

**ALL SAINTS WHITSTABLE**  
**(Whitstable Team Ministry)**  
**ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR**  
**2025**



**THE ALL SAINTS ANNUAL DISTRICT CHURCH  
MEETING IS ON SUNDAY 22<sup>nd</sup> MARCH 2026  
AT 11:45AM IN THE CHURCH HALL  
THE AGENDA IS ON PAGE 30**

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## ALL SAINTS REPORTS

### 1. TEAM VICAR'S REPORT

Looking back at 2025 for All Saints Whitstable, we see a year defined by the steady, faithful work of a community living out its calling. I am so grateful to all of you who give up such dedicated service to All Saints in so many ways.

One of the greatest joys of the past year was witnessing Jayne being priested in Canterbury Cathedral at the end of June. It was a truly joyful and moving occasion, attended by many from All Saints. We are profoundly appreciative of Jayne's ministry, recognising her funeral ministry and important Anna Chaplaincy work. We also deeply appreciate her preaching and eucharistic presence on Thursdays and Sundays. Alongside Jayne, we must express our deep appreciation for the ministry of Denise Barker, our Reader, whose dedicated leadership and safeguarding oversight have been vital to our community's safety and spiritual health, as well as her sensitive leading of worship and inspiring preaching. We also celebrate the return of Revd Chris Seppala to active ministry; his sermons and ministry are greatly appreciated by all as well as his input into the life of All Saints through his thoughtful germination of new ideas.

Our shared worship remains the cornerstone of this community, and there is encouragement to be found in the numbers, with average weekly attendance across our three main services (8am and 10.30am Sunday and Thursday 10am) rising from 85 to 93 adults on average per week. This engagement extended into our seasonal worship; during Advent 2025, special services held for the congregation and local community attracted a total of 442 adults and children before Christmas and 595 adults and children on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. The weekly growth was most notable at the 8:00 am Sunday and 10:00 am Thursday services, suggesting a quiet but persistent hunger for the sacraments. The challenge of reaching an online congregation has continued through live streaming, allowing us to reach those who cannot join us in person, despite occasional glitches.

The sacramental life of the church has been a particular highlight this year. We were delighted to see a significant increase in the number of adult baptisms, with 7 adults and 8 infants and children being welcomed into the family of Christ. Similarly, our wedding ministry has been active, with 5 couples married in our church and 3 services of prayer and dedication held after civil marriages, one of which was our own dear Nick and Echo. These moments of celebration are vital outreach opportunities, though as is common in so many churches, the numbers are much down on where we were as a society 10 or 20 years ago.

Our commitment to the next generation remains steadfast. The Children and Families Ministry, led by Elena Markova, continues to navigate the complexities of outreach in a secular world. While Sunday school attendance has been variable, the Half Term and Holiday Outreach Initiative has grown into a well-anticipated programme, hosting up to 40 children for workshops centred on the liturgical calendar, such as Easter bread baking. Our community groups, including the Air Scouts and the Guides and Brownies, remain integral parts of the All Saints family, attending our Mothering Sunday, Harvest and Remembrance Sunday services and they with our Nursery School use our Vicarage garden regularly through the development of the woods at the back as "Forest School". The Vicarage garden remains a vital asset through its outreach to our community through these organisations, and for our own use of the garden at Fireworks, Summer Fayres, and so many other events. We would be much depleted without it and we use all four corners of it – for example the 500 adults and children who attended our fireworks event in November.

Financially, while the year has seen its share of deficits and rising costs, we are pleased to note that our recent Stewardship Campaign was successful, providing a much-needed boost

to our regular giving. Our Monday drop-in Café, Cameo, our Thursday Film Club, our monthly Singing for Fun and Health, our friendly choir, servers and bellringers, our music group, and our flower arrangers continue to provide essential spaces for fellowship and creativity. One of the recent highlights was the amazing performance of the first half of the Messiah just after Christmas.

Mission and outreach were revitalized through the development of the Mission Action Plan (MAP), which focuses on “Three Things” (as the Diocese knows it) which you can see at the end of my report. Though we are still in our infancy in developing this vision, and are yet to introduce these themes to the congregation in any real way, we are grateful to Martin Garsed and the Spirituality Group for all they are doing to help us think about ways of deepening our faith and prayer life and spirituality as a church as part of this vision. Our Mission and Outreach committee also is planning new ways to connect with our culture. As 2025 drew to a close, the wonderful Christmas Tree Festival became a symbol of this community spirit, featuring 28 trees and raising funds for the Pilgrims Hospices, with hundreds of visitors pouring into the church. Our Open Day, Summer and Christmas Fairs, were also pivotal moments in the church year.

Despite the challenges of our worshipping community and the demands of modern life, All Saints remains a welcoming place to worship. I believe Café Church has strengthened bonds between us as a congregation and through the discussion times deepened our spiritual understanding of the word of God. We now move into 2026 with a realistic understanding of our needs, but also with the profound knowledge that our team of volunteers and our dedicated leadership provide a foundation of faith that no balance sheet can fully capture. In this regard I want to say a special word of thanks to our churchwardens, Howard Barker and Rob Newman, our treasurer, Malcolm Waller, our Stewardship Secretary, Barbara Tinson, and our Hall Bookings clerk, Kirsty McNicol. Another person who gives many hours in voluntary service to the church is Mike Binks who works two days a week in our churchyard and therefore also deserves a special mention.

In addition to my ministry here at All Saints, my role continues to involve several wider responsibilities across the Diocese and the local community. I continue to serve as the Team Vicar of St John the Baptist Swalecliffe, a community that has hearteningly experienced quite significant growth over the past year. Furthermore, serving as Area Dean alongside Malcolm Waller, our Lay Chair, remains a core part of my service. This role requires regular meetings in Canterbury and involves supporting the various needs of churches throughout our Deanery. I also serve as the Spiritual Director for Canterbury Cursillo and am Chair of the Wynn Ellis Almshouses. Both are very fulfilling areas of ministry.

Here is the “Three Things” aforementioned which I hope explains the direction of travel for the church.

### **ALL SAINTS WHITSTABLE VISION STATEMENT – “The Three Things”**

All Saints Whitstable commits to a mission of sustainable growth and genuine welcome, seeking to live out the Gospel of Jesus Christ in our community.

GOING DEEPER, REACHING OUT, COMING ALONGSIDE

#### **1. Going Deeper in our journey with God**

We acknowledge that sustainable mission begins with a healthy spiritual heart. Just as a branch must remain in the vine to bear fruit, we must focus on spiritual growth to ensure our energy is grounded in God's strength.

Our Action: We will create "room to breathe" for new ideas in prayer, study, and worship, moving beyond surface-level engagement. This includes initiatives such as Sacred Space, Lectio Divina, seeker courses, discussion mornings, and Quiet Days.

## **2. Reaching out with Christ's love**

We are called to be a visible presence in Whitstable—a light on a hill that cannot be hidden. We view our building, heritage, and creativity as gifts to be shared with those who may not yet know they are welcome.

Our Action: We will leverage our unique heritage through tours, arts activities, and concerts to create accessible entry points for our neighbours. By strengthening ties with campus groups like the Nursery, Scouts, Guides and Brownies, we invite our community to "come and see" without pressure. We aim to form closer ties with our baptism and wedding and funeral contacts into the future. We will explore many other ways we can reach out to our community such as through our children's workshops and our use of the Vicarage garden and Forest school.

## **3. Coming alongside each other in the Spirit**

We seek to emulate Jesus on the road to Emmaus, walking beside others rather than standing above them. We aim to be a church of warmth and inclusion, accepting everyone regardless of background, gender, race, beliefs, or sexuality.

Our Action: We commit to practical ministries that support the isolated and vulnerable by helping build community in this part of Whitstable. We will strive to manifest God's love through tangible care and by creating safe spaces for all.

With every good wish in Christ

Revd Simon Tillotson

## **2. CHURCHWARDENS' REPORT 2025**

As Churchwardens, we strive to ensure that our church remains a safe and welcoming place for all. To that end, our duties now require a comprehensive knowledge of safeguarding. We are pleased to report that we have successfully undertaken the necessary courses and passed the required tests to obtain our certificates in this vital subject.

Regarding our shared worship, it has been heartening to see our numbers growing. We are delighted to report that the average attendance over our three services—Thursday at 10am, and our 8am and 10.30am services on Sunday—has risen from 85 to 93 adults per week, which is most encouraging, mainly due to growth at our 8am Sunday and 10am Thursday services. Furthermore, the online streaming of church services has continued, allowing us to reach those who cannot join us in person. While the broadcasts did suffer from some initial technical glitches, these have been resolved thanks to the hard work of Howard to ensure smooth delivery for our online congregation.

On the matter of safety, a fire evacuation test was recently carried out during a church service. This test, although pre-announced, revealed a valuable lesson: the shouted warning of "FIRE" was misheard by some members of the congregation as "choir." Despite this confusion, the church was evacuated quickly. However, to ensure absolute clarity in the event of a real emergency, it was resolved that a whistle will be used in the future to signal an evacuation.

We are also pleased to announce that the new card machine, designed to facilitate charitable financial gifts to the church from visitors, is fully up and running and is available for use at all church events.

Finally, we would like to express our sincere gratitude to everyone who contributes to the life of All Saints. From the flower arrangers and cleaners to the sidespeople and tea makers, your dedication makes our community what it is. We are deeply grateful for your continued support and fellowship.

Robert Newman and Howard Barker

### **3. CURATE and ANNA CHAPLAINCY REPORT**

The past year has been extremely busy as well as very challenging trying to balance the needs of family, work, church and training so much so that I reluctantly decided to resign my position as Chaplain at Bradbury Grange Care Home at the end of April last year.

However despite the challenges it has been a fruitful time for both my Curate ministry and Anna Chaplaincy. Together with our Vicar Simon, the leadership team and the congregation, we endeavour to serve our congregation's spiritual and pastoral needs and the wider community. Through prayer, pastoral care, worship, and outreach, we seek to deepen relationships with God and one another. My Anna Chaplaincy ministry has a particular focus on supporting those in later life.

