

# St Stephen's Southmead

## APCM reports for 2025-26



### From our Minister

A church that punches above our weight every day 2025 was a year of settled growth. Our congregation is growing steadily in both numbers and discipleship. There are now 6 different discipleship groups plus Wednesday communion that operate throughout the week. We have had two baptisms of new adult believers and are welcoming new Christians into the church of all ages nearly every week. We have employed Emma to do our Operations and Becki to do outreach among children in the schools and community and this has been a welcome addition to the schools. Ali has grown a team and planted Lotus, a women's project that supports vulnerable women and is providing a valuable support and service. We have received so much grant funding and support for our work. Alongside this all our normal outreach and community work continues, our toddler group, prayer and share, Men's Space, Kid's Matter courses, Easter and Christmas in a Box, regular Alpha and Wednesday cafe with all the various different services and support offered through that. We have also met some people like John Bennet with amazing stories how God has transformed their lives and we look forward to seeing how this will enrich our worship and witness further. Once again, we are serving our community and sharing faith. Hopefully the next year will be a time of making changes to the building as we mend broken concrete and hope to build or at least raise the funds for our new toilet block and that we will be innovating more new ways of growing faith in our community and loving Southmead.

*Rev Gaby Doherty*

### Churchwardens Report

Firstly, We would like to thank everyone who works so hard for the running of this church, from the PCC, office staff, ministry staff the building team, most of all the volunteers whose help make the church tick over because without you this church will have less to offer.

A major part of the role as a church warden is to have oversight of the church building and the congregation. Over this last year we have seen some changes in the church building, a new boiler was installed in the kitchen also the back toilet was refurnished which now is a pleasant place to use, The back office and back room has had new heating and new windows installed which makes these places warm and comfortable to work in, the Saint Stephens room also had changes with new windows and a new door leading into the main church but also used as a fire exit, the back fire exit has been renewed with a larger door and a ramp with a path leading to the side gate. There are plans to repair the large window by the font area also the clock tower needs work, a new toilet block is to be built in the main entrance which will help in a big way with the increase in church attendance but also for People with special needs. It is exciting that we have many groups who use this church from the Toddler group, the craft group, men's space, the Lotus group, Bakpa and the youth group, these wonderful groups are for the community of Southmead and beyond. The church grounds have had a tree removed for the building of the toilet block, however there are two new large planters at the side of the church by the fire exit which will be used for a new vegetable garden. Our recent spring planting day was a joyful event. Some of the youth volunteer regularly in church and it's always great to have them on team. In conclusion St Stephens continues to thrive due to the commitment of its members and we look forward to the next steps in our journey.

*Hannah Widdows & John Gardner*

## Youth

There are between 10 and 15 members who attend on Sunday evenings. We met 31 times in 2025. We have a variety of leaders now settled in; John, Becki and Gaby, with occasional trips to the mix with Steve. We have a time of prayer and reflection – usually on the same themes that have been followed in the morning service. One of our oldest members, Olly, is now working on our team and often leads these discussions. One recent discussion was about our fears, and we discussed life and death and the difference being a Christian makes. We went to Spree, which some of the youth said was the highlight of their year. We had amazing weather and a brilliant time camping together at Westpoint in Exeter. We have had on average 7 youth per week on Sunday mornings. We do a variety of activities, their favorite being football and crafts. Every week we have a short Bible slot and we pray for each other. We have seen the youth go deeper in faith, and Ethan got “baptised” on Easter Sunday, which was a joyful event. Some of the youth volunteer regularly in church and it's always great to have them on team.

*Gaby & Becki*

## The Lotus Group

The Lotus group started in September, and we support 12 women who have all been impacted by domestic abuse.

6 women who attend have completed our internal six-week course and Ali has remotely supported two families in crisis, one of which has been rehoused.

Highlights have been watching the lady's come out of their shell, as often they are shy and withdrawn when coming to us.

We have worked with Acta community theatre, and together the ladies have written, and some have starred in a case study video loosely based on their lived experiences. This will help others to know what the group might be about at a later stage.

The MP Darren Jones came to visit, and he said he doesn't know of another group like ours in Bristol. Charities *Next link* and *Safe link* both came to visit and said they think the group is wonderful.

We have four volunteers who are in different stages of training with materiel shared by Restored, including one of our women attending the group who is now training to be a volunteer.

We hope to start another of our internal six-week course in May for more women coming to group. Another lady is being supported to write a book.

Sometimes we have chill days and enjoyed karaoke at Easter and flower arranging for Mother's Day. This enables us just to talk to one another and get to know each other well.

