excellent response to our digital online services during lockdown. |
| 2. To establish a new Pastoral Care initiative |
| 3. To enlist the support and commitment of specialist external advisors, agencies, charities and provide procedures and facilities to enable effective collaboration. |
| 4. To establish appropriate on-going Support Groups within the Community, in order to help sustain the Paths to Peace care and support initiatives. |
| 5. To transform our Worship, Prayer, Christian Meditation, Bible Study, and Teaching, to grow the spiritual life of the Parish, and attract newcomers into the Church. |

2. Our 2025 contribution to **Sharnbrook Churches Together**, included:-

| |
|--|
| 1. Joint Worship in One World Week (at St. Peter’s); Christian Aid Week; Global Education Week |
| 2. A Harvest Supper on 1/10/2025, raising net proceeds of £239.95 for the Bedford Food Bank |
| 3. Good Friday Walk of Witness and Act of Worship on Sharnbrook Village Green on 18 th April 2025 |

3. **Total Charitable Donations in 2025 amounted to £3766.33** (2023, £4083.43)

Each month in 2025, the PCC set aside £100 for donation to Missions and Charities, generating a total of £1200 for distribution by the year end.

The Missions and Charities group, which in 2025 comprised Kate Ritchie, Wendy Armitage, Janet Norman, Gerhard von Caron, and Roland Carpenter, is responsible for the recommendation of appropriate charities, and the distribution of these donations. At a meeting on April 29th 2026, the following 6 payments were proposed, 3 of which are **new**, whilst **BRCC** shows a significant increase over previous years:

| | |
|---|-------------|
| <u>Bedfordshire focus</u> | |
| Keech Hospice Care | £150 |
| Smart CJS (Criminal Justice Services) – SMART Prebend Centre for the Homeless | £250 |
| Beds. & Herts. Historic Churches Trust | £50 |
| <u>Sharnbrook ‘Paths to Peace’ Pastoral focus</u> | |
| Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity (BRCC) | £250 |

| | | |
|--|------------------------|--------------|
| | Good News for Everyone | £250 |
| | Rural Missions | £250 |
| | TOTAL | £1200 |

We also raised the following additional funds, wherever possible augmented by Gift Aid and GASDS, as a result of specific Benefice-wide charity appeals and fund-raising activities during the course of 2025:

| | |
|---|----------------|
| Christian Aid Week 2025 (online donations) | 318.75 |
| C. of E. Children’s Society – house collection boxes* (February 2026) | 547.46 |
| Unlock Walk 12th April 2025 sponsorship | 275.00 |
| CTBI re Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2025 | 217.59 |
| Bedford Food Bank (donations) | 81.25 |
| Churches Conservation Trust - Knotting Patronal & Harvest Evensong collections | 315.81 |
| Beds. Herts. Historic Churches Trust – 2025 Bike ‘n’ Hike sponsorship | 150.00 |
| C. of E. Children’s Society – Sharnbrook Christingle and Ouse Valley Xmas Concert | 660.47 |
| | TOTAL |
| | 2566.33 |

* Our grateful thanks to Paul and Ali Monk for co-ordinating the C. of E. Children’s Society house collection boxes.

Roland Carpenter 30th April 2026

The Review Report

There has been no shortage of articles from both church and community groups during the year and we are very grateful for the continuing enthusiasm shown by the community for our parish and village magazine.

However, we again experienced a reduction in magazine subscriptions during last year. Our advertising revenues were also reduced compared with other years.

As usual, we distributed £4000 from the reserves between St Peter’s, Sharnbrook, the Methodist Church in Sharnbrook and All Saints in Souldrop. If the magazine income continues to diminish, at some point in the future we will no longer be able to afford to donate to the local churches at the same level. At the end of last year, the reserves stood at some £7000 but the total shrinks each year. We will decide on the 2026 level of donation, later in the year.

I would like to thank the current Review team for all their support and hard work throughout the year: Roger Gaunt, Advertising Manager and Treasurer; Steve Yarwood, Distribution Organiser; Robert Evens, Auditor; and the Distribution Team. And lastly, thank you to the readers of *The Review*, for continuing to support us.

Paul Hayward

Editor of *The Review*

The Friends of St Peter’s Church, Sharnbrook

Trustees Report 2025

The Friends of St. Peter's, a non-denominational group, was established in 1996 to provide funds for maintenance of the fabric of the church building and since then it has provided significant funds which help to keep the church in good order.

2025 has been a year of consolidation and reorganisation, focussed on streamlining and updating our banking and administration areas.

The Friend's Lottery continues to provide the main regular income and we are extremely grateful to all those who continue to support us in this manner. The Lottery has been well subscribed over recent years and a steady membership has been maintained; however, additional subscribers are always welcome. Please contact Paul Monk or Katie Hayes if you would like further information.