With the assistance of Marian Johnson (which is much appreciated by myself and the residents), I take regular services at Lyndhurst Care Home at Tankerton. The staff and residents are always pleased to see us, and we have around fifteen residents who regularly attend our home service. It is always a happy occasion, and I am often aware of the Holy Spirit working among us. It is always uplifting to see people who find it difficult to communicate, singing hymns remembered from childhood and saying the Lord's prayer from memory. I also visit other care homes in Whitstable as and when required to take communion and do pastoral visits.

Marian also attends the home from time to time to help with their craft sessions which is greatly appreciated.

#### **Curate Ministry**

The culmination of many years of study, college attendance, and training days was my ordination as a priest at the end of June last year. It was a truly joyful and memorable occasion. The sun shone, the cathedral was full, and I was deeply moved by the presence and support of so many friends from All Saints. It was a day I will never forget, and I remain profoundly grateful for the love, prayers, and encouragement I have received from you all.

Since June, my formation has continued steadily, both academically and practically. Alongside the ongoing demands of ordinary life and my responsibilities as a self-supporting minister, I have been supported with great generosity by Simon, the congregation, my family, and friends. With that support, I have grown into my new role as a priest and have found both challenge and joy in it.

My ministry over the past year has included sharing in leading worship, preaching, administering the sacraments, funeral ministry, and offering pastoral support to individuals and families. These experiences have deepened my understanding of priesthood as something

lived faithfully within the realities and limits of everyday life. Holding ministry alongside other commitments has reinforced for me the importance of prayer, reflection, and appropriate boundaries, so that what I offer flows from attentiveness to God rather than simple busyness.

This year has been one of significant growth and learning as I continue my formation as a curate. My ongoing theological studies and reflective practice have enriched my ministry and helped me to serve with greater confidence, clarity, and humility. I am especially thankful for the patience, encouragement, and prayerful support of the congregation during this time.

As I look ahead to completing my training next year, I do so with gratitude and hope. I am very aware that I could not have come this far without the steadfast love, trust, and support of this church community, and I thank you sincerely for walking this journey with me. Thank you. God bless Revd Jayne Edinboro

#### **4. READER REPORT**

In 2025 I continued my role as reader, alongside those who regularly take on the role of leader, supporting Simon at our 10:30 am Sunday Service. As there are fewer of us this has meant that I have been more involved as a leader but also continued to preach to you all on average once every three months.

Alongside my church life I continue in my day job as a Children's Social Worker managing to somehow juggle my competing responsibilities with both these roles alongside family life, which at times has proved difficult as our family is split across Kent, Hertfordshire, Isle of Wight and Cornwall, meaning catching up with family takes a little more planning.

When looking back over the last year, it was hard to remember what I had done as everything merges into one like some wonderful work of pottery dress off the wheel dripping in clay. You can probably tell I have been watching the pottery showdown in my down time.

Last year, I continued to lead services regularly, preach on and also help out at various events such as children's workshops, BBQ's, fireworks and fundraisers. I am a bell ringer, on the pastoral care team, the spiritual fellowship team, the DCC, Deanery synod and also the parish safeguarding officer for children.

I also ran two very successful home groups during Lent and advent. The lent one focused on God in poetry and Advent on women of the nativity. Sadly due to the space in our lounge it could only be offered on a first come first served basis for up to 12 people.

All Saints has continued to grow and we have welcomed new members in our community, who are looking at the many ways they can get involved and this is heartening. The more the merrier, do come see me to have a chat about roles, but equally it is important to "just be" with God and hear the still calm voice.

I now turn to the end of the year, what Joy! to see our church filled with the beautiful Christmas trees, the event had been a passion of mine that I saw come to fruition. We are hoping to repeat this again but probably not until 2027.

The Christmas services were also well attended. It was lovely for me to attend as a spectator for some of these events but still able to minister to those who needed a chat following the event.

So as we look forward to the challenges that await us in the year to come I would like to thank you all for the love and encouragement I receive from you all and May our

God bless and keep you all. Denise Barker, Reader at All Saints

## 5. CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILY REPORT

The Children and Families Ministry at All Saints delivers two major outreach programmes alongside several smaller events throughout the year, all of which are outlined in this Report.

Our **Sunday School ADVENTURERS** provides a lively, weekly inclusive space where children (and often their parents) are encouraged to explore the stories and teaching of Jesus and the Bible in creative, engaging and age-appropriate ways. Our sessions are primarily based on the lectionary, helping children connect with the same themes being explored in the main service. Each week, we focus not only on understanding the Bible story but also on encouraging curiosity, discussion and reflection about the moral message and its relevance to everyday life.

We learn through storytelling, games, discussion and a wide range of creative activities – including painting, colouring, cutting and sticking model-making, decorating, drama movement and active play. These hands-on encouraging curiosity, discussion and reflection about the moral message and its relevance to everyday life.

Our **Half Term Outreach Initiative**, which launched in October 2023, has grown from strength to strength. What began as a simple idea to offer themed workshops around the liturgical calendar for children, young people and families as part of our inclusive outreach to the local community, has grown into a well-established and much-anticipated programme.

Each workshop is thoughtfully planned to help families connect with seasons such as Advent, Christmas, Lent and Easter in creative and accessible ways. The workshops offer a variety of hands-on activities such as Easter bread baking, decorating biscuits and cookies, card design, pot planting, giant floor art projects making and many other imaginative crafts.

Attendance has been consistently strong. One of the most encouraging outcomes has been the relationships formed. Many families now return regularly and we have built a meaningful rapport with parents and carers who look forward to the workshops as a safe, welcoming space for their children.

Feedback has been consistently outstanding – parents are invited to complete anonymous feedback slips at the end of each session and we continue to receive encouraging comments about the warm atmosphere, quality of activities and the sense of community the events provide.

Each summer we also organise **Children and Families Away Days**, providing an opportunity for families to spend relaxed, quality time together beyond the church setting. This is complemented by our much-loved **Family “Back to School” BBQ** held in the Vicarage Garden, a joyful and informal gathering that helps families reconnect after the summer break and begin the new school feeling supported and encouraged.

In addition, we actively contribute to the wider church community through the **All Saints Summer Fete and Christmas Fair**, where our popular **Kids’ Corner** has become a firm favourite packed with creative activities, games and prizes for all who attend.

Everything we do within the Children and Families Ministry at All Saints is underpinned by a strong culture of **Inclusion, Diversity and Safeguarding** practice. All volunteers are safely recruited, DBS checked and safeguarding trained, with regular refresher training to ensure best practice is maintained. For every session and event, attendance registers are completed, parental consent forms (where appropriate) are securely stored and detailed risk assessments are prepared and reviewed.

In addition, appropriate first aid provision is always in place, with trained first aiders present at activities and accident records maintained where necessary. Where food is prepared or served, food hygiene guidance is carefully followed, including allergy awareness and safe food handling procedures. All activities operate in line with health and safety requirements, ensuring a well-managed, secure and supportive environment where children and families can participate with confidence and trust.

Of course, none of the above would be possible without the support, generosity and dedication of our amazing team of volunteers, who I have rightly named **The Dream Team**, and who give their time, energy and creativity so faithfully. They help prepare materials, set up and clear away, lead activities, welcome families, pray together, complete safeguarding requirements and consistently go above and beyond to ensure every child, parent and carer feels safe, valued and included. It is their unwavering commitment behind the scenes (often unseen) what creates the welcoming atmosphere that families repeatedly comment on and enables our ministry to flourish.

We give heartfelt thanks to God for His provision, guidance and faithfulness in sustaining this ministry. It is through His grace that we are able to serve with dedication, creativity and love, offering genuine and inclusive service and hospitality to all who come through our doors. We pray God's continued blessing over every child and family who has been reached, supported and encouraged through our outreach. We also pray for our Children and Families Ministry team, for our volunteers and their families, who commitment, generosity and servant hearts make this work possible and worthy.

It is both a privilege and a joy to serve alongside The Dream Team and to share in the calling of nurturing faith, community and belonging as Children and Families Minister at all Saints. With much love and blessings.

Elena Markova Children, Youth & Families Minister

## **6. TREASURER'S REPORT**

### Introduction and Appreciation

Firstly, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the entire finance team and everyone involved in managing the Church's finances throughout 2025. Your dedication and support have been invaluable. I extend special thanks to all who have contributed generously through giving and donations during the year.

### Review of the Year

2025 marked a period of returning to normal operations following the completion of significant work on both the Church and the hall. During this time, we focused on completing essential maintenance, such as on the paths, gutters and rainwater drains, bringing our buildings up to current fire protection standards and upgrading the Church electrical system. The graveyard has also had a major tidy up. All have had an impact on our financial position.

### Unrestricted Funds

The unrestricted funds, now solely represented by the general fund, concluded the year with a deficit of £3,200 which is a distinct improvement on the 2024 deficit of £12,000. Our stewardship Sunday in September helped enormously, Thank you.

Total income for the year was £132,000, while total expenditure reached £136,000. Although voluntary income is very similar to last year, Lloyds standing orders, PGS and envelope giving

have increased. Cash collections are down but giving via the card reader is growing. The processes for claiming Gift Aid and the Gift Aid Small Donations Scheme (GASDS) directly from HMRC is now running smoothly. The Parish Giving Scheme (PGS) is successfully underway, with 14 congregation members utilizing this method of giving.

Income from occasional offices, hall rentals, and fundraising events has increased by around £8K over the year. I wish to thank the social committee, the firework organizers and everyone who assisted with the setup and cleanup of these activities.

Utility bills stayed high at around £11K for the Church and hall. We switched to Octopus to reduce costs.

