



PCC ANNUAL REPORT

Ardeley St Lawrence Church

2025/26

Aim and Purpose

Our Mission Statement and vision is “To create a church which is the support and focus for a caring community, growing spiritually in Christ’s way and welcoming to all”.

Objectives

The PCC is committed to enabling as many people as possible to worship within our church and become part of our church family. The church MAP (Mission Action Plan) looks at this in detail (See Appendix for the current MAP)

Secretary's Report

Julie Tyers

PCC Meetings

We have 10 committed members of the PCC (see list below), all of whom offer their time and energy to support the running of the church. There have been six PCC meetings held during the year, chaired by Rev Mark. All meetings have been well attended. A huge thank you to all PCC members for all that they have been able to contribute throughout the year.

PCC members who have served in full or part over the year, until the date of this report are:

- Rev Mark Bailey (Rector; PCC Chair)
- Kay Chaplin (Treasurer)
- Jackie Hayward (Churchwarden; PCC Vice-Chair; Deanery Synod Representative; Assistant Health & Safety Officer)
- Rachel Hurst (Safeguarding Officer)
- Stuart Hurst
- Aimee Lauezzari (Lead Recruiter)
- Sue Jones (Health & Safety Officer)
- Julie Tyers (Secretary)
- Wendy Waygood (Reader; Deanery Synod Representative; Assistant Safeguarding Officer)
- Chris Evans (Assistant Health & Safety Officer)

A special and huge thank you goes to Jackie Hayward, our churchwarden. Jackie gives an enormous amount of her time to ensure the effective and safe running of the church and we could not do without all she gives. We also thank Rev Mark for his committed leadership as our new Rector! As always, we thank Wendy Waygood, our Reader for all she gives to the services and church family and community.

Sub-Committees

Standing Committee: Rev Mark Bailey, Jackie Hayward and Julie Tyers.

Village Hall Committee: Rev Mark Bailey, Joy Dawson, Lorna Ewans, Sue Jones, Simon Peace, David Young and Marion Young.

Buildings Committee: Rev Mark Bailey, Kay Chaplin, Chris Evans, Jackie Hayward, Stuart Hurst, Julie Tyers.

Outreach

The Churchwarden's report below describes all we have done and continue to do to make the church a welcoming and comfortable place for worship and fellowship.

The children of our community play a large part in the life of Ardeley St Lawrence, and the Junior Church Report below outlines the range of activities and family-friendly services that we have held.

Our Church and Village Facebook pages, as well as the Forum magazine continue to provide a means for effective outreach and efficient ways for the church to communicate all it does in support of the wider community.

Financials and Fund raising

The PCC has continued to maintain a careful watch on the church's finances, and we remain vigilant in ensuring we meet a sustainable level of income. The church's financials are outlined in the Treasurer's report below. Fund-raising events this year have included the village fete, summer teas, regular coffee mornings, a quiz, the Christmas Mingle. These events have been fun for the community and we grateful to always have many offers of help to organise them.

We remain hugely grateful to everyone who donates regularly either through direct debits (and the associated Gift Aid Scheme), or in the weekly collections during the services.

Policies and Procedures

We have updated our Health & Safety Policy, reviewed our Terrier and Inventory and conducted a review of Church fees. A Lone Worker Policy and a Data Protection policy for taking photographs remain in place, as well as risk assessments for our music group and junior church. We have a business continuity plan in place. A Data Privacy Policy now also can be viewed on the Ardeley St Lawrence Church Website. We follow the Diocesan safeguarding policy.

Other Administrative Information

Ardeley St Lawrence Church, Ardeley is part of the Diocese of St Albans within the Church of England. It is also part of the Buntingford Deanery.

Its Email correspondence address is ardeleychurch@gmail.com.

Churchwarden's Report

Jackie Hayward

Worship & Services

On Monday 16th June, we celebrated the institution of Revd Mark by the Bishop of Hertford, The Rt Revd Dr Jane Mainwaring, and his induction and installation as Rector of the benefice by the Archdeacon of Hertford, The Venerable Janet Mackenzie. It was a joyful service, with the benefice



choir and benefice schools' choir taking part, and a packed church! This important occasion secures the benefice with Revd Mark as our Rector for as long as he wishes to remain in post.