Much of the work associated with the Lottery is undertaken by our Treasurer, Katie Hayes and we are indebted to her for all her hard work. As part of our reorganisation, Ray Boswell, one of our new Trustees, has agreed to become Joint Treasurer to help support Katie.

During the year to 31 December 2025, we generated funds totalling £3,412,96 (2024: £3,362.19). Apart from the main Lottery income and bank interest, we continue to receive regular donations which are very much appreciated. The Financial Statement for 2025 follows this report, with full details of our financial position.

In 2025 we were not required to assist with any projects at St. Peter's. However, for 2026 we have committed £10,000 towards the Accessibility Project, to be allocated equally to fabric elements of the project over Phases 1 & 2.

The Trustees are a small, dedicated group, keen to support the maintenance of our historic church. The duties of the trustees are not onerous and we always welcome the interest of anyone willing to join us.

The Friends' Trustees are grateful to all of our supporters and we look forward to an increasing participation in our future projects.

Paul Monk
Chairman March 2026

| Annual account 1-1-25 to 31-12-25 | | 2025 | 2024 |
|---|------------------|----------------|-------------------------|
| Income and Expenditure | | | |
| Income | | | |
| CBF interest | | 587.96 | 489.39 |
| Donations | | 150.00 | 150.00 |
| Lottery receipts | 107 at £25 | 2,675.00 | (108 x £25) 2,700.00 |
| Film nights | Ticket sales etc | nil | 127.20 |
| | Costs | nil | -104.40 |
| | | | <u>22.80</u> |
| Total | | 3,412.96 | 3,362.19 |
| Expenditure | | | |
| Lottery winners | | 1,200.00 | 1,200.00 |
| Lottery licence | | 20.00 | 20.00 |
| Payment to PCC | | | <u>1,188.00</u> |
| Total | | 1,220.00 | 2,408.00 |
| Surplus for the year | | 2,192.96 | 954.19 |
| Reserves | | | |
| Balance brought forward from prior year | | 23644.67 | 22,690.48 |
| Surplus for the year brought down | | 2192.96 | <u>954.19</u> |
| Balance carried forward | | 25837.63 | 23644.67 |
| Represented by | | | |
| Cash balance at TSB | | 13207.54 | 11602.54 |
| Cash balance at CBF | | 13580.09 | <u>12992.13</u> |
| | | 26787.63 | 24594.67 |
| Less accrued creditors | | | |
| Lottery prizes to August | | <u>950.00</u> | 950.00 |
| | | | |
| | | <u>-950.00</u> | <u>-950.00</u> |
| | | 25837.63 | 23644.67 |

I have reviewed the records and accounts of CHERISH and this statement accurately reflects the income and expenditure as well as the cash balance for the year ending 31 December 2025

Andrew Steiner
 ANDREW STEINER
 18/3/26

Safe Safeguarding Report

Beth Miller ~ DSA in the Diocese of Durham

~ Churches welcome vulnerable people, many of whom view it as a safe place to be. If any place should be safe a church should be it ~

Safeguarding is more than simply compliance, it is about creating and embedding a safeguarding culture and fundamentally it is a mission imperative.

The safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults is an absolute priority in the Diocese of St Albans.

In 2017 the national independent safeguarding audit commissioned by the national Church of England recognised that the Diocese is committed to safeguarding by effectively working together to make churches and chaplaincies safer places.

Anyone who has suffered abuse needs to be properly heard, properly cared for and where necessary entitled to justice.

The Church of England will respond promptly to every safeguarding concern or allegation.

The Diocese of St Albans has designed various levels of high, quality targeted safeguarding training for any members of the church working with children and vulnerable adults across the Diocese and this has to be refreshed every three years.

Previous levels of training will be more enhanced and there will be further training on domestic abuse, mental health and modern slavery. One in every four victims of slavery is a child.

As our communities become increasingly fragmented, the 'cost of living' crisis deepens and refugees, asylum seekers and migrants face ongoing hostility, it is vital we can reach out to vulnerable adults and children to protect them from harm in a practical way.

Regular newsletters from the Diocese Safeguarding Training Team are sent **out with** any updates on safeguarding with links to the online training.

The guidance in these newsletters comes from the House of Bishops Safeguarding Training and Development Practice Guidance.

All national policies and practise guidance, CCPAS guidance and the newsletter can be found at www.stalbans.anglican.org/diocese/safeguarding-documents

Safeguarding Hubs are a suite of tools to help a parish with safeguarding.

The first three tools:

- Keep track of DBS checks and safeguarding training.
- Create role descriptions and person specifications.
- Track the safer recruitment of new volunteers.