### Restricted Funds

Restricted funds including the Shirley Hall trust fund, transferred to the Church in 2009. For 2025, these funds recorded a deficit of £23,000, which is a significant improvement from the 2024 deficit of £100,000.

Income for restricted funds was £2,500, while planned expenses totaled £22,000. Major expenditure included Graveyard tree works, Church Electrical update, All Saints Nursery Fire risk assessment works and Church Gutter works. The legacy funds carried forward into 2026 stand at £66,500. Other restricted funds amount to a total of £32,000.

### Total Funds and Year-End Position

As of December 31, 2025, total funds amounted to £312,000.

Excluding fixed assets such as Shirley Hall (£37,000), unrestricted funds were £14,000 at year-end. The various restricted funds totaled £261,000, with Shirley Hall representing £162,000 of that amount.

Year-end liabilities stood at £5,000

### The Trust Funds

At the close of 2025, the only remaining trust fund is the Sunman Music & Media Endowment Trust, which has been loaned to All Saints Church since December 2010. This fund is maintained to support the Church's music and audio systems.

### Reserves Policy for All Saints Whitstable

The Church maintains a reserves policy designed to safeguard financial stability and prepare for unforeseen emergencies. This policy stipulates that the Church should hold reserves equivalent to two months of running costs (£25,000), an additional one month of payroll costs (£2,000), and two months of hall income (£5,000). Furthermore, due to the Church's status as a listed building requiring ongoing repairs, a building fund reserve of £10,000 is maintained to address urgent essential work. Remaining reserves are allocated to maintenance and development projects for both the Church and the hall. This policy will be reviewed in advance of the Annual District Church Meeting (ADCM) scheduled for March 2026.

Malcolm Waller

**7. All Saints Whitstable, District Church Council**  
**FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 DECEMBER 2025**  
Income and Expenditure Account

		2025	2025	2025	2024
		General	Restricted	Total	Total
		Fund	Funds	Total	Total
<b><u>2025 Income</u></b>					
1	Tax Efficient Planned Giving	37,532	0	37,532	34,090
2	Other Planned Giving	4,744	0	4,744	4,941
3	Collections at Services	6,500	0	6,500	6,874
4	Donations	9,897	0	9,897	6,287
6	Gift Aid/GASD recovered	12,602	0	12,602	9,117
7	Legacies	0	0	0	0
8	Grants	0	0	0	0
9	Fundraising Activities	10,330	0	10,330	6,834
10	Dividend, Interest, Income from S Hall	5,213	2,179	7,392	6,001
11	Fees from Weddings/Funerals	14,661	320	14,981	12,004
12	Hall income	30,379	0	30,379	28,831
13	Other Income	604	0	604	0
	<b>Total Income</b>	<b>132,462</b>	<b>2,499</b>	<b>134,961</b>	<b>114,979</b>
<b><u>2025 Expenditure</u></b>					
17	Costs of fundraising Activities	3,715	0	3,715	1,939
18	Mission Giving and Donations	101	250	351	610
19	Diocesan Parish Share Contribution	76,340	0	76,340	74,200
20	Salaries, Wages & Honoraria	12,606	374	12,980	10,811
21	Clergy & Staff Expenses	2,305	150	2,455	619
22	Mission & Evangelism Costs	650	5,410	6,060	432
23	Church Running Costs	9,116	1,041	10,157	12,083
24	Church Utility Bills	5,572	0	5,572	8,111
25	Cost of Trading	21,366	4,929	26,295	17,994
27	Repairs to Church Building	2,151	8,928	11,079	0
28	Repairs to Hall/Shirley Hall	2,302	1,039	3,341	0
29	New Building work to Church, Halls, etc.	0	0	0	0
99	Other Payments	0	0	0	0
	<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>136,224</b>	<b>22,121</b>	<b>158,345</b>	<b>126,799</b>
	<b>Balance (Income - Expenditure)</b>	<b>-3,762</b>	<b>-19,622</b>	<b>-23,384</b>	<b>-11,820</b>
	Fixed Assets (Shirley Hall & Mower)			200,945	200,604
	Current Assets			116,345	138,108
	Liabilities			-5,081	-2,221
	<b>Net Assets</b>			<b>312,209</b>	<b>336,491</b>
	Represented by - Unrestricted Funds			14,416	17,547
	Represented by - Designated Funds			37,073	37,140
	Represented by - Restricted Funds			260,719	281,804
	<b>Total</b>			<b>312,208</b>	<b>336,491</b>
	<i>(There may be minor discrepancies in totals as pence are not being shown)</i>				
	<i>(A full set of accounts is available from Malcolm Waller)</i>				

**8. STEWARDSHIP SCHEME REPORT ~ PLANNED GIVING BY ENVELOPE, BANKERS ORDER OR OCCASSIONAL CHEQUES. JAN. ~ DEC. 2025**

**PGScheme or OCCASSIONAL CHEQUES. JAN 1<sup>st</sup> ~ DEC 31st. 2025**

Thank you for your continued financial support over the past year.

2025 proved to be yet another busy year. New methods of payment and administration which started in 2024 have settled down enabling the church to benefit from those planning their giving. One off gifts & donations are treated separately. Gifts via envelope and bankers order continue with Malcolm dealing directly with HMRC for Gift Aid & GASDS claims. The Parish Giving Scheme (PGS) administered by an external company continues with donors paying by direct debit on the first of the month. Payments and Gift Aid are received by the church monthly proving to be a quick & efficient method. During 2025 planned giving was **£43,555.60** compared with £38,840 in 2024.

Stewardship members are increasing and at the end of December we had 86 members giving regularly.

**Patterns of Giving during 2025**

	<u>Members</u>	<u>per wk.</u>		<u>2024</u>
<b>£0.01 – 1.00</b>	<b>7 gave</b>	<b>4.06</b>	<b>7 gave</b>	<b>3.85</b>
<b>£1.01 – 3.00</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>37.60</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>36.08</b>
<b>£3.01 – 5.00</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>45.95</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>28.83</b>
<b>£5.01 – 10.00</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>169.59</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>221.71</b>
<b>Over 10.00</b>	<b><u>27</u></b>	<b><u>580.40</u></b>	<b><u>23</u></b>	<b><u>456.45</u></b>
	<b>86</b>	<b>837.60</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>746.92</b>
		x52 Sundays		x52 Sundays
		<b>43555.20</b>		<b>38839.84</b>

**Gift Aid and Tax reclaims.**

Gift Aid enables us to reclaim tax already paid by donors which at present stands at 25p/£. This is a vital source of income for our church so please could I encourage anyone who is a tax payer to complete a simple declaration form. Likewise, if you are an existing member and your circumstances change – especially if you become a non tax payer please let me know. In 2025 we received tax reclaim payments of **£9,411.00** compared with £9,216.43 in 2024.

At the end of 2025 seventy of the 86 stewardship members were able claim Gift Aid on their giving.

**GASDS --- Gift Aid Small Donations Scheme**

This scheme allows us to reclaim a limited amount of tax on small donations for which there is no Gift Aid declaration. This includes our weekly plate collections, certain offertory envelopes & certain donations. GASDS stands at 25p/£ and during 2025 we received GASDS payments totalling **£1,610.00** compared with £2,189.94 in 2024.

The 2024 figure was inflated by back claims received during the year.

New boxes of envelopes will be available in May for a June start. Please let me know if you do not want your box this year or if you wish to donate via Bankers order or the PGScheme.

Thank you once again to those that give so generously to the work of our church both financially and commitment to the many jobs that go on behind the scenes. Barbara Scott and her faithful rota of helpers are one such group working unseen for the Stewardship Department. Without their hard work and dedication life would be difficult & complicated. – a big thank you to you all.

Barbara Tinson -- Stewardship/ Gift Aid secretary. (263288)

## **9a. CHOIR REPORT**

“Come, let us sing for joy to the LORD; let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation” says Psalm 98 and the dedicated and amazing members of All Saints Choir have done exactly that this year.

What a privilege it is to have so many of us in the choir; so often are there row upon row in the processions and it's almost a squeeze in the vestry when gathering for the pre-service prayers. Have you ever thought about joining us? Try it out! It's great fun! We rehearse Thursdays 7.15pm in the church. There's no audition and no requirement to read music - you're even allowed to still go on holiday!

Another year has brought another selection of wonderful music. During communion, we have sung all kinds of pieces including anthems, plainsong and a plethora of hymns from the New English Hymnal that were completely new to the choir. We also sang multiple pieces some written by myself and some by Michael Cooke highlights of which included 'To dust you shall return' written by myself for Ash Wednesday 2025, a beautiful Nunc Dimittis written by Michael Cooke and a special arrangement of the Nicene Creed by Michael Cooke to celebrate its 1700th Anniversary.

Fellowship and combined worship was a special theme this year and we were privileged to host the Team Ascension Day Service at All Saints; so many of us gathered together in a mass Team Choir to sing praises to the Lord and raised the roof with the anthem 'With One Voice, We'll Sing to Christ Together', a piece that I wrote for the Team Ascension Service a few years ago. Additionally, the choir did an amazing job performing at the two concerts held at All Saints, singing 'All in an April Evening' and a beautiful rendition of 'How lovely are thy dwellings' by Samuel Liddle affectionately known to the choir as "Auntie Vera".

Christmas soon came around and the Choir sang their hearts out at a beautiful and busy candlelit Christmas Carol Service.

Finally, we can't finish before mentioning two special events. In August, we had the immense privilege for singing for Echo's and Nick's wedding; what a special moment that was for us all. Also, in 2025 we paused to thank the amazing Doreen Austin, who, this year retired from full time membership of the choir after over 35 years of service. Thank you again.

I close this report by congratulating and thanking the wonderful Choir who continue to dedicate their time and talents to enriching the musical life of All Saints, Barbara for helping with office tasks and Simon for his ongoing support. My heartfelt thanks also goes to my friend and colleague, the musical genius and kind Sir Mike for all of his continued help, talents, compositions and dedication to the musical life of All Saints. Victoria Hall

## **9b. MUSIC GROUP REPORT**

My version of Psalm 150 would be "Praise him with the Flute, praise him with the bassoon, praise him with the keyboard and voice" and this aptly described our wonderful Music Group playing and singing this year.