Revd. Mark continues in his set pattern across the benefice, being with us in Ardeley 2 out of the 4 weeks each month, at 9.30 am; taking both communion and family worship services. We look forward to his time with us. On the 5th Sunday, we have

a Benefice communion service enabling everyone from the 5 churches to come together. We

continue to be blessed to have Wendy Waygood, our Reader. She is very committed to our church life. While she has reduced the number of services she leads, she remains passionate and caring in all she does to support us. Wendy leads our family worship and morning worship bi-monthly; including Mothering Sunday and Harvest. She also leads on filling the service rota and we thank her for her time in organising this. We always appreciate the excellent choice of priests and readers.

Our weekly worship is enabled by the dedicated church family who commit regularly. Their time, service and skills are **very much** valued. David Young and Stuart Hurst continue to act as servers during the communion service ensuring the practicalities happen as needed. Ann Little uses her superb skills as thurifer, quietly also caring for the thurible. Thank you.



The Shoe box appeal led by Angela Cannon and Sue Jones had a bumper year, with lots of extra hats too! Thank you to them both for organising us all.



This year, we have 2 new volunteers to add to our group who read the lesson, thank you for your clear and thoughtful reading. It would be lovely to also add to our intercessors if we have any volunteers. Thank you to the group who lead us in intercessions: Jennie Yates, Anne Yardoumian, Julie Tyers, Rachel Hurst. Taking the time and commitment to undertake this role is such a valuable addition to the worship.

We pride ourselves in being a welcoming church. A special thank you to the sides people who have the vital role “on the door” each week and the refreshment ladies/gentleman who provide the opportunity for fellowship after services. On several occasions, visitors will remark on the welcome they feel.

Music is a vital and important part of our worship in Ardeley and has been for many years. Aimee Lauezzari is our very gifted leader of music; the worship is always brought to life by her organ playing skills. Mike Stevens has been a welcome stand in when Aimee has her holidays. Our church music group practices hard and plays regularly in the family service. This year, we welcome Shay on his guitar. A warm thank you to them all. In the coming year, they are looking to raise funds for new music stands. Aimee has used the church also for her pupils’ recitals, which is exciting.

We have had one funeral and two baptisms this year.

Care of the Church

Most goods and ornaments are in good repair and we are delighted they are used regularly in our worship. This year, the list of all goods and ornaments (the terrier) has been digitised onto a memory stick. Last year, the new thurible had been troublesome with some sticking issues, but thankfully with Ann Little’s care, these issues have resolved.

Sue Jones and I undertake washing and ironing the laundry. Thank you Sue for support. The altar linen is beginning to show wear and this is on the watch list for replacing. We have a dedicated and

consistent team of church cleaners: Sue Jones, Jenny Yates, Marion Young, Joy Dawson, Kay Chaplin, and Rachel Hurst. The time and commitment this takes is very much valued – thank you.

The church is beautifully decorated by Rachel Hurst who creates our flower displays each week. Her arrangements always provide a focus of thanks in our worship. Again, a special mention also to Rachel, Sue Jones, Joy Dawson and Marion Young for the Remembrance service and Harvest decorations this year. They were outstanding.



Our ringers are few in number, Stuart Hurst remains our tower master. The bells are rung for weddings by visiting ringers and at funerals by Stuart.

Len Little has kindly taken on as our history buff! When we have requests for searches of family history linked to Ardeley Len has taken this on, he has excelled in the role and his attention to detail and passion are paramount. - Thank you, Len.

The annual fire extinguisher inspection has taken place. The health and safety risk assessments were undertaken, and the policy updated accordingly. The electrical service was undertaken in September 2025, a socket was replaced and plug.

Community Outreach

Being an accessible and welcoming church for all is central to who we are. We have several events throughout the year to involve the community and beyond. Thank you to Mark Hayward for building the “Church Open” sign so that everyone can see when they are able to pop in. The village fete, which has been running for over 80 years, continues to bring together generations. The funds are divided between the church, village hall and school governors. This year, Ian Neale opened the afternoon for us. Thank you to Harvey Phipson for his field manager role and all the committee for the behind-the-scenes work!



