

MEET THE TEAM

Who We Are: St Martins, Knowle

REV. SAM DENYER



My name is Sam and I've been the vicar here at St Martin's since October 2025. I grew up in and around Bristol but spent many years living in other parts of southern England before finally succumbing to the pull back to this great city.

I have spent my whole life immersed in the life of local parish churches, and I love that it is my job to build up God's people here in Knowle, giving God the glory in worship, learning better to follow Jesus, and loving our neighbours.

If not doing church things, you might find me playing music and singing, riding my bike, or cooking for friends and family.

REV. ANNE COWLEY



My name is Anne, and I moved to Bristol in 2025 after I retired from working in churches in London. I originally come from Yorkshire, but spent most of my adult life in London – apart from five years living in Hong Kong and Singapore. I have two grown up children – one who lives two minutes walk from me with her husband and little boy, and a son who is still in London. I have enjoyed becoming involved at St Martin's and getting to know a new area. I am a homemaker and have really enjoyed being able to make a new house my home – I lived in the previous one for over thirty years, so this was a new blank canvas! I am always happy to take the opportunity to meet and talk about faith – or not about faith.

REV. PHIL MANNING

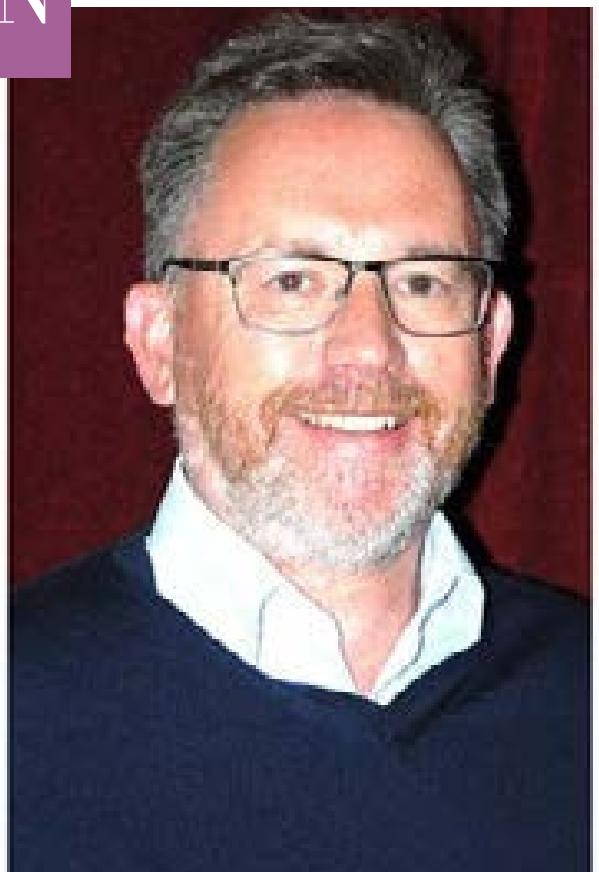


Hi, I'm Phil, originally from Southampton, but I have been living in south Bristol for 9 years now, with my wife Abbey. I trained at Trinity Theological College and became the curate at St Martin's in July 2023, following my Ordination as a Deacon in Bristol Cathedral and was ordained as a Priest, a year later.

I am passionate about exploring faith and doubt with others, as well as creating fresh expressions of church that are infused with the richness of tradition. I have enjoyed beginning my ministry in Knowle, getting to know people at church and in the wider community.

RICHARD HENSMAN

Hi, I'm Richard one of the churchwardens here at St Martin's. I have been worshipping here with my family, since 2004 and have variedly been a dad pushing a screaming baby up and down the south isle during services, a shepherd in the Christmas Eve Nativity play (I hasten to add with a young child), occasionally sung in the choir and with the singing group, been a member of the PCC and have now graduated to being a churchwarden!