Throughout the year, I have again added to our repertoire with another selection of brand new pieces of music for us to play and sing including a few of my own compositions and lots of updated musical orchestrations and arrangements of hymns and worship songs. In addition to the weekly playing at services and for the communion, the Music Group have been particularly busy and collectively had a large involvement within our two amazing and very popular concerts that were held at All Saints be that as a Music Group together and playing as soloists and ensemble members in many of the other of the musical items.

Over the August choir break, the Music Group once again played and sung a beautiful series of solos which was ever popular and well received. Jan and Nick also did a splendid job playing at the very popular Christmas Eve service alongside Dave and Hannah Perry and Emma Rafferty and her daughter.

Playing at monthly Cafe church services has continued to be a great addition to worship at All Saints and the Music Group continues to provide enjoyable background music as people arrive in addition to playing for some of the hymns within the service.

I'd like to close our report by thanking Jan, Nick, Pauline and Mike for their amazing musical talents and their continued dedication to our worship and to Simon for his continued support. I'd also like to thank all those people who helped at the Concerts this year including all those behind the scenes and all those who performed including Friends here at All Saints and Friends of our Church Community too. Finally, I'd also again like to thank my wonderful husband Chris who continues to regularly gift his time and talents by producing additional wonderful musical orchestrations for us to play.

Victoria Hall

## **10. FABRIC REPORT**

There were recently issues with some individuals using the lychgate at night for smoking and taking drugs. The bulbs in the lights of the lychgate were replaced to improve visibility, and this resolved the problem to the relief of the church and our neighbours.

Capital expenditure continues to be monitored. A significant amount of capital expenditure has related to work required by the Quinquennial Report and fire risk assessments. Regarding the Quinquennial, future work needs to be carried out on the Vestry roof, the Tower roof, and downpipes within the next two years. Fire safety requires annual monitoring to ensure compliance with recommendations. Additionally, PAT testing has been completed for the year.

The cost of creating a small refreshment and toilet area with drainage continues to be investigated. We have determined that we must establish the cost of connecting to the sewer system before proceeding with anything else. A substantive reply from Southern Water about making a connection is awaited. It is thought that the cost of this could be substantial and that the figures need to be clarified before proceeding to incur other costs.

Thanks must go to those who have given their time and effort in work parties to maintain the church and its surrounds. Recent completions include the cleaning of gutters and downpipes

by Mike Lynch and Paul Cook , and the refinishing of the Vicar's desk, which was completed during a work party. A special thanks is due to Derek, who maintained the boilers and heating system up until he retired. Although his certification to carry out boiler work had lapsed, he kindly came along on a work party to explain how to access the pipes and where the leak causing a loss of pressure was likely to be located. The work party duly located the leak with a quick temporary fix to cap the water supply. This has resulted in the temporary loss of two radiators, which it is planned should be reconnected by the laying of some new pipework in the warmer weather. This voluntary work should save the church several thousand pounds.

In general administration and future planning, the CCTV Policy has been received and filed , and a large cohort of our congregation undertook basic First Aid training recently. Soakaways from the east wall were renewed earlier in the year to prevent damp building up. Some of the trees to the south of the church which were growing in graves or becoming dangerous were removed. Repairs to the font are ongoing , and the DCC has given the go-ahead to order new bell ropes. Finally, regarding sustainability, contact has been made with St Alphege, Seasalter, regarding their use of solar panels and how that can help improve our use of solar panels on the hall roof.

Howard Barker

## **11. SOCIAL COMMITTEE REPORT**

2025 saw the start of the year in February with our Quiz night attracting tables from the community as well as the congregation, a very good evening with thanks going to Dave and Helen Parry who as usual masterminded it all.

The next event was serving wine and nibbles in the hall after the team ascension day service, it so happened to coincide with the exchange so our guests from Germany were very pleased to be with us and meet people. On the 29th June we organised a bring and share lunch for Rev Jane Edinboro to celebrate her being Priestess the day before in Canterbury Cathedral.

The Garden Fete in the Vicarage garden was at the beginning of July but will be back in the normal slot this year on the last Saturday in June. This is always a well attended event with visitors enjoying the garden. October 5th saw our Harvest Festival lunch after the service. Over 40 people sat down to Cottage pie with veg with apple crumble and cream to follow. I would like to thank Marian and Echo who helped cook. At the end of November we held our Christmas Fair also well attended by the local community and congregation this event is over lunch time with our very hard working food team serving lunches.

Last but not least was the Carols under the Yew trees when we served mulled wine and mince pies in the hall afterwards. The Quiz, Garden Fete and Christmas Fair bring in much needed funds for the church and as Chair of the Social Committee thank everyone that contributes to these events.

Carol Sims - Chair of Social Committee.

## **12. PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY REPORT**

The Prayer Shawl Ministry group meets in All Saints church hall from 1.30pm to 3.30pm on the first and fourth Wednesdays of each month.

We make prayer shawls, hats, scarves and knee blankets to give away to people within the Church community and beyond who need a special 'Hug of Love' because they are dealing

with a difficult situation or have something to celebrate. Each session begins with prayers and a short Bible reading or reflection and shawls are blessed for the recipient at our Communion Service in church. Last year we gifted 24 shawls, 11 blankets, 7 scarves and 2 stoles.

Although our prime interest is in helping local people, the group continues to support a charity in Sierra Leone registered by the Soroptimists, by knitting little jumpers and hats for babies. These are taken to a distribution centre in Maidenhead for their onward journey when sufficient transportation funds have been raised. *“Tiama is the headquarters of the Kori Chiefdom in the Moyamba District of Southern Sierra Leone. It is a growing center for agricultural development, such as maize farming, and hosts mobile health clinics providing essential maternal, child, and general medical services to the community.”* These mobile health clinics and schools have been provided with help from the charity we support.

This year, we also knitted hats, scarves and gloves for the Link of Hope Christmas shoe box appeal which sends shoeboxes filled with gifts to families and elderly people in Eastern Europe (Ukraine, Moldova, Bulgaria, Romania).

We have one member living in Hampshire who regularly sends parcels by post and our oldest member is 95. We would welcome any knitters, crocheters and/or needle crafters to join us regularly or occasionally, whenever you can. A lot of our work is done at home - in fact all manner of places! We have plenty of wool and needles for you to use and ask for £1 each session to help provide materials.

### **Prayer of blessing**

“May God's grace be upon this shawl...

warming, comforting, enfolding and embracing.

May this mantle be a safe haven... a sacred place of security and well-being...

sustaining and embracing in good times as well as difficult ones.

May the one who receives this shawl be cradled in hope, kept in joy, graced with peace, and wrapped in love.”

*(Prayer shawl ministry website)* Sue Smith

## **13. REFLECTIVE SCRIPTURE (LECTIO DIVINA) REPORT**

### **Reflective Scripture (Lectio Divina)**

#### **Group Report.**

The group meets regularly at home, usually on the second Monday of the month from 8 to 9 pm, at home.

Following an opening prayer, we listen to the Gospel reading set for the following Sunday. It is read aloud slowly, twice, by two different members, while others listen.

Only then each person, reads the passage silently to themselves. After a time of meditating on the passage, anyone, when and if they wish to, repeat a word or phrase that might have touched them in some way.

There is no obligation to say anything, nor is there any commentary or discussion on what a person might have said.

It is led by The Holy Spirit in each participant, enabling “a prayer of the imagination” to possibly take shape. This way of prayer comes from The Benedictine tradition, later adopted also by The Jesuits and remains an important form of prayer across all Christian traditions, East and West.

There is usually some sharing at the end over a soft drink. Participants attend as and when they wish or are able to.

Do think about coming and exploring this unique way of praying "The Word of God".

It is sometimes called "Sacred Reading". It is not bible study and there is no need to bring a Bible. Please ask us about it at any time, if you would like to know more. You are most welcome. The dates are published in the weekly notices.

Martin and Berit Garsed

#### **14. OCCASSIONAL OFFICES REPORT (BAPTISM AND WEDDING)**

"Occasional Offices" is the term given to the general category of Baptisms, Weddings, Services of Prayer and Dedication after a Civil Wedding, and Funerals and Interments of Ashes.

It is a profound privilege to write this report for the year 2025, reflecting on the deeply pastoral life of our parish through the occasional offices. As your vicar, there is perhaps no greater joy or more sacred responsibility than accompanying the people of Whitstable through the most significant and transformative transitions of their human journey. A special thank you though is extended to Revd Jayne Edinboro who took a large number of funerals and also started her baptism and wedding ministry in.

In 2025, we had the immense pleasure of celebrating sixteen baptisms. What was particularly striking and deeply encouraging this past year was the diversity of ages coming to the font. We welcomed six infants under the age of one, two children aged between one and four, one child aged between five and ten, and a remarkable seven adults. It was a special privilege to have so many adult baptisms, witnessing mature individuals making their own considered commitments to faith. Theologically, baptism is our joyful entry into the unfolding story of God's love. It is a visible sign of our inclusion in the body of Christ, a community that transcends time, reminding us of our truest identity as beloved children of God.

This journey of initiation and grace continued beautifully into the spring. It was a privilege of having a good group of adults from All Saints confirmed by Bishop Rose at the Confirmation service at St Alphege Whitstable in May. We saw six adults confirmed in 2025. Seeing those adults stand faithfully before the bishop to own the promises of their baptism, surrounded by the prayers of the wider community, was a deeply moving experience. Confirmation is a profound moment where we pray the Holy Spirit equips us for the journey ahead, drawing us deeper into the sacramental life of the church.