The monthly community coffee morning goes from strength to strength. Thank you to Sue Jones, Rachel and Stuart Hurst who give their time and talents each month. Due to lack of heating, we had a short break in January! The cream teas also bring locals and those from afar into the village and create an opportunity visit the church. If you are lucky, Len Little gives a good guided tour, thank you Len. The many helpers and bakers are amazing to keep the tea and cakes flowing! This year, we had some extra helpers too. Everyone is very much thanked. Secret knitting and crocheting were undertaken across the parish and beyond.

After 2 days of sewing, a magnificent poppy arch was visible over the Lych gate. Thank you to everyone especially Ann Jones, Sue Jones, Julie Gray and Rebecca Hayward. Remembrance is a treasured time in our community.



The Ardeley quiz saw fierce rivalry and ‘Brian Bear Bellies’ only just won - “Warr and Peace’s” are on your tail now! Thank you to Kay Chaplin and Jenny Yates for the hard work to put this together and

keep tradition going in such a positive way. The Christmas Mingle and draw started the Christmas season with lots of new faces, laughter, music and a great atmosphere. Thank you to Geoff Ewen for taking on the Christmas choir, which sang in church and in the Jolly Waggoner. They sounded great!

The Building and Churchyard

In February, we had our latest quinquennial report. We used Helen Axworthy as our specialist architect, given the good service from her on the masonry project last year. The building committee met and began to unpick what project to look at next. The floor boards in the north aisle by the rood stairs were rotten from previous water ingress. These have been replaced. The metal candle holder has been repaired. A structural engineer has been to survey the visible cracks internally on the tower wall. We are awaiting a further review, but major repairs to the roof are expected. The loft roof has been repaired and the wire protecting the birds from nesting in the tower has been repaired also.

The organ received its annual maintenance and tuning by Craig from Johnson organ builders. The issues of losing function/power when playing have come to the forefront. In the meantime, the piano has been used for several weeks. The blower has been to Cambridge, serviced with no fault problem but still low power prevails.

The church clock is still out of commission, and we remain aware that it needs fixing.

The Anderson family bench has been erected in the churchyard. Thank you to Nick Dawson who helped with this.

Thank you to Mick Jones for his time mowing the churchyard he has now retired from this role. The mower broke this year, the parish council kindly replaced this and it is housed at Church Farm. Adrian Waygood has stepped up to take on the mowing and strimming on a regular basis – thank you. The lime trees were pollarded last year and we lost a pussy willow tree near the vestry in high winds. Both of these have now meant the churchyard has opened up well and brought it together more. The churchyard has looked amazing this year and we have had many comments praising how cared for it looks. We have had several working parties in the sun and rain! Thank you to the tireless volunteers and refreshment providers! Also to some regular parishioners who have been in regularly clearing areas and grave stones.



I cannot thank our church family enough. The generous teamwork is never ending. We are truly blessed by the many gifts and skills, not least time, which people give generously and freely. Please forgive me if I have not mentioned everyone directly in this report – thank you.

Junior Church Report

Morag Phipson

Little Fishes is led by Jackie Hayward, Tracy Warr and Harriet Roche who have a dedicated team of supporters Joy Dawson, Sue Jones and Morag Phipson. We are also grateful to Jennie Yates and Julie Tyers, who stepped in to lead Junior Church this year.

Held in the village hall on the 2nd and 3rd Sunday of each month, we normally start with a prayer, short story and activity in the village hall and then join the congregation for the remainder of the service. The children eagerly share what they have been doing that morning during the service and show the craft work they have made. A variety of awards are given for attendance during the Family Service and the children keep track by adding stickers into the attendance book. We also include a monthly article on Junior Church in the Forum magazine which shares information and the activities with the wider parish community.

Jennie Yates and her team of helpers created a brilliant display in the font area for the annual Harvest Appeal which helps to highlight these good causes. The Bishop's appeal for 2025 was to support focused Mission Direct in Zambia and Uganda, where they are building schools and improving access to education.



At Christmas, we make Christingles to distribute at our Christingle service to the congregation. Thank you to all the adults, who give their time and materials, and to the children who took part in slicing, tying ribbon, decorating and eating sweets!