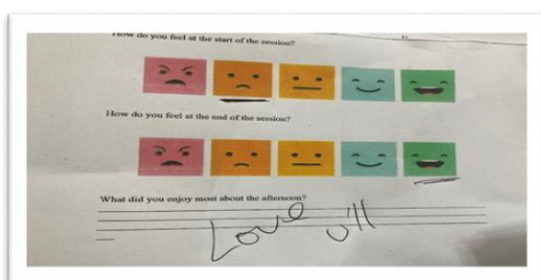
We have pre-school two children who come along regularly with their mums and who are a delight to have.

We would like to thank the church and it's members for giving up the space on Thursdays and allowing these wonderful ladies to have a safe space, as well as our wonderful volunteers

Please continue to pray for our mission to give ladies a safe space and support them to recover from abuse and for ongoing funding too.

Below is a feedback form each lady fills out before and after group. I think it sums up how important this mission really is!

*Ali Prince & Heather May*



## Craft Group

The craft group is still a very small group; we meet on a Monday afternoon at 1.30 - 3.30pm in the St Stephen's room.

In the last year we celebrated Easter by designing and making the flower wreath that hung in the church, we also made a tomb to stand on the alter table where two of the nativity figures ( Mary and the angel ) were used, after that we focused on the harvest service and what we could make to represent this time of year, we chose to create another wreath of fruits and vegetables all made from different fabrics , this sat in front of the table used for communion, as Christmas approached we readied the nativity figures we had made the year before.

So far this year we have made an alter hanging for Easter and are currently working on replicating the stain glass window fabric applique nativity wall hangings that was loaned to the church last Christmas, we are very fortunate to have Anne the lady who made the original hangings teaching and guiding us with this new project.

The group is open to anyone who would like to come along and join in even if it's just to talk and enjoy a cup of tea with us



*Vicky, John, Janet and Jenny*

## Safeguarding

This year we celebrated Safeguarding Sunday in November. We take safeguarding very seriously and have a good relationship with the diocese. We are pleased to have had issues of safeguarding concern that have needed significant follow through. We keep notes of any matters of concern and are regularly consulting with the diocese safeguarding team and have helpful advice from them particularly when setting up Lotus. Trenna Blundell is now working with Joe Widdows as an additional safeguarding officer

and Emma Caldwell is doing our safeguarding admin. She has made some new posters for the toilets and noticeboards. If anyone has any concerns over the safety of any child or vulnerable adult in the church, please do speak to Trena or Joe.

## Electoral Roll

This is the official register of the adult and voting members of the church family. At St Stephens we use this to keep contact details of every individual in the church family and use it to make sure we don't forget about anybody! If you are not accounted for on the electoral role and would like to be please do let myself or the office know. We currently have 38 people on our electoral role with 8 additions this year and sadly two who have departed from this parish.

*Joanne Hamilton*

## Bible Study

The Tuesday night Zoom group continued to meet throughout the year. We spent most of the year following the Jesus Shaped People course, as well as exploring some of Paul's letters and Isaiah. We also, enjoyed spending time together, meeting up during the year to enjoy fellowship.

*Steve Hamilton*

## Prayer Chain

The prayer chain is a small number of people that receive confidential emails of requests for prayer. In the last year we have prayed for many things, . I'm sure we have all witnessed miracles happen from these prayers. If you would like to join in praying for people, please speak to me and I will add you.

*Ali Prince*

## Men's Space

Men's space meets on a Friday morning. There are hot drinks and plenty of laughter to be shared whilst they do woodwork together. As well as the amazing work the men have done for the church garden and community, they have also made props for community groups such as Meadows to Meaders.

*John Gardener*



## Children and Families work

### Schools

I started work in July 2025 as a Children's outreach worker. This presently involves working in Little Mead Academy running woodland wellbeing sessions for children. Each week is tailor made for them after filling out a mental health screening tool and identifying their needs. Sessions have all been based around a wellbeing theme such as boundaries, Self-care, Confidence, Connection, Identity or Emotional Communication. All sessions are based in the schools wooded area and have included mud painting, map

making, feeling sad / happy pictures, animal homes, masks, clay 'invented' insects, bird hides and of course cooking on the fire!

Each session starts and finishes with a discussion or reflection around the allocated theme, and this often involves a practical activity such as learning to trust = a child was blindfolded and was led by their group with the objective of discussing how they were feeling rather than 'win.

I have also given them homework or challenges each week – for example to take care of an identified child which they have managed to feedback weekly.

The Ranch is an adventure playground in Southmead, and I initially supported their sessions during the summer holidays where it was not unusual to feed over 120 children. They are an inspiring team to work with and the care for the children is most evident.

The Ranch targets children from Southmead, particularly those on free school meals which generally means families on a lower income. The children are from ALL schools in the area, which allows me to build relationships in an easy and natural way, with one child recently interested in joining our Youth group.