Alongside new life in the Spirit, we also celebrated the profound mystery of human love. This year, we held five weddings in our church, less than used to be the case due to our changing secular society, but well above average for a church. We also hosted three services of Prayer and Dedication after civil marriage or Renewal of Vows. It was a special privilege watching Jayne taking the Service of Prayer and Dedication for the marriage of Nick and Echo .

Of course, our parish ministry extends to the shadows as well as the light. In 2025, we conducted a total of 16 burials and 21 committal of ashes services as well as 5 funerals preceding or after a cremation or entirely at the crematorium. Officiating at a funeral is a sacred trust. Our theology of death is rooted firmly in the resurrection of Jesus Christ and the promise of eternal life. We trust that God gathers up all that is good, beautiful, and broken in a human life, holding each soul eternally in the divine embrace. We sit in the ashes of grief with our community, offering the comforting presence of a God who intimately understands our sorrow, just as Jesus wept at the tomb of his friend.

None of this vital pastoral ministry would be possible without the dedicated team of volunteers

who serve our parish so faithfully. I want to extend my deepest thanks to those who work tirelessly to ensure these services are beautiful, dignified, and welcoming. Thank you so much to Dave Parry and Helen Parry as outdoor vergers for funerals, which also involves a lot of work locating graves and updating the burial plan. My sincere gratitude goes to Carol Sims, deputised by Howard Barker and Helen Parry, as indoor vergers for funerals and weddings. I am deeply grateful to Karen Goodwin, our wedding administrator, whose quiet efficiency is a blessing to so many couples. A heartfelt thank you is due to the bellringers and choir for their help at weddings and baptisms, and to our organist, Michael Cooke. Finally, thank you to our Baptism team of helpers: Susan Goodearl, Peri Hawkins, Cheree Moyes, Rob Newman, Helen Parry, and Trevor Stroud. Their cheerful presence at the Baptism services on Saturday and Sunday afternoons has been highly appreciated.

Revd Simon Tillotson

## **15. GROUNDSMAN'S REPORT**

Spring started early, but thankfully drier than the previous year which allowed us to start the season promptly and keep on top of the grounds. This coming spring we are expecting to be a big challenge however, because the volume of rain over the winter and spring leaves the grounds extremely flooded.

The using of glass amnesty was in general a success, with most visitors adhering to the request not to use glass and to remove items of glass from graves. My thanks to Simon and the church committee for their support with this, it certainly makes for a safer working environment for the team.

I'm pleased to report that general vandalism and anti-social behaviour occurrences seemed to continue its downward trend and long may this continue.

The compliments towards us from visitors continued, showing that the grounds are really valued and the work involved to keep them looking their best doesn't go unnoticed.

Finally, my thanks go to Mike Binks for all his help and hard work put in, to ensure the grounds remain a place of peace and tranquility for visitors and the community to enjoy.

Jason Tongue – Coastal Gardens Grounds maintenance team

## **16. OUTDOOR / GRAVEYARD VERGERS' REPORT**

All Saints churchyard is the largest open churchyard in the Canterbury Diocese. It has a public footpath along which people pass on the way to church, school, home or Tesco's.

Many people find visiting the churchyard to attend the grave of a loved one a helpful part of the mourning process. In 2025 there were 16 burials and 21 recorded Interment of Ashes. Please contact Simon our Vicar if you would like further information or support.

Helen and David Parry

## **17. SACRISTANS REPORT**

The sacristy team have continued their work throughout the year. Every week used linen is washed, ironed and silverware is scalded in preparation for the next Eucharist. Altar frontals and vestments are changed and Servers amices washed and ironed according to season. Supplies of wine and bread are checked and replenished as necessary.

We find our work satisfying serving All Saints in this way.

Sacristans – Doreen Austin, Barbara Tinson.

## **18. CAMEO – Come And Meet Each Other – REPORT**

CAMEO – Come And Meet Each Other - We meet at All Saints Church Hall weekly (except for bank holidays) on a Monday afternoon, 2pm to 3.30pm, to chat, drink tea and eat cake. It is a good opportunity to catch up or make new friends and share experiences of other local activity and luncheon groups, encouraging each other to get out and about. We are very pleased to have new people visit and join us and there is no obligation to come every week – just when you feel like it ! There are 36 people currently on our member's list and an average of 18-20 meet up each Monday. Membership fees are not required but a suggested donation of £1 each goes towards the cost of refreshments and activities.

Every week there are table-top games and a jigsaw table available for anyone who cares to join in plus a bi-monthly quiz which one of our members, Sue, devises and presents with a prize going to the winner. Also, at the end of the year, we join together for a Christmas meal; this year we again went across the road to The Monument Pub, had a delicious meal and were very well looked after by the staff there.

CAMEO only happens every week due to the CAMEO members who shop for food, set up/clear down, serve drinks, handle the funds, provide lifts and also the friends who, on a weekly rota, put up and take down the heavy tables and chairs ; many thanks to you all, your help is much appreciated.

Linda Young

## **19. FILM CLUB REPORT**

Meetings are held on Thursday mornings and the film show starts promptly at 11.15am and ends at around 1.30pm. Members have a break around 12.15am for refreshments and enjoy a friendly social chat etc. Members are asked to make a Voluntary Donation of £5 in January and September and a weekly donation of £1 for interval refreshments. All money collected is passed at the end of each meeting to The Treasurer and no funds are held by the Club. Average attendance has been of the order of around twenty people of recent times though it has been lower on some days due to illness, bad weather and other commitments. All films shown are at least three years old from their original Cinema release date. Only films with a Certificate U, PG and 12 are shown. Some 12 Certificate Films may have a limited amount of bad language/ violence/sexual inference & content. Most films are shown with English Sub-titles and are chosen for being cheerful /feel good light entertainment.

The Church Hall was re- decorated in August 2023 and the curtains taken down and washed before being put back up. Unfortunately these improvements resulted in the blackout in the hall being far worse than before the redecoration and now is particularly inadequate when the sun shines brightly through the now clean curtains (more transparent?) and this spoils the projected picture so that it looks washed out. The curtains in the hall at present are in urgent need of attention as some have partly come off their runners/rail.

The Club breaks for two weeks over Easter and Christmas and then for the Summer Holidays in August starting again in September. The Club is run by Tanya and David Welford and members assist in serving refreshments. The Films are shown on a 4K projector for an enhanced picture quality. Most of the films shown come from David's large personal collection of Blu-ray /DVD films at no cost to the Club.

Tanya and David Welford

## **20. SINGING FOR FUN AND HEALTH REPORT**

The sessions for Singing for Fun and Health have continued to be a highlight of our monthly calendar, taking place on the third Wednesday of every month from 2:30pm to 4:00pm in the hall. We have been delighted to see a consistent attendance of about 40 people who join us to share in the uplifting experience of music and community. Our time together is dedicated to singing along to cheerful secular songs from a variety of different eras using a song box and projector which projects onto our large screen.

In a change from our previous habit of focusing primarily on the songs of the 20s and 30s, we have recently enjoyed singing hits from the 60s and 70s more frequently. This shift in repertoire has brought a wonderful new energy to our meetings and seems to resonate deeply with all those who attend.

The success of these afternoons is made possible by our tireless and faithful team of volunteers who work tirelessly behind the scenes. This group is expertly organised by Peri Hawkins, and I would like to extend a huge thanks to every one of them for their dedication and support.

For me, leading the singing is a joy and a privilege. As a vicar, it serves as a great opportunity for me to do something completely different and step away from the usual pressures and demands of ministry. Being able to connect with the community through the simple act of singing is incredibly rewarding and vital for the health and happiness of us all.

Revd Simon Tillotson

## **21. FLOWER ARRANGERS' REPORT**

It has been another good year for the flower team with special displays for Easter, Harvest, Remembrance Day and Christmas. We appreciate your thankful comments on the regular Sunday flower arrangements.

Not so many weddings were asking for flowers this year, but we did enjoy the open day and created special displays to show what can be done.

On several occasions we have created arrangements to remember lost loved ones or celebrate family events.

Our thanks to Berit and Linda for their assistance at busy times.

Carol Simns, Marian Johnson and Kayte Holness.

## **22. HALL BOOKINGS REPORT**

The hall was even busier in 2025, particularly since St Andrew's closed in August. Two weekly bookings have transferred from there: a dance school on Saturday mornings until 1:15, and a choir on Wednesday evenings. A Sunday evening booking also took place for four months.

Since September all evening slots on weekdays have been filled, and nearly every daytime slot. Regular hirers numbered seventeen in 2025, and there are six church and church related groups.

The hall was hired on forty seven other occasions, mostly at weekends, including as a polling station one Thursday.

I am most grateful to Helen Parry for covering when I was away for 4 weeks in September, to Steve Reith for very ably looking after the hall finances, and as well Simon, Howard and Mandy our cleaner for all their support.

Kirsty McNicol

### **23. BELLRINGERS' REPORT**

Again we have all put many hours into our responsibility/ fun of bell ringing. Many ringers pursue a journey, logging towers rung. Jackie has now rung at over 1700 towers hoping to gain 1800. Maureen, Peter, Pam and Howard regularly travel to ring at towers with COOTS, originally set up by Doug Saker. All bell towers are different, up winding towers or ladders, bell setting, weight and number. Our bell ringing family stretches far and wide. Our tower continues well as a co-operative with Pam and Maureen managing new roles well, Peter and Co, maintaining the bells as usual, thank you.

Thank you to Julia for hosting our AGM last year and Pam for tonight. Our numbers for ringing vary greatly and unfortunately at times we have to cancel due to poor attendance. Fortunately, we can flourish with visiting ringers and ring challenging methods. This year we have welcomed many visiting ringers to services and practice. Visiting ringers have also completed quarter peels. We have rung for 7 weddings or renewal of vows, including for Nick and Echo's blessing in August. We rung for VE Day, VJ Day anniversary, remembrance services, the annual church open afternoon, church services and our Wednesday evening practices. Also taking our turn in the Sunday service coffee rota.

