

**ST MARY-THE-LESS PARISH CHURCH
CHILBOLTON, SO20 6BQ**

ANNUAL REPORT

AND

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

OF THE

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2025

**Incumbent
Reverend Kevin Rogers**

Secretary
Mrs Wendy Fakes
Grafton
Village Street
Chilbolton
Stockbridge
Hampshire, SO20 6BE

**THE PARISH OF ST-MARY-THE-LESS, CHILBOLTON
IN THE DEANERY OF ANDOVER
AND THE DIOCESE OF WINCHESTER**

INTRODUCTION

The responsibility of Chilbolton Parochial Church Council (PCC) is to cooperate with the Rector in promoting in the parish the whole mission of the church - pastoral, evangelistic and ecumenical.

Representatives

Members of the PCC are either ex officio or elected at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting in accordance with the church Representation Rules.

During the year 2025 the following served as members of Chilbolton PCC.

Incumbent	Reverend Kevin Rogers	
Churchwarden	Vacant	
Deanery Synod Representatives	Mrs Wendy Fakes Mr Colin Sheath	
Elected Members	Mr Neil Bowen Mrs Kerensa Ellis Mrs Wendy Fakes (PCC Secretary) Mr Andrew Kent (PCC Chairman) Mrs Lesley Kent Mrs Charlotte Nash Mrs Janie Painter Mr Michael Payne (PCC Treasurer) Mr Colin Sheath Mr Lawrence Wild (resigned March 2025)	

Chilbolton PCC met five times during the year with an average attendance of 84%. The PCC is divided into five sub committees, which meet between PCC meetings. The sub committees may co-opt parishioners to serve.

Overview of Strategy

The Benefice Vision and Strategy was launched in June by the Bishop of Winchester at our Pentecost Service, followed by lunch.

The Benefice Vision: the village churches of Chilbolton, Crawley, Littleton, Sparsholt and Wherwell aspire to be vibrant Christian communities with Jesus at the heart of our ministry - making a difference.

Our Mission: is to do this by being relevant and inclusive worshipping communities, embracing all people, serving others and sharing the message of Jesus through worship, discipleship, leadership and outreach.

Our values: love, humility, prayer and grace.

A steering group comprising Alick Kay, Andrew Kent, Michael Coleman and Jemma Mack serves to monitor embedding this in our life together, alongside champions who deliver various aspects of this. Involvement is encouraged through joining a homegroup, serving on various teams, giving generously, praying continually, worshipping together and sharing Jesus with others.

Safeguarding and Data Protection

Safeguarding General

There were no safeguarding issues reported.

The PCC has complied with the duty under Section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 (duty to have regard to House of Bishops' guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults).

The Parish Safeguarding Dashboard has been updated.

Safeguarding Dashboard

This has been adopted on behalf of the PCC and maintained. All mandatory training topics have been addressed. No actions are outstanding at the time of this report.

Safeguarding Policy Statement

Nothing to report.

Data Protection

There have been no issues reported.

Health and Safety

No incidents have been reported.

Health and Safety inspections have been carried out through the course of the year.

The five-yearly inspection of the fixed electrical installations has been carried out and some minor defects repaired. Safety testing of portable electrical equipment (PAT testing) has been undertaken and a defective kettle removed from service.

No other safety-related defects have been reported.

Health and Safety Document

Work Instruction No. 14.1 - Safeguarding and Child Protection

(As required in the work instruction a statement upholding procedures will be made to each annual parochial church council meeting.)

In the past year there have been no safeguarding or child protection issues.

WORSHIP

Church Membership

There were 61 names on the Electoral Roll.

Services

With services now being held on alternate weeks the estimated attendance for each service was 29 adults and three children.

2025 showed a small uptake in numbers attending Sunday services. The festivals were celebrated throughout the year, including Mothering Sunday, Easter, Harvest and Christmas - all were well attended. Early April the Maundy Thursday supper took place at Dancing Ledge, kindly hosted by Michael and Joyce Payne. After the fete in June a Thanksgiving Service was held in the fete marquee. At Harvest Festival, Andover Freedom from Abuse was supported with donations of non-perishable produce and financial donations raised from the auction of produce following the service, which included a huge marrow. REME came for its annual visit in November.

During the year congregations were encouraged to attend a Benefice Service on fifth Sundays of the month. Chilbolton hosted the service on Advent Sunday which was followed by a bring and share lunch in the church.