REBECCA WEARNE

Hi, I'm Becky. I am Church Warden, Pastoral Care Coordinator and also co-ordinate our Gift Aid returns! I have had a long association with St. Martin's, as I first came to the church as a teenager. Married with 5 children, all grown-ups, apart from our almost 16-year-old son and apart from one, all still living at home, so life is very busy! I work as a Relationship and Family Counsellor. I love nothing more than spending time talking with a variety of people from all backgrounds and ages!



CHRIS DURSLEY



Hi, I'm Chris, one of St. Martin's Licensed Lay Ministers. I first started worshipping at St. Martin's in 1998, having spent several years, not being part of a church community and just having been given the huge privilege and responsibility of setting up and opening a brand-new primary school, as its first Headteacher!

Although I have now retired, my passion and interest for working with children, young people, and their families, has not diminished! This is the focus of my ministry as an LLM at St. Martins, alongside, preaching and taking part in leading worship and small discipleship groups

STEVE PURNELL

Hi, I'm Steve, I retired in September 2023, having worked all my life in various roles in the motor trade, including for some time, owning my own business in Knowle, so I am very familiar with the local community. I've been attending St. Martin's for about 15 years, prompted initially by a former incumbent who I met socially, to come along to a service. The warmth of the welcome I received, and the liturgy encouraged me to begin to attend regularly and to go along to a weekly Bible Study group, which helped develop my faith and to make the decision to be confirmed. Feeling called to some form of ministry, I attended an Exploring Christianity Course and in 2022 was licensed as an LLM in Bristol Cathedral.



JANET COOMBES



Hi, I'm Jan, I have been the Safeguarding Officer for St Martin's Church, since November 2015. My role is ensuring our safeguarding policies and procedures are in place, to keep children and vulnerable adults safe and to respond to protection concerns that may arise.

I am a registered nurse and trained as a midwife in 1979, I then worked as a midwifery sister at St Michael's hospital and in the community, until I retired. Safeguarding has therefore always been a priority in my life.

Apart from my role at St. Martin's, I am also part of the Diocesan Steering Safeguarding Group and the Diocesan Risk Management Team.

I have two grown up daughters, both are married and have given me six wonderful grandchildren. Watching them grow into individual little people, is now one of the highlights of my life!

MARTIN TURNBULL



Hi, I'm Martin, the Music Director and Organist, a professional musician and piano teacher, I have two grown up sons and grandchildren, who I adore spending time with! I came to St Martin's in 1997 to be the organist and choir trainer. I had to step back in 2000 but then started up a church band with my two children on drums and bass, which then grew to 6 to 8 members. Later I started a singing group, which supported an all-age worship service for a number of years, until the younger members moved on to take up further education. My present role as Director of Music and Organist began in 2022.

Passionate about green issues all my life, I worked with others to raise awareness of the importance of taking responsibility for being stewards of God's creation. This resulted in St. Martin's being awarded a Bronze Eco Award by A Rocha.

For a number of years, I have also felt called to share my Christian faith on the streets of Bristol, Bath and London, through a music-theatre act called 'Street Surprise'. I also support other evangelism teams, playing and singing Christian songs.



CLARE HENSMAN

Hi, I'm Clare, I have been attending St. Martin's since 2004, with my husband Richard and family.

I am the Hall Manager/ emergency drain 'unblocker' and designer and creator of what has become an annual tradition at St. Martin's, upcycling materials to produce a Christmas Tree, for display in Church during the festive season!

Apart from the above, I work alongside Lynn teaching the under 11's in Sunday School and am also a member of the Messy Church and Café Reconnect Teams. I love the range of worship we have at St Martins, which allows me to 'escape' with the children on 'high' Sunday's and come along to the less formal Café Church and the All-age Communion Service on the other Sundays in the month!

BETH HERBERT

Hello, I'm the Parish Administrator at St Martin's. I've lived in Knowle since 2016, with my husband and 2 young children, who especially enjoy Messy Church at St. Martin's. I enjoy being creative and spending time with the family, exploring the local area and camping trips in my spare time. As the Parish Administrator.