We also support Mothering Sunday by making up posies to give out at the service. The daffodils are kindly donated and the children enjoy making them up with ribbon and greenery.



Aimee Lauezzari has continued leading the music group which plays at our family services in church. Well done to our musicians who eagerly attend the practice sessions and for their continued commitment. Thank you Aimee.

The FOG (Family Outreach Group) meets at least 4 times per year and aims to help develop ideas for the young people.

Thanks also to Wendy and the congregation for your guidance and support for our young people.

Safeguarding Report

Rachel Hurst (Parish Safeguarding Officer),

Wendy Waygood (Assistant Parish Safeguarding Officer)

Aimee Lauezzari (Lead Recruiter)

The Parish is committed to the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults and to supporting those who have been victims of abuse, as well as those who may present a risk to others. The PCC has complied with the duty under Section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 (duty to have due regard to the House of Bishop's guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults).

The PCC continues to follow all the House of Bishops' Safeguarding Policies and Practice Guidance, as well as "Promoting a Safer Church" (child protection and vulnerable adults policy) and the Domestic Abuse statement. Guidance regarding 'Identifying Safeguarding Serious Incidents and Reporting them to the Charity Commission' has also been adopted by the PCC. An item on Safeguarding is on every PCC agenda.

We have a Parish Safeguarding Officer and a Lead Recruiter. Those who work with vulnerable groups in the Parish are recruited in accordance with the Practice Guidance Safer Recruitment July 2021. DBS checks are renewed every 3 years. Members of the PCC are requested to take the appropriate safeguarding training, to be renewed every three years.

Anyone (volunteers or employees) working with children, young people, or vulnerable adults, must now also undertake the Domestic Abuse module.

There is adequate insurance cover for all activities involving children or adults undertaken in the name of the Parish. There have been no actions following risk assessments during 2025.

Buntingford Deanery Synod Report

Jackie Hayward

Wendy Waygood

There were 4 meeting this year:

Meeting: 10 February 2026

St Peter's Church, Buntingford

Chair: Revd James Sawyer (Rural Dean)

Advent and Christmas Feedback: Attendance varied across churches, but many reported seeing new or occasional visitors. Some noted declining midnight service attendance. Having midnight at 21.00 which is midnight in Bethlehem. Ideas shared included combining services for larger gatherings and creative events such as pub carols, quiet Christmas services, and community activities.

Deanery Choral Evensong: held on 22 February

General Synod Report: Emma Robarts spoke at General Synod about the importance of Lowest Income Communities funding and asked questions about church strategy and finance.

Flourishing Churches Events 2026: Upcoming events include:

- Hope for Rural Churches Conference (6 June)
- Online rural churches prayer meeting (18 March)

- Leading Your Church into Growth conference (16–18 October)

Next Triennium (2026–2029)

Deanery Synod elections are due. Total representatives reduced to 36 due to electoral roll changes. Parishes encouraged to fill vacancies. New treasurer and secretary are also needed.

Any Other Business

- Concern raised about Church of England plans for slavery reparations (Project Spire).
- Support requested for village schools facing possible closure..

Meeting: 4 December 2025

Baldock Church Hall

Chair: Revd James Sawyer (Rural Dean)

Corporate Spiritual Discernment: The Revd Mark Rodel (Diocesan Deputy Director of Mission and Ministry) led a listening session to gather views for the Diocese ahead of the appointment of a new bishop. Through Bible study and group discussions, participants reflected on ministry and how it can grow. Key themes included encouragement, recognising everyone’s role, building relationships, and creating opportunities for service. Feedback from the process was requested.

Diocesan Synod Report: Topics included Bishop Jane’s address on kindness, the approved 2026 Diocesan budget, mission funding bids, updates on Living in Love and Faith, church schools, and ministry strategy.

Financial Matters: Parish share across the Diocese will decrease by 3.5%, though this Deanery’s reduction is 2.1%. Remaining BRAVE Trust funds were returned and will support youth work. Some parish share write-offs were approved; a pastoral support grant decision for Cottered was pending.

Elections: Emma Robarts was congratulated on her election to General Synod. Deanery Synod elections will take place in 2026.