Choir

Despite the low numbers the choir has continued to sing at Services.

In September the choir was invited to sing at a funeral and a wedding which were both held in Wherwell. For both occasions previous choir members were willing to attend.

In December the extended choir also assisted at the annual Carol Service.

Church Fabric

East Wall

The rendering has been repaired and no longer poses a hazard to passers-by in the churchyard.

Maintenance

Some uneven sections of flooring and some unstable pews have been repaired.

Heater elements have been replaced as necessary and the defective heater unit has been repaired.

No other defects have been identified; light bulbs have been replaced as necessary to ensure adequate lighting.

Churchyard

Faculty

In July 2025 a faculty was granted by the Diocesan Advisory Committee to replace the perimeter fencing. The work would be carried out by James Painter and his employees at a time convenient to his farming activities. James had kindly offered to provide the funding. Once undertaken this would enhance the churchyard.

Maintenance

A 'thank you' to Brian Fakes who continued to maintain the churchyard to a high standard. Many compliments had been received.

Grave Spaces

There were available spaces for a number of years.

Regulations

In October 2025 the Chancellor of the Diocese of Winchester issued a Handbook for the Bereaved. It covered numerous issues, including burial rights, ownership and care of memorials, permitted and non permitted items on graves, how to apply for a memorial, how to apply for a Faculty to reserve a grave space. The handbook could be viewed at [Diocesan Registry - Diocese of Winchester](#).

DISCIPLESHIP

Homegroups

General

As part of the Benefice Vision and Strategy five homegroups have met regularly at various times of the day, various days of the week and in various homes (and farm shops) for fellowship, prayer and learning. Amongst others, material used included Great Prayers of the Bible, Discipleship Explored, Heading for the Hill Country, Wisdom in the Desert and a study on Mark's Gospel. These are groups where people can explore and grow in their faith amongst friends. A 'thank you' to all those who host or lead.

Chilbolton

Chilbolton Homegroup continued to meet fortnightly and offered fellowship, Bible study, prayer and support for one another. Members were encouraged to offer their homes for meetings and take turns to lead. During Lent congregations around the Benefice were invited to join a homegroup to study the book of Ruth. Those who came were greatly encouraged by studying the word of God and as a result new members joined the group. To encourage further growth, plans for a new group and someone to lead it were discussed during the year and a new group will be launched in 2026. We have fun and social get-togethers once a term. Please get in touch with Reverend Kevin, Charlotte or Andrew if you are interested in joining a group.

Finance

In 2025 the General Fund made a surplus of £1,270 but only because of a transfer of £4,000 from the Legacy Fund. It ended the year at £27,780 which is above our minimum reserve requirement for this fund (£25,000).

Over the year £13,350 was received from standing orders. This was up slightly despite some end-of-year cancellations. The next largest source of income was from fund-raising (a net £10,920, largely from the fete). £5,703 came from Gift Aid (up by £925 because of a large donation to this fund). Collections at services were £2,427 (down £919, mainly because of fewer special services). Fees were £2,094 (little changed) and bank interest was £989.

Utility costs were £1,621, largely unchanged. Insurance costs at £2,424 were down by 6.5% because the December premium was delayed until 2026. Churchyard maintenance costs were down by £393 to £2,276.

Total charitable donations were a more normal £2,003 - down by £392 on 2024 because of the one-off payment in that year.

Benefice administration costs were £7,321 - up by £780 due largely to the change in the apportionment factor.

£23,212 was paid to the Diocese in 2025 compared with £22,594 in 2024. This was the full amount requested and was made possible by the transfer from the Legacy Fund.

The Building Fund balance declined by £4,622 to £8,244 despite receiving income of £4,900 and a transfer of £750 from the Joint Fund. Total expenditure was £10,272, three-quarters of which was for repairs to the East wall and electrical testing.

Bequests totalling £21,407 were received last year and in consequence the Legacy Fund rose from £150 to £18,714. This fund is used to top up the General Fund when required since none of the legacies are restricted.

The Joint Fund ended the year at £6,173 which is sufficient to cover half a year's printing costs before the 2026 summer's advertising revenue arrives. That revenue amounted to £10,769 in 2025 - up slightly on 2024. Expenditure (largely printing costs) was virtually unchanged at £9,204. £750 was paid to Wherwell PCC and the same amount was transferred to our Building Fund.