I now work here term time only and run Forest School sessions for them with any child who is interested. I regularly work with around 20-40 children in one session and offer activities such as Bird feeders, Smores, Garlic toast on the fire, making bread, Animal homes and dens.

#### Christmas Party

A VERY 'old grumpy owl' and 'dodgy wolf' were part of the Christmas dramatization to express the reason for Jesus's birth in a fun interactive way!! There were many exciting age-appropriate activities and food on offer. The party was well attended and enjoyed by all. These families were also invited to the Christingle and other Church events.

#### Summer Party

Each summer holiday club was based on a theme such as 'Water into wine,' 'Lowering the man from the roof,' 'Calming the storm,' 'Zacchaeus and 'Lazarus.' Each of these included activities aimed at all ages of children such as making wooden boats, Paper plate trees, decorating biscuits, drawing, collage and so on. The families attended with on average 30 children and enjoyed a participative drama of each bible story. The parties also included food and refreshments.

#### Light Party

The theme for the light party was 'Jesus the light of the world' and one of our Youth group led the readings and then the various torches and lights were used as illustrations to the talk. Many games and activities were provided such as a disco ball tent, apple bobbing, pumpkin face collage, illuminous graffiti and tattoos. Food and goody bags were provided to over 70 people who attended.

#### Pancake Party

The pancake party was aimed at local families and included all age activities around the Shrove Tuesday theme. The activities included donuts on a string, playdough and paper plate pancakes and a roleplay café. The highlight was enjoying two types of pancakes with a variety of toppings.

Most of these parties were kindly and generously supported financially by BCEC and we would like to formally thank them.

#### INTERGENERATIONAL WORSHIP

St Stephens has grown in the last year and is attracting more local families. Intergenerational worship is still on a journey and is open to everyone inclusive of age background or ability. The activities always aim to enhance the theme of the service and support participative, active worship and discussion for those who engage best this way. Sometimes they are offered within the main Church and sometimes in the St Stephens room.

Some examples of active worship in the church are:

- Traffic light biscuits for safeguarding week
- Making armor / Swords – Ephesians 6:10-20
- Marshmallow and straw towers - Standing firm 1 Peter 5
- Mother's day flower making

Some examples of active worship in St Stephens room are:

- 'Chosen to belong' - What God says about us with post it notes
- Trusting in God when he hasn't answered our prayers – Planting seeds and blindfold trust game.
- Prayer stations regarding verses of the Lord's Prayer – bread and icing and reading / writing love letters with Jesus.

We always make space to listen, discuss the theme and pray with each other.

#### CHRISTMAS TRAIL

Three classes and the community attended our Christmas trail. This involved setting out all the bible nativity scenes in the church – for example: Joseph's workshop, Mary's house, The Fields of sheep, The Three Kings palace room and so on. The children were led in groups around the church and able to interact with the objects and story in a practical and exciting way. At the end of the story, they were led into the Nativity scene where they met real dressed up Nativity characters who were able to answer their questions. Just today a child came to church who had attended the trail with her class at school. She correctly remembered where Mary's house was and one of the activities, she did.

#### CHRISTMAS STORY TIME

A team of us led Christmas story times at the local schools and in the Church. This involved age-appropriate books with props such as the nativity characters. We estimated that with the Storytimes, Christmas through the keyhole and Christmas in a box we reached over 300 children.

*Rebecca Clark*



## Christmas and Easter in a box

We have gone into every Year 5 school in Southmead with both Easter and Christmas in a box. The boxes are presented and explained in front of the class with the Christian story in a way they can understand. These boxes contain objects related to the Bible that they can interact with – for example a scroll or bread on a plate. There is a practical activity with each box such as colouring a wooden egg with a message or scratching a colour board or even acting out a scene or tasting some unleavened bread. Each box has a 'wonder moment' such as 'I wonder what you would say to Jesus's friends who fell asleep?' Have you ever felt worried or alone? What would you say to your friends if they let you down?

Think of someone who feels worried or alone and write a message to them on the wooden pocket hug to give them.

There is time to have discussions with each child on the table and for them to ask questions. In one of the classes I was in they asked about communion bread so I was able to share an example of how we break the bread and say the Grace with the whole class.

*Rebecca Clark*

## Toddlers Group

A consistent group of adults and parents under 5's run loudly and happily throughout the St. Stephen's room and the back of church. A small number of the parents meet after the main session for a time of Prayer and Share - where we pray for one another and share a thought from the Bible to encourage one another. A number of these parents are new to faith, or exploring faith.

Our annual wreath making event opened the doors to 60 women from the community! We gathered to make Christmas wreaths and heard a short thought from Hannah that knowing Jesus can help in our everyday life, and that St Stephen's is a place where we can know that Jesus helps us in our everyday. We raised £200 for the toilet block.