Meeting: 10 September 2025

Horstead Church

Chair: Mark Eaton (Lay Co-Chair)

Christian Aid Presentation: Phil Evans, Christian Aid’s Home Counties Church Engagement and Fundraising Officer, was welcomed for this item. His power-point presentation included details of recent appeals (e.g. Gaza, Sudan, Afghanistan), a brief history of the charity and how it had evolved over the eighty years since it was founded after the Second World War, its campaigns such as climate and debt advocacy and such resources as Lent courses, harvest festival orders of service and various resources for school including ‘global neighbours’. He explained that as well as appeals in situations of natural disasters and human conflict and at different times of the year, Christian Aid also maintained an emergency fund for sudden individual crises. Whilst it did not wish to hide its identity and its logo could be seen wherever it was safe to do so, it was not a proselytising agency and it generally worked through local partner organisations, particularly in countries where Christianity was not welcomed. As well as direct practical help, Christian Aid also gave money to its partners for other local projects. His presentation included various examples of how individual people had been helped as well as many other facts and figures. With his own enthusiasm and commitment to the work of Christian Aid being obvious, he also repeatedly acknowledged and thanked people and churches for their support.

General Synod Report: Canon Tim Bull’s reflections on the July sessions in York were shared. Topics included finance, a proposed creation festival, support for survivors of clergy abuse, and changes to ordination processes.

BRAVE Trust: Following the resignation of the schools worker, the Trust was being wound up, though clergy would continue engagement with local schools.

Meeting: 21 May 2025

Cottered Church

Chair: Revd James Sawyer (Rural Dean)

Vision for the future of our Deanery: By way of introduction, James Sawyer explained that the clergy had been working together for some time on developing a vision for the Deanery with a project to assist in the implementation of that vision. Session led by Reverend Kate Lomax, Diocesan Flourishing Churches Team Leader and Church Growth Officer for Hertfordshire. Kate began with reading the account of the feeding of the five thousand from John’s Gospel, as an introduction to thinking about the future and how we might collaborate together. With everyone sitting together in benefice/parish groups, people were asked to think about the disciples’ initial response, what we might learn from the boy and what the miracle revealed about Jesus’ power and compassion. Each benefice identified their strengths and resources on one side of a piece of paper and their areas of need on the other. Finally the meeting came together to think about as a Deanery what opportunities God might be opening up for us to collaborate and share our resources, trusting in Him to multiply our impact. Ideas mentioned included youth work, better communication, shared worship and pilgrimage. Kate finished by saying that she could see that God was already at work amongst us and the challenge now was to start to work on making some of the ideas identified happen.

Updates

- Bishop Alan retired at the end of May.
- Annual church inspections information to be published

Treasurer’s Report– Year Ended 31 Dec 2025

Kay Chaplin

Income: Regular income (regular giving through Gift Aid, collections etc. but excluding donations specifically to the Church Repair Fund) was £25,246 (£24,431 in 2024).

	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020
Plate Collections	5,761	5,006	5,761	4,939	2,940	1,095
Donations (incl Gift Aid)	12,430	12,677	11,697	12,393	13,580	10,882
<i>Monthly standing orders</i>	<i>8,983</i>	<i>8,413</i>	<i>8,972</i>	<i>9,414</i>	<i>10,521</i>	<i>8,668</i>
<i>Envelopes & One Off</i>	<i>3,447</i>	<i>4,264</i>	<i>2,725</i>	<i>2,979</i>	<i>3,059</i>	<i>2,214</i>
General donations	0	350	1,128	1,927	931	4,341
Fees	104	1,583	1,365	1,770	1,757	1,003
Fete, Teas & other events	6,951	4,815	5,151	5,564	4,667	0
Total	25,246	24,431	£25,102	£26,035	£23,875	£17,321

Expenditure: Routine running costs (i.e. costs excluding charitable donations and major repairs & maintenance) were £24,057 (£22,929 in 2024).