Bell Ringers Safeguarding information

The Central Council of Church Bell Ringers has produced a guide for clergy, PCCs and Diocesan Safeguarding Advisers which explains how ringing 'works', through individual towers, territorial and non-territorial bell ringing associations, and the work of the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers.

The guide, 'From Practice to Perfect' focuses particularly on how church bell ringers are trained, safeguarded and organised.

Tower Captains & Ringing Teachers

1. Basic Safeguarding Awareness
2. Safeguarding Foundations – renewal every three years.

Bellringers must complete:

1. Basic Safeguarding Awareness – renewal every three years

The National Safeguarding Training Portal

All training is now accessible via the Safeguarding Training Portal. Any technical issues with the portal, please contact:

elearning@mail.safeguardingtraining.cofeportal.org

The following courses are available as on-line courses on the Portal:

<https://safeguardingtraining.cofeportal.org/>

- Basic Awareness (C0)
- Foundations (C1)

No safeguarding issues have been raised in the last year.

Rosemary Drewery

Safeguarding Officer

Tel No: 07792926004

Email: rosemary@madewithlovinghands.com

Sharnbrook Deanery Synod Report for 2025

Meetings

Synod met four times during 2025. The focus of the February meeting was a presentation about *Christian grandparenting* by Ceri-Anne Ashby, Reader and Children and Families Minister at St Mary's Goldington. In June, synod received an update from Bob Goody, Chief Executive of Rural Missions. Rural Missions had recently merged the Resources Cupboard into their operations with Becky May as the lead person for children's, youth and families mission. He assured synod that the work of the Resources Cupboard would continue as usual, but the merger was enabling the establishment of a Bedford-based lending library of resources and props which all our churches could use. The September meeting received a presentation from Dr Ryan Parker, the Diocesan RE and Christian Ethos Adviser, on *Supporting the vision-driven work of schools*. The session included some thought-provoking exercises for synod which led to a sharing of thoughts and ideas on worship in schools. The final session of the year, in November, focused on *Mission Action Planning* led by Rev Nick Smith, the Diocesan Church Growth Officer for Bedfordshire. The message was that a plan should be viewed as helpful means to an end and not just a completed document to satisfy the Diocese. Nick provided some hope that the "management process" template was being reviewed.

Work with Children, Young People and Families

The Deanery Hub has continued its operations, but the focus is now on securing funding for the work to continue once the support from the Growing Faith Foundation ends in the middle of 2026. Rural Missions have proposed a two-year partnership with the appointment of a Mission Enabler dedicated to supporting children, youth and families across the Deanery. It is estimated that a two days per week role might cost £42,000 over two years. Synod is considering a plan to make a Deanery application, on behalf of the thirty parishes, for funding from the Diocese's *designated mission funds* (which are funded from parish share contributions!).

Changes of People in 2025

Revd Stephen Liley and Revd Nick Munday both came to the end of their terms as Rural Dean and Assistant Rural Dean respectively. Both have made a substantial contribution to the Deanery's mission with wise counsel and effective nurturing of teamwork. In Stephens's case this extended over ten years. The Revds. Tim and Catherine Wilson have taken over as Joint Rural Deans having been appointed by Bishop Alan in one of his last acts before his own retirement. The Revd Diana Stretton left the Deanery following her appointment as Team Vicar in the Langelei Team Ministry.

Parish Share

Synod received regular updates on parish share receipts during the year. At the end of October (latest information available), parishes in the Deanery had made donations amounting to 75% of the amount requested. This is broadly in line with previous October numbers with the Deanery ranking 17th out of 20 in the Diocese in terms of the percentages achieved. The total request from the Deanery for 2026 is £550,864, slightly down from the £554,928 for 2025. The 2026 request is for an average of £754 per church member.

James Stewart

Lay Chair, Sharnbrook Deanery
February 2026

Rector's 2026 Report

for the

United Benefice of Sharnbrook, Felmersham, Radwell & Knotting with Souldrop

I wish to thank all our parishioners existing and new for their continued support of our vision and 5-point plan.

As a benefice we remain committed to our vision and 5-point plan below:

**“To be a loving Christian community,
that seeks to enable
the love and peace of God in everyone”**

We continue to make progress against most of our objectives.