## Kids & Babies Matter

Since January 2025 we have held 2 Kids Matter programmes and 1 Babies Matter programme. The total number of parents 22 and 58 children impacted. We are still in touch regularly with most of the parents - building community and support which helps parenting confidence! It was particularly good to be at Little Mead primary school delivering the programme with parents from the school. Many of them also come to toddlers. This really highlights the positive crossover of how St Stephen's connects with our local community. Please pray that the schools continue to invite Kids Matter in

*Trenna Blundell*

## Cafe

With gratitude, because of the funding secured to enable me to continue to serve the community of St Stephen's Southmead, I am full of joy to share this update with you.

This funding, since June 2025, has been gifted from the National Lottery Community Fund. These hours are shared between the Wednesday Cafe space, offering a free community drop in, and our Lotus group for women impacted by domestic abuse.

Due to the confidential nature of some of the work I am involved in, names and specific details may be omitted to protect vulnerable persons I have the privilege of serving here.

However, there has been an encouraging and notable integration of people across groups this year – both within the church building and with wider community partnerships. The welcome received has caused people to feel groups here are 'like family' and 'like a warm embrace.' This warms my heart, especially when relating to those who might otherwise be made with and for local people.

Visitors to cafe have included Listening Space facilitators, where some health-related discussions led to local action – in the form of a community letter to local healthcare centres, facilitated by the local MP.

Pop up events have included the cold home group, the CHEESE project, where we received a temperature and humidity monitor. Members of the Greenway Community Development team have also been involved, sharing course details and other opportunities for our visitors to grow and flourish in many ways. We were also part of a pilot scheme, Cool Spaces trial, using the coolness of the main sanctuary to the advantage of local people during periods of temperatures exceeding 25 degrees centigrade outside. See data attached.

Beginning in February, we started hosting a community network meeting, seeking to expand our connections and outreach, in conjunction with Caring In Bristol.

A small cafe steering group has met intermittently to review how things are going – we would love more people to contribute to this please, especially as we hope to create seated, shady spaces for visitors to rest and socialise during the impending brighter weather – help with setting up or packing away outdoor furniture, gazebos or activities would be particularly wonderful.

While we made the decision to cease our monthly dance event, due to low numbers, we would welcome other contacts to reintroduce a movement or fitness activity, such as Zumba, Pilates or Tai Chi.

Our occasional quiz mornings have supported our fundraising efforts, mostly focused upon an accessible toilet block, as well as over £250 for MacMillan cancer nursing care.

Ag arginalised or judged. Well done for being such a welcoming team!

Links with the cafe visitors have led directly to supporting the church cleaning and decorating for both Harvest and Christmas events. Skilled craftspeople have enabled tabletop donation stations to fundraise towards our accessible toilet block appeal, in partnership with the craft group. See images attached.

Training of volunteers has included: first aid, neurodiversity awareness, safeguarding and attendance at a city-wide bumper health day, where we received our own blood pressure monitoring equipment. We have some regular volunteers including students and retired people – even cafe is intergenerational!

Alongside the wider local and national Warm Welcome network, it has been suggested that we become part of a pilot scheme to support local people, with the support of local authorities, into employment through facilitating voluntary opportunities – please consider if there is potential for this beyond cafe.

We are registered as a host for the Bereavement Journey – a National programme to support people going through grief after the death of a loved one. It is intended to be a safe, valuable space for those seeking to journey with others in a small group context. This hopes to launch fully in June 2026, on Wednesdays at 1:30pm after midday communion lunch. Spaces are limited to 8 maximum, for the duration of the 7 week course, which we hope to run on several occasions during the coming year. Please make contact to register your interest or share details with those you know would be interested.

During cafe itself, we have been involved in planting with local groups, at the remembrance garden opposite the church. These events took place in November 2025 and March 2026. This special space enabled a variety of positive connections to be

ain, any donations of time or other gifts towards future events will be gratefully received; perhaps a healthy snacks or cake morning?

Regular visitors often bring something to share, such as fruit, biscuits and cake (bread pudding this week – yum!) and we received funding from the Bristol City Council Household Support Fund to expand the free snacks available and supplement the beautiful donated meals and soups, made and delivered freely, through B&A church in Bishopston.

These gifts have enabled visitors to try fruits, vegetables, pulses and juices which they had never tried before, inspiring some to try some new recipe ideas at home or invite others to share around their table, particularly over Christmas.

It is anticipated that our breakfast roll fundraising morning could be a popular addition to our offer, but if you have other ideas, would like to visit or wish to make an alternative contribution, please come along or get in touch.