Times of joy and happiness are to be celebrated. Howards 70<sup>th</sup> we enjoyed at The Marine Hotel with lovely food and great games. The All Saints quiz nights are a definite. Two tables are already booked to defend our winner's place!! We are only the caretakers of our bells and unfortunately this year there has been significant long-term illness withing our family. Our prayers have been answered to date and our team is almost complete. We continue to miss and pray for one member needing support.

We are grateful to Sarah, Malcolm and Ben from St Alphege to attend our practices to supervise our learners. Susan is now ringing in rounds on bell 4 then call changing with 3. Philip is ringing rounds on bell 5, and standing the bell with flare at times when not pursuing his sponsored charity walks. Julia is ringing call changes on various bells. Charlotte's confidence is growing with call changes on the front bells following a 40-year gap from ringing. Mark is now confident in many methods and progressing with Steadman. All are now included in our WhatsApp group.

Westmeads School visited in May as part of their religious education. All very keen to see the bells rung and several attempting supervised chiming of the treble.

This autumn we heard from the fabric committee that church funds will finance new bell ropes. Peter has been in touch with Trevor in Lynstead, a new business setup locally generating good reports from other towers. The new rope colours agreed will have burgundy, mauve and grey sallies.

In October creative preparation began for the 1<sup>st</sup> All Saints Christmas Tree festival during Advent, instigated by Denise. At the end of October, 20<sup>th</sup>– 24<sup>th</sup> most of our ringers attended All Saints and Friends annual outing to Nottingham. Organised by Jane, accommodation, and Len Towers. Both accomplished ringers within the Canterbury District. We stayed at Warner Hotels "Thoresby Hall ", visiting 11 towers over 3 days, all with great bells and no LOCKOUTS.

A great time meeting up with scattered fellow bell ringers and partners. It was so well received, the 2026 outing will be in Nottingham again with lots of towers still to explore.

We gathered at Tim and Pam's this December for very enjoyable festive drinks and buffet. Thank you, Pam. During Weds 17<sup>th</sup> December practice night all contributed to decorating our Christmas tree for the weekend festival. 28 trees all with a story to tell was amazing. We were pleased to ring for the Christmas services, the evening candle lit carol services were beautiful.

This year has started very cold but we look forward to more fun, with progressive ringing as the daylight hours lengthen. Can I just remind people to renew their yearly KCACR memberships, costing £15 when required. The association has both public liability and personal accident insurance for the benefit of its members. Safe guarding guidance should be completed by all. Now required only once. Any safe guarding issues should be discussed in confidence with Denise.

Pat Miller Librarian

## **24. SACRED SPACE REPORT**

Sacred Space is a time of reflection and quiet when the church is open for people to come and go during the hour. Candles light the church and people are encouraged to bring torches with them. Reflective music is played in the background. There are periods of silence for people to pray.

Over the years Sacred Space has run, many people have found times to meet with God in a special way. By just making ourselves available in God's presence the Holy Spirit can minister to us in ways that can bring comfort and hope.

Sacred Space has appealed to many in our community who would not normally consider church attendance and as such it has been an important outreach event. Please pray for its continued success going forward.

It takes place from 8pm to 9pm and we are now going to have most of the meetings on Sunday.

The dates for 2026 are as follows, Sunday 22 February, Sunday, 22 March, Sunday, 19 April, Sunday, 24 May, Sunday, 14 June, Monday, 10 August, Monday, 26 October, Sunday, 29 November, Monday, 21 December.

Please remember to bring a torch if you are coming outside of May, June and July

Rev Simon Tillotson

## **25. PASTORAL VISITORS REPORT**

Our faithful small team of Pastoral Assistants take Communion and visit various people in the community who are housebound, and make additional visits to those who are suddenly incapacitated and unable to attend church. I am very grateful to Denise Barker, Christine Daldorph, Revd Jane Edinboro, Martin Garsed, Pat Hudgell, Marian Johnson, Janet Livermore and Canon Anne Rees for all they do behind the scenes.

Revd Simon Tillotson

## **26. SAFEGUARDING REPORT**

This year has been an epic year for Safeguarding Training as our three year cycle came to an end this year meaning a lot of us needed to renew our training. Alongside this the diocese updated their rules on who needed to have training which meant a lot more of us needed training .

One piece of good news from the updated rules, is if you have completed your basic safeguarding, you no longer need to renew this, but if your role needs foundation or leadership training then you will still need to renew this every three years.

As a lot of us are at a certain age and not all of us are computer literate or have a computer at home this meant us putting on some face to face training.

A big thanks to Simon for supporting me with that which took place in September. The Diocese does not give out certificates for that but we arranged with the other safeguarding leads for us to have team certification and Isobel from St Alphege, supplied lovely certificates which have been well received.

We now have 99% of the DCC having either undertaken or renewed their training, 100% of our pastoral team and a 100% of our group leaders .

The focus now turns to the wider church community and you will be receiving your reminders shortly.

Simon and I have agreed to put on another Saturday morning training soon that we are also opening up to the team by way of supporting their uptake .

This has been an amazing task and I couldn't have done this without the support of the All Saints DCC and Simon, so thank you.

I have now turned my efforts into updating our All Saints Safeguarding dashboard , an online tool that will support us to track training and we also await our dioceses inspection which will focus on safeguarding sometime this year.

Alongside this I regularly attend the diocese safeguarding meetings and our team safeguarding get together sessions so that we remain on top of this important work.

We as a team , Simon, Jayne and myself have also regularly taken any worries we may have had for discussions with our diocese colleagues at head office, making our church a safe place for everyone.

If you ever want to have an informal discussion with us about anything safeguarding related then please get in touch , no questions are too silly or unimportant as it is only through healthy conversation that we can make sure safeguarding remains at the heart of our community.

Denise Barker

## **27. SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT GROUP**

In the autumn of 2024 it was viewed that too much DCC time and energy was taken up with practicalities, financial issues, mission, outreach and that we were not addressing our “**foundational resource**”, the spiritual growth of individuals nor the congregation.

It was evident that only from a deeper spiritual life experience could any of the wider DCC concerns be fruitfully met.

In November 2024 a core group of DCC members and others, led by Martin Garsed was established to find ways in which the Spiritual life of all members of ALS and beyond could be encouraged and developed.

In January 2025 we held an open consultation with the congregation. They came up with a number of ideas and questions that have been very helpful to us as we discerned a way forward.

The topics, or areas that we have delivered and others in progress:

- **Updating and publishing a list of all Spirituality related opportunities** locally and further afield that anyone can explore. This list is available at the back of the church.
- **Explanations looking at three key aspects of our regular Eucharistic Practice.** Vestments, The Book, and The Table were presented by Revs Simon Tillotson and Christopher Seppala. Transcripts of these talk / demonstrations are still available.
- **Acknowledging that “Prayer is The Bedrock of Our Faith”** a number of prayer opportunities are planned.
- **A Prayer Tree** on which a person or family can write and hang a prayer request. This will then be taken to, and read out from the alter at our regular midweek Healing service.
- **A quiet Day centred** on being Salt and Light, and other Lent events as published in the weekly notices.

This is exciting but challenging work that the group is committed to with DCC backing. We pray it will evolve and bear fruit over time.

We are here to support you, to explore and deepen your own faith.

Dr Martin Garsed (Chair)

## **DCC, PCC and DEANERY REPORTS**

### **28. DCC REPORT**

#### **All Saints District Church Council REPORT for the year 2025**

##### **January 13 2025**

The church began the year with £18,000 in the general fund. A year-end deficit of approximately £15,000 was projected for the coming year. The Team share for the Parish was anticipated to be around £73,000 based on weekly attendance. Mission Action Plan discussions centred on utilizing the church as an outreach resource and increasing congregational spirituality. The Christmas Fayre profit was confirmed at £1,300. New social plans included a Valentine's quiz and a Summer Fayre scheduled for the first Saturday in July. Fabric and safety updates included the completion of PAT testing, acceptance of fire safety quotes for the nursery, and the approval of resin to address a trip hazard.

### **March 3rd 2025**

It was noted that there is a financial shortfall across the five team ministry churches. The council agreed to conduct an in-house stewardship campaign encompassing finance, time, and talents. The church cleaner, Carol, announced her retirement after 24 years of service. Her replacement will have a reduced commitment of 4 hours per week due to the increase in the national minimum wage. The February quiz night raised £600, and the Summer Fayre was confirmed for July 5th. Fabric updates included the completion of floor levelling and electrical safety inspections for the church and hall. Potential sewage and drainage solutions for new facilities at the East End of the church were discussed, noting that a soakaway might be problematic, possibly necessitating more expensive alternatives. Safeguarding training was made mandatory for all council members.

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### **May 12th 2025**

A stewardship campaign was set for September 28th to explain practical help and giving methods. Hall income performed well, but the council chose not to increase rates to avoid losing bookers, despite two slots remaining vacant for six months. Total reserves were reported at £321,000, which includes the £200,000 valuation of the New Shirley Hall. A new card reader was acquired for the church. The Spirituality Group developed a leaflet to support congregational life. A quote of £1,600 was received for the replacement of bell ringing ropes.

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### **July 28th 2025**

Unrestricted funds dropped to £6,000, and a projected year-end deficit of £22,000 was deemed unsustainable. The council voted to allocate £2,500 to help pay for kitchenette explorations to facilitate sewage discussions with Southern Water. The summer course had a regular attendance of 30 people. A church open day was planned for September 20th. A quinquennial inspection was completed, indicating the vestry roof might need replacement. The Church Open Day in September was planned.

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### **October 20th 2025**

The September stewardship campaign led to an immediate monthly donation increase of at least £200. Spiritual renewal was prioritized as the primary focus for growth under the Diocese's strategy. The church switched to Octopus Energy to benefit from lower daily charges. Dead or overhanging trees were scheduled for removal, and a fire evacuation drill was organized for October 26th. A Christmas Tree Festival was confirmed for mid-December to raise funds for Pilgrims Hospice.