Benefice 5 Point Plan

1. Develop a pastoral care as a form of outreach based on:
 - i. Focused Pastoral visitation.
 - ii. Expanded Pastoral Team, contacts and coverage
2. Re imagine and develop 'additional' forms and ways of teaching, worship and prayer.
3. Expand our digital presence:
 - a. Develop a digital strategy
4. Enhance our administrative capability.
5. Secure and grow our financial future.
 - a. Initiate a stewardship program to encourage and increase:
 - i. Personal Giving
 - ii. Fund Raising
 - iii. Gifts and donations
 - iv. Grants, legacies, endowments
 - v. Creative investments

Highlights to the year have been:

- **Administration**
 - Administration of our PCCs is excellent and I wish to thank our PCC secretaries and Wardens for all their dedication, hard work and the gifts they bring in support of the administration and governance of our PCCs. I also wish to thank all PCC members for their dedication and hard work over the year.
 - Further discussion is required as regards a Benefice wide administration function that will support a number of key internal and external needs across our churches.
- **Curate.**
 - We are participating in the new diocesan process of Training Incumbent profiling, interviews and allocations
- **Number of Worshippers**
 - We continue to modestly increase in numbers across all our churches.
 - New worshippers of all ages have added to our numbers.
- **Church Worship**
 - We continue to sustain a 'balanced' worship posture that strengthens and grows our traditional worship, whilst adding other innovative worship offerings that increase the variety and appeal of our worship services without disrupting the established traditional services.

- We have added an additional said communion at All Saints on the 3rd Sunday of the month.
 - We continue our joint Benefice 'Choral Celebration' services across the benefice which have been well received.
 - Benefice Evensong is consistently well attended, in particular themed services, such as our annual Harvest Evensong in St Margaret's Knotting.
 - Monthly Communion Services at Sharnbrook House Care Home continue to be held.
 - Home study groups in Sharnbrook and Felmersham are well attended with a minimum 10 attendees per group.
 - ADVENT and LENT Study groups have changed format to a 30-minute Online reflection. The Lent series has been well received.
 - Online Morning Prayer continues with good attendance
 - Online ministerial prayer is well attended by ministers
 - Various concerts and events across all the churches continue to make varied use of our buildings and facilities.
 - Our ministry team has been enriched with new LLW's and two in training.
 - I wish to thank all ministers lay and licensed for their time, dedication and gifts in leading many services, their pastoral ministry to many and their support and guidance.
- **Pastoral Care and Outreach**
 - Pastoral Care remains at the heart of our outreach and mission.
 - The 'Paths to Peace' pastoral team in St Peters, and the pastoral groups in St Mary's and All Saints continue to support several needful 'Pilgrims'.
 - A benefice wide pastoral drop in 'coffee morning' held in St Peters called 'The Ark' continues to work well
 - Needles and Pins continue in St Peter's room providing a place of creative crafting and fellowship.
 - Due to the planned closure of the Sharnbrook Hotel in 2026 pastoral care in this regard will diminish.
 - Coffee Mornings and Afternoon Teas in St Mary's are working well. The lunch club in the Sun Pub continues to be well attended.
 - Coffee Mornings in Sharnbrook continue to be held in homes or in St Peter's room.
 - St Peter's has developed a plan to enhance accessibility and mobility both internally and externally. We are now 'seeking' funds for Stage 1. Stage 2 is still in the faculty approval stage.
- **Youth Work, Schools and Children Work.**
 - Pinchmill Primary School
 - 'Open the Book' story time at Pinchmill Primary School continues to be well received.
 - Christmas and Easter Services, and other events have been held, where the whole school, staff and parents have attended. This is and continues to be a blessing.
 - Sharnbrook Primary School
 - Church tours to St Peter's and teaching events have been held throughout the year.
 - Every class of the school attended an introduction of the Christmas and Easter story and what this means for Christians.
 - Several assemblies and classes have been led by the Rector
 - The Rector has stood down as a governor and will support the school as a 'Member' providing oversight and governance to the governing body.
 - A member of the Rural Mission charity is exploring ways to support the Rector with developing our work with the school.
 - Sharnbrook Academy: Discussions are ongoing regarding further lessons.
 - Uniform Groups.
 - Our work with the uniform Groups is developing with ad hoc teaching and participation provided on request.

- Little Hearts
 - Little Hearts weekly toddler drop continues to work well.
- Faith Explorers
 - Continues to be well attended and is now held in St Mary's Felmersham on the 2nd Sunday of the month.
- **Digitisation and Online Capabilities:**
 - We have sustained our online presence via Zoom based online access to services, studies and reflections allowing wider access to teaching and prayer and also allowing some who are sick or lacking mobility to participate in worship and teaching from any location.
 - We have launched Facebook social media pages for each church. Our new website is working well.
 - St Mary's has installed a new Audio system.
- **Giving and Fund Raising**
 - There continues to be generous giving in all our churches in various ways.
 - Stewardship discussions continue into 2026/2027
- **Ecumenical and Village Wide Co Operation**
 - Joint services with non-Anglican communities continues to be positive and growing.
 - Our Walk of Witness on Good Friday and Outdoor Service was well attended by all four of our denominations in our villages.
 - We continue to be part of the planning group for the Sharnbrook Christmas Fayre
 - We are in discussion with Sharnbrook Parish Council and The Rural Mission charity regarding a youth initiative in Sharnbrook

Revd. Paolo Di Leo