All feedback warmly received, with gratitude

Heather [heather.hubssc@gmail.com](mailto:heather.hubssc@gmail.com)

*Heather May*



## Operations Administrator

This year you might have noticed some changes around the church building, although a lot of the work going on will be invisible to most members.

Charitable status - Since our last APCM St. Stephens has become a charity. This has been a necessary step largely because of our growth but is also a necessity for all Anglican churches by 2028, and this will impact the way we report our activities as our work is now visible via the charities house website to the public.

Finances - We need to ensure our annual accounts are submitted in a timely fashion each year, particularly now we are a charity.

In addition, there have been some operational changes to the way we manage our finances. The banking system has been updated and the signatories on our accounts are now all fully present members of the church community.

This means we can do our banking in a more efficient way, which going forward should make our accounting processes easier.

Back-office enhancements – As the team has grown, we have made some helpful changes to the office set up and done some re-arranging of the filing processes and general office layout. Some changes online have also been necessary as we have updated our website provider which will give us more opportunity to enhance our website in the future.

Telecommunications – Some focus has been given to the improvement of our telecommunications. In a building and location such as St. Stephens in Southmead, we face infrastructure constraints, however our phone and Wi-Fi systems have been upgraded from the residential set up we had formerly to a business hub which provides for the growth this church is experiencing, with its many midweek and weekend outreaches.

Again, this provides a good platform for the team to springboard from as it considers all that is store going ahead into 2026/27.

Safeguarding – Ensure all our operational activities are carried out in accordance with safeguarding law has been a priority; whether reporting, recruiting or facilitating groups.

Buildings Development – Some considerable focus has been given to the ongoing maintenance and development of our church buildings (see the Warden's report for all that has been going on).

I am very thankful for the input and support of the many volunteers who contribute to the progress of the operations of St. Stephens and to the Priority Communities Network funded by the diocese for financing this role.

*Emma Caldwell*

## Community Connections

I am very involved with a number of Community groups and social outreaches that are supported by our Church, with the St. Stephen's Room used as one of the meeting venues

1. Travelling Kitchen: Once a month on a Tuesday morning, from about 9:30 onwards, we support the "Travelling Kitchen", cookery workshop, which teaches those who are interested in expanding their cooking skills with varied & unusual dishes. It is run by two very accomplished lady chefs. Early in the day, I, or possibly others if I am not available, prepare the St. Stephen's Room and kitchen with all the cooking facilities, tables and chairs etc., needed to run the workshop effectively. I help provide kitchen support and hot drinks etc. After preparation and cooking, everyone has the chance to sit down and eat and enjoy what they have prepared, and indeed, take home the balance of their cooked creations for another day! It is a very enjoyable and creative experience, typically ending at about 13:00. Well worth considering!

2. The Wednesday Cafe: Every Wednesday morning in the St. Stephen's Room, between 10:00 - 12:00, this cafe is open to all in the greater Southmead community and is run by volunteers. Certainly, not all who come along are members of any Church following, but everyone is welcome. Tea, coffee, cold drinks and snacks are readily available for free. I am involved in setting up the basic Cafe needs, (tables & chairs etc.,) the afternoon beforehand. Various social outreaches sometimes use this venue to present their support / services to the community. For those who want to participate further, there is a shortened Holy Communion Service in the Chapel, which takes place at 12:00, followed by a hot soup lunchtime snack afterwards. There is of course, no pressure to stay after the cafe closes at midday. It is always hoped that being present at the cafe may encourage someone to seek the Lord's presence afterwards.

3. Team Southmead: This group meets in the St. Stephen's Room often on the last Tuesday of the month, between 11:00 - 12:30. It is fundamentally a very productive communication platform and involves itself with discussing and managing issues that involve Southmead in various ways.

To support this event, I am involved in setting up tables, chairs, providing refreshments etc. It is open to all and quite typically consists of Bristol City Councillors directly involved with Southmead's needs and issues and they come along and share information as to where things are at present.

Representatives from The Greenway Centre who comment on upcoming events and developments. Community Police who observe discussions and concerns and act, accordingly, offering advice where they can. Various members of the public are quite often present, some, as teams: involved with projects aimed at uplifting and improving Southmead's community and are feeding back or seeking advice and support. Then, there are those individuals, who are interested about what is happening in our community and may have concerns that they voice during "Any Other Business" ...you could be one of them?

4. The Ranch, Doncaster Road: During the school holidays, I have volunteered to work at this play and activity centre for young people. Basically, I am catering based, providing fruit drinks and fresh fruit to youngsters of Year 6 - age 10 and under. They are treated to all sorts of activities and playgroups, supervised by Ranch Youth Workers. I work on two days of each week, from a morning until midafternoon. On a dry warm day, the number of children present can easily exceed 100, so things will become quite labour intensive! I also provide hot drinks to parents and staff, chatting quite often to various parents. My other task is to provide core kitchen duties such as washing up, waste management and the recycling of cooking utensils for the chef who provides lunch to the children. Busy! Busy! This is a great activity and one I fully support. Many at The Ranch know I am from St. Stephen's Church and hopefully it might send out a message that our Church cares about being involved with children's activities in Southmead.