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### **December 15th 2025**

Wonderful success again at the Fireworks. Huge thanks to all.

The council endorsed a three-pillar Mission Action Plan: Going Deeper (Spiritual Growth), Reaching Out (Community Engagement), and Coming Alongside (Social Support). The general fund loss was narrowed to £6,000, which was a significant improvement over earlier projections. The council agreed to budget for the full £74,500 parish share for 2026. A proposal for InPost lockers was defeated due to concerns about tarmac damage and potential calls for assistance at the vicarage and hall. Communion was reinstated for baptized children prior to confirmation.

My thanks to Dani Jones for her skilful work as our new DCC secretary.

Revd Simon Tillotson

## **29. PCC REPORT**

The Whitstable Parochial Church Council (PCC) navigated a year defined by administrative transition and focused strategic growth throughout 2025. This period saw a significant emphasis on governance and leadership, beginning with the successful complete renewal of the Electoral Roll across all five churches. To bolster administrative resilience, the Council discussed setting up a new secure online storage system designed to protect digital records for the long term. Leadership transitions were also a key highlight, most notably the appointment of Angela Maxted as the Chair of Governors for the Whitstable Endowed Foundation School.

Sadly due to a Health and Safety audit in the summer, St Andrew's church building was deemed unfit for use and had to close with immediate effect. Its future remains unclear at the time of writing this report.

The spiritual vitality of the team was nurtured through the development of "Just 3 Things" mission plans tailored for each church to encourage growth and renewal. These strategic efforts were underpinned by a rigorous commitment to safety and compliance.

The PCC streamlined its protocols by aligning local safeguarding policies and mandating a comprehensive fire safety audit across all buildings. Furthermore, training record-keeping has been successfully migrated to "The Hub," complemented by in-person training sessions for members of the District Church Councils and PCC.

Environmental stewardship remained at the forefront of the parish's identity as progress toward the Church of England's Net Zero 2030 target accelerated. St Alphege Whitstable distinguished itself by achieving a Silver Eco Church award, while All Saints and the Seasalter Christian Centre maintain their Bronze status. Participation in the Joint Rochester and Canterbury ECO conference has further aligned the parish with national goals, leading to several churches commissioning energy audits to identify carbon-reducing opportunities such as LED lighting and improved insulation. These environmental initiatives are supported by available Diocesan grants for immediate improvements.

Financial management and human resources were handled with careful attention to rising costs and the need for operational parity. The parish managed a 5% increase in the Parish Share for 2025 and is currently preparing for an additional increase in 2026, which will be distributed based on a three-year average of weekly attendance. To support staff during these economic shifts, the PCC has recommended a 3% pay increase for parish employees for 2026.

The clergy team meet regularly on Monday mornings, three times every month, for three and a half hours to share and pray together, led by our Team Rector Rev Rachel Webbley. Ascension Day and Advent Sunday Team services brought the whole Team together, and a special Team Shakespeare event is planned for the All Saints vicarage garden in 2026. Sadly we had to say farewell to the Rev Claude Gayle who has become an vicar in Maidstone but we welcomed Rev Eddie and Ripeka Bijl to our Team who together are one full time post, based at St Alphege Whitstable for their training.

Revd Simon Tillotson

### **30. RECVLVER DEANERY SYNOD REPORT**

The Reculver Deanery Synod began its 2025 journey on February 3 with a strong emphasis on youth ministry, featuring a plenary session with Jen Tobin, the Diocesan Lead Officer for Children and Young People's Ministry. Jen highlighted that effective outreach should prioritize sowing spiritual seeds and engaging families rather than fixating on attendance numbers, noting that teenagers often seek values-based conversations with caring adults. During this meeting, the synod also viewed a Tearfund video regarding ecological stewardship and discussed sensitive matters like the Living in Love and Faith course and the need for creative safeguarding training using online modules in small groups.

Following this, the Deanery Mission and Ministry Committee met on May 14 to address the ongoing vacancy in the Reculver Parish, where it was felt that a part-time incumbent would be preferable over a merger with another parish. The committee decided to replace the idea of a formal eco-subgroup with a library of information to help churches share research on practical improvements like heat pumps and solar panels. They also noted significant legal confusion and delays regarding the appointment of a new Archbishop and refined the agenda for the upcoming June synod to include discussions on governance and leadership.

The full synod reconvened on June 16 at St Bartholomew's Church, focusing heavily on the practicalities of Mission Action Plans. Canon Amanda Boucherat and Jane Myhill from St John's Swalecliffe led a session encouraging parishes to use the RADAR and SMART principles to identify achievable outcomes for the year, and shared the value of mission planning within their own context. During the business session, the synod approved a formal motion requesting a review of the difficulties surrounding the Vacancy in See Committee processes. It was also reported that while six churches were up to date with their parish share, four remained in arrears, illustrating the financial strain on the deanery. The evening concluded with a peaceful closing prayer based on the New Zealand prayer book.

Finally, on October 6, the year's work culminated in the Three Things initiative, where parishes presented their specific strategic priorities for the coming twelve months. These plans ranged from All Saints Whitstable's hopes for building utilization and spiritual nurture to Herne's concentration on a new welcome team and the Bubble Church model. A major milestone was reached when the synod unanimously passed a motion to support a grant bid for youth projects in Seasalter and Herne Bay. The meeting also celebrated the news of Dame Sarah Mullally's appointment as the new Archbishop and rescinded the previous motion regarding the Vacancy in See process after receiving a satisfactory explanation from the Archdeacon. Looking ahead, the synod agreed that safeguarding would be a primary focus for their first gathering in 2026.

Rev Simon Tillotson

### **31. ELECTORAL ROLL REPORT**

This is a verbal Report given at the meeting.

## COMMUNITY REPORTS

32.



**3<sup>rd</sup> Whitstable (All Saints) Scout Group**

**Registered Charity Number: 1065505**

***Group Lead Volunteer, Peter Maley, [gsl@3rdwhitstable.org.uk](mailto:gsl@3rdwhitstable.org.uk)***

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Whitstable (All Saints) Amy Johnson Air Scout Group Annual Report - 2025**

Once again, I can report that our Air Scout Group is thriving and numbers have increased over the last year to 95 Young People and 22 Adult Leaders - this is an amazing achievement by all involved and I thank All Saints Church, our own Trustees and the 100 families associated with our Group for all their incredible support.

Evidence for that support could be seen at the Remembrance Sunday Service, where we had 80 Scouts, 20 Leaders and around 200 family members in Church. We also supported the All Saints Open Day, where we met quite a few local people who had been Scouts themselves, as well as the Christmas Tree Festival, which was such a fabulous event.

In 2025, we also celebrated our 80th Birthday as a Scout Group, being formed in 1945 and always being associated with All Saints Church. We marked the occasion by a Quiz Night, with lots of birthday cake and bunting. We are now an Air Scout Group and you will see our Scouts walking around in their smart blue uniforms and berets. Indeed, we are the Amy Johnson Air Scouts and are proud to be associated with such an iconic person. As such, our Air Scouts have also attended a number of events in our community to commemorate various occasions and representing All Saints Church in the process.

We also attended our District St Georges Day Parade through Canterbury and Service in Canterbury Cathedral, attended by 1,000 Scouts from Canterbury, Whitstable and Herne Bay.

Our Sections include: Beavers (6 to 8) who meet on Monday; Cubs (8 to 10) who meet on Tuesday; Scouts (10 to 14) who meet on Friday; Explorers (14 to 18) who meet on Thursday - all in the Scout HQ. Throughout the year, each of our sections have organised a dynamic programme of scouting, covering many STEM activities, adventurous training and fun camping.

I would like to finish with a special thanks for the set up and use of the Forest School, which has provided such an amazing facility for our Young People to enjoy. We have held camp fires, cook outs, singing, forest bathing and even held our AGM and Award Ceremony there around the fire, so have really made use of the wooded area.

Thank you for your continuing support to over 100 families in our Scouting community.

Yours in Scouting  
Simon Haseltine (Basil)  
Group Lead

### **33. 3<sup>rd</sup> WHITSTABLE BROWNIES REPORT**

In 2025 the Brownies met each week during term time in the Church Hall. We played games, sang songs, made new friends, did craft, worked toward badges and learnt new skills.

Some of the older girls learnt First Aid as part of the Be Well Theme Badge in our Brownie badge book.

We went to Faversham to do pottery painting, we had a wide choice of items to paint and once fired we got them back to keep.

Made elephants that squirted water which allowed us to also practice using the compass point and how to remember them (this was part of the Have Adventure Badge) we also learnt how to pack for a country walk as part of the badge even if we couldn't go on one we pretended to do this in the hall and outside the hall we practise 'how to wrap clothes to keep them dry if camping'

We taste tested Ice-cream while blindfolded trying to work out what the flavour was and dreamed up our own flavours.

We went to the Beach, had hotdogs, played games but also paddled.

We had a Christmas party organised by one of the Brownies whose last night it was and this also allowed her to obtain her Gold Award. The Gold Award is the highest badge you can get at Brownies as it means they have completed each section of their badge book.

Brownies also love to play games, these can be bingo, build a human snowperson, seasonal beetle drive, the torch game to name a few.

We enrolled a number of girls into Brownies which allowed an older Brownie to complete their hostess badge, they serve the visiting family of the new Brownie tea and cake then do the washing up. We also said bye to a few of the older girls who have left.

We went on a weekend away in October, where we had a theme of 'A year in a weekend' so we had a sports afternoon with rounders, had hotdogs round the camp fire, each had an extra birthday, made pizzas and ended off with a Christmas stocking on the final morning and Christmas lunch before returning home.

06/02 is the birthday of the unit, Brownies at All Saints turned 89 in 2025. So around this time we do something to do with history of girl guiding. 2026 we turn 90.