The Organ Fund rose by £26 to £741, the Flower Fund was up by £85 to £214 and the Choir Fund rose by £364 to £1,005 as a result of fees from weddings.

Total reserves at the year-end were £65,634, a rise of £15,912. This includes outstanding items of £2,613. Most of the reserves are held in the CBF Deposit Fund earning 3.8% interest.

Lloyds Bank has decided to close one of our current accounts because it does not meet its criteria, having originally been set up as a personal account. This account has mainly been used for standing orders. In the process of transferring these to our main account, three standing orders were cancelled or reduced, whilst five were increased. The net effect is a loss of income of £1,420 per annum.

Volunteers

During the year volunteers provided refreshments after the church services on a rota basis. The provision of coffee machines to serve freshly brewed ground coffee as well as a selection of teas being available after the services has been appreciated.

OUTREACH

Children - Bubble Church

Bubble Church began in February on the second and fourth Sunday afternoons at 4.00 pm and was held in Chilbolton church. From small beginnings it attracted more interest as the year progressed. Young children love it and it is a joy to see them join in supported by their parents and a team of volunteers.

Social and Fundraising Events

June was the annual fete which this year was held at The Manor. Our thanks go to James and Janie Painter for the use of their field and garden. Huge thanks to Wendy Fakes and her team for organising it and to the many people from the church and village community who ran the stalls, and helped set up before the day, erected marquees and after the event took them all down and packed things away. A big thank you to Brian Fakes for getting all the items used back to the barn for storage. This year there was the added attraction of a live band and also the addition of pedal cars for adults and children to race round a circuit in the field. This proved to be an exciting event both for the spectators and the participants.

In August the Bexley Phoenix Choir gave a concert in the church. The church was full and we were entertained to a concert full of varied music including a 'sing along' to one of the pieces of music. The Director of Music John Mackenzie announced that he was going to retire from his post within the next year and so it could be his final visit to our church. Thank you to all who provided the choir with an afternoon tea before the performance. This was very much appreciated by the choir.

September was Harvest Festival. Thirty-five people attended the buffet lunch in the village hall. This year by advertising it to the wider village community it was hoped that this could be more of a community event rather than being a 'church' event. A big thank you again to all the people who catered for this or helped preparing the village hall.

The warm hub soup lunches in the village hall are still proving to be very popular and from April they will be replaced by afternoon tea. A big thank you to all the helpers and to those who cook the variety of soups or cakes.

In December around 60 Christmas lunches were served in the village hall with the help of several volunteers who set up, laid and decorated tables. Several home cooks provided the roast turkey, ham and the usual accompaniments plus the traditional Christmas pudding and trifle. 'Thank you' to the volunteers both from the Hub and from the church who made this event possible and so enjoyable. Musical entertainment was provided by the Wherwell School Choir.

All these events would not be possible without volunteers from both the church and the village community which enabled these events to take place.

Home Communion and Care Home Communion

Four people were licensed to take Holy Communion to the house-bound. These were Charlotte Nash, Lucy Kington (until October 2025 on moving away from the Benefice), Alastair Barron and Susan Ansell. They work according to Pastoral Care Policy and Procedure and the Lone Working Policy. All have valid DBS clearances and attended according to the required Safeguarding training and procedures. Often, people receiving Holy Communion invited neighbours, family and friends to join them.

There are three local care homes, namely Flowerdown, Westholme and Winchester Heights. Regular Care Home Communion services are provided by Reverend Kevin, Charlotte Nash, Alastair Barron, Andrew Kent and Barbara Crabbe in the context of a service suitable to the Care Homes' residents. Care Home Staff are in attendance, and this ministry is wonderfully supported by Deirdre Wratten and Sylvia Arnold who provide the musical accompaniment via a keyboard. There is also a support team of Shirley Lupton (recently deceased), Valerie Sangwine and Sarah Flood who support and enable the Care Home residents to engage with the service.

Kate Fletcher (Anna Chaplain) has made wonderful in-roads into our Care Homes, vastly improving our input and reach amongst these precious souls.

Supporting both the Home Communion services and the Care Home Communion services is Caroline McAulay in the office who makes sure that the Care Home services have leaders, all the consumables are replenished and the equipment is ready to go. Caroline is also our point of call to ensure the safety of those engaged in this ministry.