*Michael Sheilds*

## PCC

The PCC is the elected by, and seeks to represent, all those who call St. Stephen's their home. Its members help to shape the way St. Stephen's shares God's love with Southmead, by making decisions about how we use our resources, planning strategically, and representing the church family.

The PCC started the year with a full complement of eleven members (Gaby and the church wardens, as well as six elected and two co-opted members). A number of people joined or left the PCC team over the year, and there are currently seven members.

The PCC has met eight times since the last APCM. Some of the business of the PCC is about the day-to-day running of the church, looking at things like safeguarding, finances and repairs (for example, to the back window and bell tower). However, some of the more exciting projects the PCC has considered over this past year include:

- The launch of the Lotus Project.
- The employment of Becki as our Children's Outreach Worker.
- The use of the Jesus Shaped People programme and its resources.

In addition, the PCC ran the first "PCC-lite" meeting in February. The aim of the meeting was to try to get a better understanding of what really matters to the congregation of St. Stephen's. We learnt a lot of useful things from the meeting, which were discussed at the PCC meeting in March.

*Daniel Gregory*

## Licensed Lay Minister

Hello I am Janet, your licenced lay minister.

I feel honoured to be part of your worship here at St Stephen's.

You have seen me lead some services and take a turn in preaching.

I also reach out from the church by working with other churches in our neighbourhood, with churches together. We have monthly prayer meetings and church leaders meet frequently to support each other and to keep in touch with events.

I have been to meetings and training sessions with other Lay Ministers from across the diocese.

I am always willing to pray for and with anyone. Please ask me whenever you see me or contact me if I'm not around.

*Janet Moreton*

## Fabric and furnishing

The buildings team (Gill O'Rourke, Michael Shields, Gaby, Emma Caldwell and formerly Jo Hamilton) continue to meet to regularly to consider ongoing building maintenance and development. You will see small and ongoing repairs and maintenance activity around the building and appreciate the input from the Men's Shed and others too for all their helpful support in such matters.

Building developments - At the beginning of the year (April) our secondary toilet facility was upgraded which significantly enhanced this space in the building for the pleasure of all using it.

In addition, the heating in the back offices was upgraded and some new wiring was installed in the St. Stephens room and Lady Chapel. This was necessary to improve the power requirements for the offices.

Over Feb-April a new exit ramp was built at the back of the building and door knocked through from the nave to the St Stephen's room, improving the fire and safety exit for all including the disabled.

We have had some setbacks with the projects focussing on the much-needed repair works to the tower and the large window above the font (West Window). We continue to progress these projects and we hope work will be commencing in spring 2026.

In addition, some much needed updating of the lighting in the main church sanctuary will be happening in spring 2026.

The project to enhance our front toilet block and make this an inclusive facility, continues to be a focus of our fundraising and as the funds grow, we shall be able to make plans for the work to commence.

We appreciate all the expertise that Hannah Widdows and the wider church team are giving to fundraising. It is all key to enable the building to remain in the best condition.

Ongoing maintenance - Since the PCC Lite meeting (February 2026) we have also established a small building maintenance team who will undertake some of the routine maintenance around the building. They have painted the edge of the step in the chancel for improved safety and built extra space-saving storage in the back meeting room.

We continue to call on external providers for some repair and routine maintenance work to ensure the building is compliant with latest legislation. This spring, the blocked and broken drainpipes by the front door have been cleared and repaired and the front door re-painted.

Emma Caldwell

## Finances

### Financial Review

All PCCs are charities. The Charity Act 2011 and specific regulations mandate that any PCC with a gross annual income exceeding £100,000 must register with the Charity Commission. Registration means the PCC must adhere to charity law, including having policies in place and filing annual returns, which demonstrates transparency and good governance to the public and donors. The first year we will have to present accounts to the Charity Commission as well as the Church of England will be for year ending 2025.

Charity finances are subject to a different form of accounting to business accounts. This is sometimes known as charity accounting or fund accounting. This is based on the principle that a donor can decide how the recipient charity can spend the donation and subsequently requires that all income be recorded against one of three different types of funds.

The three types of funds against which Receipts and Payments must be recorded are:

- General – money that can be used for any purpose that furthers the aims of the charity. This money is a type of Unrestricted Fund

- Designated – money that has been set aside by the PCC, from the general fund, to cover any predicted future costs. This money can be transferred back into the general fund by the PCC and is therefore another type of Unrestricted Fund.
- Restricted Fund – money that has been given for a specific purpose (e.g. roof repairs) and can only be used for that purpose.