The Brownies meet in term time and are always looking for new girls to join who are between the age of 7 and 10. If the girl is younger than this, they are welcome to join our list for when the time comes to join us.

Sharon Gray

### **34. ALL SAINTS NURSERY REPORT**

All Saints Nursery continues to be an integral part of the All Saints Community. This year we will be celebrating our 50 years anniversary since registering with OFSTED.

We are a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) and are currently awaiting an OFSTED inspection under our new organisation and charity number. We continue to have a committee of six dedicated trustees who support us.

Our number increased greatly this year due to the introduction of Forest School; therefore we have had to increase our daily sessions to 30 children maximum, and we are full this academic

year. We currently have 47 children on roll aged two and a half to five years old.

Due to the new government changes in EYFS funding and ensuring sustainability, we have had to change our pricing structure and extend our school day to help working families. This has proved very successful with families now using the flexible drop-off and pick-up service which we now offer.

Listening to parent feedback, we have also changed to one nursery management software platform and now use Family. So far it is having a positive response from staff and parents.

There have been some staff changes this year. Levi Mayne has left us to relocate with her family to Australia therefore Ruby Foad is now the Finance and Administration Officer. Laura Collar left us in November to work at another nursery due to family commitments, and we were lucky to recruit Cheryl Reed from Saint Andrews Nursery.

Forest School has been extremely successful. Due to its popularity, we have children on the waiting list for this session. This takes place on Thursdays and is led by myself, Sallie Smith, Manager (a Level 3 qualified Forest School leader) and Claire Barker. Using the biodiversity grant obtained from the Council, we were able to purchase resources and pay for Claire to be trained as a Level 3 Forest School leader. She qualified at Christmas.

In addition to Forest School on Thursdays, we provide the children with extra-curricular sessions which parents can sign up to. On Mondays they can do French lessons with a French teacher, Vicky Sullivan, from La Jolie Ronde and Fridays Sporty Tot sessions, provided by Inclusive Sport coaches.

The nursery continues to be a part of a highly successful and productive collaboration of other nurseries in the local area. These nurseries meet regularly to support each other and offer advice about new EYFS regulations which are enforced.

Due to being a charity, we still regularly organise numerous fundraising activities over the year. Our Light Up All Saints and our Christmas Workshop were again very successful. We also took the older children to the theatre on a coach to see Dear Zoo at Christmas.

New government regulations state that all settings should have a climate action plan in place by March 2025 so All Saints Nursery has signed up to be an Eco School and we are working towards a Green Flag status.

We feel we have a good relationship with the church and continue to utilise the church for celebrations such as Nativities, Harvest Festivals and Easter Services. Our parents donated a considerable amount of food to the food bank for the Harvest service. We are also lucky to have access to the Vicarage garden for events. The nursery and the church have regular meetings with regards to maintenance and upkeep. We contact them with any concerns or maintenance requests and these have been actioned quickly this year.

We continue to try to offer the children a wide range of exciting and stimulating activities as they take those first steps towards independence in a supportive and nurturing environment, where each child feels part of the All Saints' family.

Sallie Smith Nursery Manager

- 1) **Annual Vestry Meeting for the Election of Churchwardens precedes the ADCM**
- 2) **41st Annual District Church Meeting of ALL SAINTS CHURCH, WHITSTABLE**

## **AGENDA**

**Sunday 22nd March 2026 at 11.45am at All Saints Whitstable Church hall**

1. Prayers
2. Apologies for Absence
3. Minutes of the Annual District Church Meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> April 2025
  - any matters arising
4. Appointment of tellers if these be needed
5. Nominations for election:
  - i. All Saints DCC for 3 years – 6 vacancies
  - ii. Team PCC for 1 year – 2 vacancies (ex-officio member of DCC)
  - iii. Deanery Synod elections – 3 vacancies (ex-officio member of PCC and DCC)
6. Statutory Reports
  - Presentation of Annual Accounts, Treasurer's Report, Audited Accounts, Trust Fund Accounts and other financial affairs
    - Annual Reports of the DCC and PCC
    - Fabric Committee
    - Electoral Roll Officer
    - Deanery Synod
    - Other reports contained in the booklet will be taken as read. Time will be allowed for questions on these reports.
7. Vicar's Remarks
8. Churchwardens' remarks
9. Any Other Business
10. Provisional Date of the ADCM for 2027 to be set later this year

**All Saints Church, Whitstable**  
**Vestry and Annual District Church Meeting**  
**Minutes of the 40<sup>th</sup> Annual District Church Meeting of All Saints Whitstable held on**  
**Sunday, 6th April 2025**

**THE VESTRY MEETING**

**1. Election of Church Wardens:**

Robert Newman and Howard Barker were duly elected as Churchwardens being the only candidates. Both candidates were duly nominated and seconded. A vote of thanks was expressed for their willingness to serve.

**2. Appreciation for Service:**

A vote of thanks was recorded for Alan Barrows for his dedicated service as Church Warden. Gratitude was also expressed to Carol for her 24 years of service as Church Cleaner. Gifts were given to both Allan and Carol

**THE ADCM**

**3. Apologies for Absence:**

An apology for absence was received from Michael Cooke.

**4. Minutes of the Previous Meeting:**

It was resolved that the minutes of the previous meeting were correct.

**5. Deanery Church Council (DCC) Elections:**

There were 7 vacancies for the Deanery Church Council (DCC) for a 3-year term. The following four individuals had come forward: Carol Sims, Allan Barrows, Dani Jones, and Susan Goodearl. The meeting noted that three further nominations were required, and Jan Lewis and Penny Midson were elected. All candidates were duly nominated and seconded.

**6. Parochial Church Council (PCC) Election:**

Pauline Newman was nominated and elected for a 1-year term on the Parochial Church Council (PCC). Simon stated he thought Steve Reith was willing to serve a further term but would consult with him and then ask the DCC to ratify if this was the case.

**7. Approval of Accounts:**

The accounts were presented for approval. In response to an invitation for questions, none were raised. It was resolved that the accounts be approved.

Malcolm thanked the congregation for their assistance with the accounts.

**8. Card Reader:**

Susan Goodearl raised a question regarding the card reader. Malcolm acknowledged that the current reader was temperamental and confirmed that a new card reader was being set up and was expected to be operational within the next few weeks.

**9. Finance Committee:**

A vote of thanks was recorded for Malcolm, Allan, and all members of the Finance Committee for their hard work.

**10. PCC and DCC Reports:**

It was noted that the PCC and DCC annual reports had been circulated via email to all members on the electoral roll. The Chair invited questions on these reports, and none were raised.

#### **11. Fabric Committee Report:**

The Fabric Committee report was noted, highlighting the significant amount of work undertaken. Howard had no further comments to add.

In response to an invitation for questions:

- Gillien Davison raised concerns raised by the film club regarding the condition of the hall curtains and the expense of repair. She inquired about the church's financial position to address this.

It was agreed that minor repairs should be undertaken.

- Martin Garsed asked for an update on the condition of the Church floor. It was reported that repairs had been carried out to the best of the church's ability, resulting in a significant improvement. While the floor was not yet perfect, further consideration could be given to it in the coming year.

#### **12. Electoral Roll:**

An apology was received from Brian. It was reported that 121 members had renewed their registration, and 34 new people had joined for the first time, bringing the total number on the electoral roll to 155 as of the current week. Thanks were extended to Brian for his work on the electoral roll.

#### **13. Deanery Synod Report:**

It was reported that Simon and Malcolm regularly attend Deanery Synod meetings. Simon informed the meeting that he would be attending a PCC meeting in Reculver the following day to discuss a significant proposed reduction in their priest provision from one full-time role to a 0.2 role. No further questions were raised.

#### **14. Other Reports:**

It was agreed that other reports had been taken as read. Rev Jayne Edinboro provided an update on her training, noting that she had been deaconed in June of the previous year and had been undertaking training for the past year. She would be priested in June, following the conclusion of her assignments. A bring-your-own-lunch event was planned for the first Sunday after Jane's priesting. She noted that there would be a further year of training following this and expressed her gratitude for the support of Simon and the congregation.

Denise Barker and Reverend Chris Seppälä were thanked for their ministry too, along with all others who assisted with leading services and other duties.

#### **15. Vicar's Remarks:**

Simon's report, as detailed in the circulated reports, were highlighted. He added a few further words at the meeting, expressing some optimism about the future of All Saints, noting the significant local population as a potential source of new members to ensure the church's future. He noted that churches in smaller population areas were often struggling with just a handful of attendees, attributing this to the increasingly secular nature of society. While acknowledging a decline in requests for funerals, baptisms, and weddings, he emphasized the potential of the church hall as an outreach to new and diverse members of the community.

Simon stated that he felt more optimistic compared to the previous year and encouraged continued prayer for the church's growth and support for the community. He expressed gratitude to Allan for his work as Church Warden and to others for running various groups. He concluded with a prayer for the continued influence of Christ on the congregation and urged continued optimism.

**16. Appreciation for Simon's Writings:**

Terry thanked Simon for his weekly written contributions.

**17. Thanks from Retiring Church Warden:**

Alan thanked everyone for their support over the past three years.

**18. Format of Future AGMs:**

It was agreed that the AGM would continue in the current format following the 10.30am service.

**19. Facing East in Lent and Advent:**

The question of facing East during Lent and Advent was raised, with the rationale explained as symbolizing waiting for Christ's return in Advent and resurrection in Lent. A show of hands revealed most people were happy to continue with this arrangement in Lent and Advent for the coming year.

David Snook raised concerns regarding wheelchair accessibility during services conducted in the East-facing format. It was agreed to clear some chairs in future to make the church more wheelchair accessible.

Martin Garsed raised concerns about the lighting on the altar when the church is east facing. Simon responded that there was an additional light that could be used, although it might already be switched on, potentially necessitating another light source. He would look into it.

It was agreed that during Holy Communion while facing East, congregants should refrain from returning down the central aisle and should instead use the side aisles.

The meeting concluded.