Parish Visitors

Parish Visitors have been faithfully delivering pastoral care to people in their respective local village communities across the Benefice in accordance with our Pastoral Care Policy and Procedure. The Parish Visitors are Lesley Kent, Charlotte Nash, Colin Sheath, Carol Ward, Clive Thompsett, Alastair Barron and Susan Ansell. All have valid DBS clearances and are continually attending to the required Safeguarding training and procedures. This care has included, amongst other things, prayer, visiting people in their homes, accompanying them to appointments, running errands, doing odd jobs, arranging further support as requested and telephone/text calls to keep in touch.

These Parish Visitors and their ministries are an indispensable part of the life and witness of the respective parish churches. A huge shout out to each and every one for all they invest into the Kingdom of God in this way. There is also an army of people who are not parish visitors but form part of our worshipping community, and others who are sympathetic to the witness of their parish church, who by virtue of who they are care for their neighbours in many and varied ways.

Three meetings have taken place to consolidate this work and plan a way forward to ensure the ministry, and the people exercising this ministry, can flourish. Currently a role description is being developed to enable a future recruitment drive (invitational) to this important role.

LEADERSHIP

Ministry Team

The ministry team said a fond farewell to Reverend Bruce Kington and his wife Lucy as they relocated out of the area. The Reverend Canon Peter Lippiett was welcomed to the team as retired minister with permission to officiate. We continue to be indebted towards Reverend Canon Jill Bentall for her ministry amongst us, also as a retired minister with permission to officiate. Doctor Alan Disher continues in his role as Licenced Lay Reader Emeritus to encourage the ministry team with his insights and memoires on aspects of the Old Testament, especially around the Book of Isaiah. Visiting clergy from the Diocese have supported us from time to time as well.

The ministry team meets weekly to look back with gratitude for all God has done, to learn from one another and to look forward with faith to the ministry opportunities in the week ahead. The team has also focused on what it means to offer a worship space for everyone, every week, in all our services. There was also a focus on engaging with a wider variety of music provision to supplement the organs.

The lay ministry team comprises our licenced lay ministers Charlotte Nash and Barbara Crabb, together with our lay leaders Carol Coleman, Alastair Barron, Andrew Kent and Sally Wesley. Each offer themselves in faithful ministry. We are grateful for each as they share their gifts with us in the Benefice.

Andover Deanery Synod

There is little of significance to report. One meeting was cancelled and one was held on zoom. Chilbolton's elected representatives were Wendy Fakes and Colin Sheath - with Andrew Kent also a member ex officio as a Deanery representative on Diocese Synod.

From our Benefice, Chilbolton and Crawley are regularly represented at Synod (and Wherwell, by agreement, is represented by Chilbolton given their shortage of church members). Parish attendance at Synod is relatively sparse, with some parishes not represented at all - which is a pity, given that it is the one opportunity for individual parishes to express their views to Diocese.

Although this report should be limited to 2025 meetings, it is however timely to mention the 10 February 2026 Synod, given its relevance to current matters. It was attended by Bishop Kelly (the new bishop of Basingstoke) who was well received by Synod and has subsequently agreed to officiate at Chilbolton's 2026 Harvest Festival Service - and with her husband plans to stay for the auction of produce and lunch in the village hall. It is hoped that as many of our congregation as possible will join her.

The one point of particular note at the February 2026 Synod was a presentation by the Incumbent of North Downs Benefice, which is a rural group of parishes very similar in nature to ours. Although he has 10 parishes most are very small - some are hamlets with just a few houses. Overall population numbers are similar to the Downs Benefice.

However, North Downs is geographically compact and easily managed. Over his 10 years in charge there has always been a minimum of two full time stipendiary priests. In answer to a question by Andrew Kent he said that he could not have made a success of it (which clearly he has) if the Benefice had been geographically as widespread as ours; nor could he have managed without at least two priests.

GENERAL

Finally the PCC wishes to thank all the many volunteers who help with the running of the church, for example there are those who help with:

- (i) organising the various rota duties for services
- (ii) cleaning the church
- (iii) displaying flowers in the church
- (iv) organising fund raising activities
- (v) winding the clock.

Your support is invaluable.

A 'thank you' too should be extended to Caroline McAulay, the benefice administrator, who worked tirelessly throughout 2025 and enabled the benefice and church services to run smoothly.