This is our second year of using the Cloud Accounting system ExpensePlus which is specifically designed for Churches. In our second year we have increased the number of transactions by 60%.

We use fund accounting which is the appropriate method for Churches and Charities. In 2024 we had 16 funds that we were accounting for whilst in 2025 we were accounting 24. Which is a 50% increase. This and the increase in the number of transactions mean the workload on a small team has increased significantly, which means we may have to improve the way we work with the software.

Another factor that is impacting on our current situation is Priority Communities Network. From this we get a full time Outreach Worker and part time Operations Manager paid for by the Dioceses i.e. no cost to the parish and a contribution each quarter for their parish expenses. How much this is accounting for the extra workload is currently unclear.

Our fundraisers have raised enough money to cover our Employment Cost for the new year and well into the following year.

In 2025 our regular giving increase by 5% which in the age of the cost-of-living crisis this is not a bad increase. I will also investigate claiming Gift Aid on our cash giving. Whilst a regular parishioner has agreed to donate £730 to cover the shortfall shown on the Summary of Funds against the Lee Abbey Fund.

Finally, we need to look at Note 6 Pastoral work cost. Two areas Activities (the rise here might be the result of the rise in the general cost of living) and Gift Given where we increased our giving by over £7,000. This is due to a change in system from giving annually to giving monthly which will now settle down as we had two years worth of giving from our one year budget.

#### Draft Receipts and Payment Accounts

Unrestricted <u>Funds</u>	Designated <u>Funds</u>	Restricted <u>Funds</u>	Total funds <u>2025</u>	Total funds <u>2024</u>
------------------------------	----------------------------	----------------------------	-------------------------------	-------------------------------

	Notes	£	£	£	£	£
<b>Income:</b>						
Giving	1	34,425			34,425	32,735
Misc. income	2	1,960	1,385		3,345	1,986
Major Refurbishment	3		1,337		1,337	84,500
Other Income	4	3,185	13,798		16,983	15,099
Grants	5		9,801	53,269	63,070	36,048
<b>Total Income</b>		<b>39,570</b>	<b>26,321</b>	<b>53,269</b>	<b>119,160</b>	<b>170,368</b>
<b>Expenditure:</b>						
Parish Share	6	17,646			17,646	15,780
Pastoral Work	6	13,813	7,656	3563	25,032	13,992
Runing Cost	7	18,401			18,401	15,728
Employment Cost	8	4,613		28,038	32,651	23,126
Major Repairs	9		52,087		52,087	65,272
					0	0
					0	0
<b>Total Expenditure</b>		<b>54,473</b>	<b>59,743</b>	<b>31,601</b>	<b>145,816</b>	<b>133,898</b>
Surplus / Deficit 2025		(14,902)	(33,423)	21,670	(26,655)	36,470
Surplus / Deficit B/F		19,439	74,840	10,865	105,144	68,674
Surplus / Deficit C/F		4,537	41,417	32,535	78,489	105,144
<b>Represented by</b>						
<b>Lloyds Bank</b>						
Instant Access					76,007	67,884
Main Account					2,482	790
					<b>78,489</b>	<b>68,674</b>

### Draft Summary of Funds for Year Ending 31-12-25

Fund Name	Opening Balance	Income	Expenditure	Fund Transfers	Closing Balance
-----------	-----------------	--------	-------------	----------------	-----------------

		£	£	£	£	£
General	Unrestricted	19,439.43	39,570.30	54,471.46		4,538.27
Toddlers	Designated	981.45	80.41	562.76		499.10
Kids Matter	Designated	57.18	300.00	268.07		89.11
Youth and young adults	Designated	110.04	14.00	528.00		-403.96
Wreath Making	Designated	0.00	280.51	120.52		159.99
Clergy discretionary fund	Designated	1,777.10	990.21	1,664.00		1,103.31
Family Minister	Designated	3,362.79		803.51		2,559.28
Lee Abbey	Designated	875.50	1,712.50	3,318.35		-730.35
Building Fund	Designated	34,252.47	9,877.91	42,367.74	24,252.34	26,014.98
Legacy gift	Designated	24,252.34			24,252.34	0.00
79 Ullswater Road fund	Designated	9,171.19	11,700.00	9,432.00		11,439.19
Friendship Café	Designated		1,365.26	678.06		687.20
Salaries Grant	Restricted	6,112.21	20,600.00	17,880.56		8,831.65
Community Fund	Restricted	4,543.92	19,720.00	10,049.70		14,214.22
Ops Manager Expenses	Restricted	0.00	768.00	935.91		-167.91
Outreach Worker Expenses	Restricted	0.00	750.00	640.54		109.46
Bristol Christian education council	Restricted	208.30	586.28	716.06		78.52
Lotus	Restricted	0.00	10,345.00	1,218.17		9,126.83
Spree	Restricted	0.00	500.00	160.00		340.00
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>105,143.92</b>	<b>119,160.38</b>	<b>145,815.41</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>78,488.89</b>