	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020
Parish Share	17,706	16,709	16,055	15,541	14,254	13,851
Insurance	2,242	2,203	2,086	1,942	1,875	1,848
Electricity & Water	891	1,295	5,340	2,238	864	672
Vicar & visiting Vicars	1,343	1,385	1,213	969	535	405
Routine repairs	516	559	895	821	1,467	1,605
Sundry	1,359	778	1,146	666	892	1,221
Total	24,057	22,929	£26,735	£22,177	£19,887	£19,602

Sundry includes £200 donation to the school governors, £372 altar supplies, £230 music licenses, £405 for the CollecTin (including connection – less £250 Diocese Grant towards the cost) and £152 other sundry expenses.

Routine repairs and maintenance (out of recurring income) was for servicing the fire extinguishers and clearing the gutters.

Overall, there was £1,369 more routine income vs routine running costs.

We collected £40 for Harvest Festival and £71 for Christingle, plus £10 via CollecTin towards the Church flowers.

In addition to these donations passed already on, £50 annual subs to the Beds & Herts Historic Churches Trust (if the PCC are happy to continue to support this charity).

The PCC spent £1,516 on printing the Ardeley Book, and £774 had been recouped through sales by the end of the year.

The claim for £18,969 of VAT on the 2024 window & buttress repairs was granted by HMRC in 2025, bringing the cost down to £96,009.

In 2025 £11,817 was spent out of restricted funds on repairs & maintenance: £3,000 on pollarding trees; £2,046 on the Quinquennial report; £3,124 on the final retention for the masonry works; £1,765 on various organ repairs and investigations; £781 on the roof alarm routine costs; £700 on emergency tree clearance; and £400 to replace phase boards.

At the end of 2025 the Church had total funds of £84,920, of which £61,211 was restricted funds (only to be spent on building repairs and other specified projects, including £1,278 in the Chancel Fund and £1,653 in CBF Investments), and £23,752 of unrestricted funds. There is £810 of the New Court Trust grant remaining.



Appendix: Mission Action Plan 2026

Core values for your Church, Parish, Team Ministry or Benefice?

1. Weekly worship in Ardeley church
2. To be a welcoming church family to everyone
3. Togetherness working as a team, valuing each other

What is your 1st Priority to make your vision a reality?

To rebuild relationships with our village Church school

Which of the 3 strands of Living God's Love does your 1st Priority most focus on?

Making New Disciples

What is your 1st SMART Goal to achieve your 1st Priority?

PET Service at family service 2026

What is your 2nd SMART Goal to achieve your 1st Priority?

School newsletter shared termly with PCC

What is your 3rd SMART Goal to achieve your 1st Priority?

Invite the school choir to sing at the music and carols service. Be actively welcoming to new head teacher.

Are these 1st priority goals Specific, Measurable, Actionable, Realistic, and Timebound?

Yes

What 2nd Priority are you working on to make your vision a reality?

Sustaining the church building and churchyard for future generations

Which of the 3 strands of Living God's Love does your 2nd Priority most focus on?

Transforming Communities

What is your 1st SMART Goal to achieve your 2nd Priority?

Breakdown Quinquennial 2025 report into achievable projects.

Undertake one project at a time, allowing funding to be utilised smartly.

What is your 2nd SMART Goal to achieve your 2nd Priority?

Structural engineer to assess roof of the nave for water ingress

What is your 3rd SMART Goal to achieve your 2nd Priority?

Raise funds for roof improvements as indicated

Are these 2nd priority goals Specific, Measurable, Actionable, Realistic, and Timebound?

Yes

What 3rd Priority are you working on to make your vision a reality?

New music Stands to support continuation of music in our family worship

Which of the 3 strands of Living God's Love does your 3rd Priority most focus on?

Making New Disciples

What is your 1st SMART Goal to achieve your 3rd Priority?

Identify costing of music stands

What is your 2nd SMART Goal to achieve your 3rd Priority?

Look at musicathon to raise funds

What is your 3rd SMART Goal to achieve your 3rd Priority?

Good advertising for fund raising

Are these 3rd priority goals Specific, Measurable, Actionable, Realistic, and Timebound?

Yes

How will your priorities and goals be resourced?

Pulling together we have a small group of volunteers but they are very dedicated

We would love to support you in making your Mission Action Plan a reality. Please indicate what support you would welcome. A member of the Diocesan team will contact you.

Buildings & Grants

Church Growth