Unrestricted	19,439.43	39,570.30	54,471.46		4,538.27
Designated	74,840.06	26,320.80	59,743.01	0.00	41,417.85
Restricted	10,864.43	53,269.28	31,600.94	0.00	32,532.77
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>105,143.92</b>	<b>119,160.38</b>	<b>145,815.41</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>78,488.89</b>

	2023	2024	2025	2026
Parish share	17,064	15,780	17,645	16,501

## Notes to the Accounts

### Basis of Preparation

The PCC is a body corporate (PCC Powers Measure 1956, and the Church Representation Rules 2022) and a Charity registered with the Charity Commission No 1215510.as per the Charity Act (2011)

Charity finances are subject to a different form of accounting to business accounts. This is sometimes known as charity or fund accounting. With receipts below £250,000 annually, we are also allowed to adopt a

simplified form of accounting where the financial statements are prepared on a cash basis when receipts and payments accounts take place through the bank account, instead of the more complex accrual method.

### Assessment of Going Concern

Preparation of the accounts is on a going concern basis. The Trustees consider that there are no material uncertainties about the Charity's ability to continue as a going concern.

### Fund Accounting

- **General** – money that can be used for any purpose that furthers the aims of the PCC. This money is a type of **Unrestricted Fund**
- **Designated** – money that has been set aside by the PCC, from the general fund, to cover any predicted future costs. This money can be transferred back into the general fund by the PCC and is therefore another type of **Unrestricted Fund**.
- **Restricted Fund** – money that has been given for a specific purpose (e.g. roof repairs) and can only be used for that purpose.

### Incoming Resources

All incoming resources are recognised once the charity has received the money in its bank account.

### Resources Expended

Expenditure is recognised on a cash basis when payments have been made through the bank account.

	<b>2025</b>	<b>2024</b>
<b>Income Notes 1 - 5</b>	119,160	170,368
<b>Expenditure Notes 6 - 9</b>	145,815	133,898
<b>Note 1 Giving</b>	£	
Donations: PGS	25,249	23,524
Gift Aid: PGS gift aid	6,214	6,259
Donations: Cash Collections	2,961	2,952
	34,425	32,735
<b>Note 2 Miscellaneous Income</b>		
Donations	1,626	820
Ecclesiastic Fees	1,719	1,166
	3,345	1,986
	<b>2025</b>	<b>2024</b>
<b>Note 3 Major Refurbishment</b>		
Fund Raising	1,337	
Funds from Diocese held in Trust for PCC		84,500
	1,337	84,500

**Note 4 Other Income**

Bank Interest	609	979
Investment Income	746	872
Room Hire	1,830	710
Event Income	281	
Café	105	
fees collected for Lee Abby	1,713	3,469
Property Income	11,700	9,068
	<b>16,983</b>	<b>15,099</b>

**Note 5 Grants**

Capital Grants	8,541	10,990
Café	1,260	
Salary Grants	20,600	25,058
Community Fund	19,720	
Bristol Christian education council	586	
Ops Manager	768	
Outreach Worker	750	
Lotus Grant	10,345	
Spree Fund	500	
	<b>63,070</b>	<b>36,048</b>

**Note 6 Pastoral Work**

Parish Share	17,646	15,780
Vicars Expense	774	1,985
Clergy discretionary fund	1,664	101
Family Minister	804	445
Activities	2,971	490
Event Costs	837	752
Gifts Given	9,851	2,064
Lee Abbey	3,318	3,469
Sundry	4,813	4,686
	<b>42,677</b>	<b>29,772</b>

**Note 7 Running Costs**

Admin	3,158	1,210
Insurance	2,550	2,273
Electric, Gas, Water and refuse	8,211	7,395
Telecoms	1,266	767

Maintenance	3,215	4,083
	<span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">18,401</span>	<span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">15,728</span>

**2025****2024****Note 8 Employment Cost**

Gross Pay	28,828	23,126
Employers N I	1,141	
Employers Pension Cost	544	
Other Staff Costs	2,139	
	<span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">32,651</span>	<span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">23,126</span>

**Note 9 Major Repairs**

Major Church Repairs	42,655	37,571
79 Ullswater Road Repairs	9,432	2,718
Clock Repairs		7,884
Windows Repairs		17,099
	<span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">52,087</span>	<span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">65,272</span>

*Dermot Byron*

