



# THE PARISH OF THE ITCHEN VALLEY 2025 Annual Report

Incorporating the Parish Churches of  
St Mary's Avington, St Mary's Easton,  
St John's Itchen Abbas and St Swithun's Martyr Worthy



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## Administrative information

The Parish of the Itchen Valley is part of the Diocese of Winchester within the Church of England. The correspondence address is Itchen Valley Parish Office, St John's Church, Itchen Abbas, Winchester SO21 1BJ (01962)779845. The office is open from 9 am to 1pm on weekdays. The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Itchen Valley is a Registered Charity No: 1133110.

The Churches of the Parish are St Mary's at Avington, St Mary's at Easton, St John the Baptist's at Itchen Abbas and St Swithun's at Martyr Worthy.

### Ministry team:

Rector - vacant  
 Licensed Lay Minister - Gerry Stacey  
 Ministry team – John Barber, Nicky Barber, Tim Clapp, Simon Ffennell, Sarah Noble, Lavinia Owen.

### Churchwardens:

St Mary's Avington	Vacant
St Mary's Easton	Theo Mezger
St John's Itchen Abbas	Vacant
St Swithun's Martyr Worthy	John Barber Malcolm Hogg

**Deanery Synod Representatives** (elected in 2023 for 3 years) - Gerry Stacey, Chris Ellis, Mary Hogg  
 Chris Ellis stepped down during the year, and Theo Mezger was elected.

**Elected members of the PCC:** Sonia Cragg (Avington), Judy Bishop, Sara Janssen *alternate* (Easton), Jean Taylor (Itchen Abbas).

**Secretary:** Beccy Clark

**Hon Treasurer:** David Anderson



## Structure, governance and management

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) for the Parish of the Itchen Valley is the governing body for the Parish. The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules and the Parish Scheme. The PCC met six times during 2025/26. The PCC was supported by a Standing Committee and a Finance Committee.

The Constitution of the Parish of the Itchen Valley and the supporting Policy Guidance document can both be found on the parish website.

There are four District Church Councils (DCCs), one for each District centred on the churches of the Parish. All the DCCs met regularly during 2025.

All regular Church attendees are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and stand for election to the PCC and DCCs.

## Aims and purposes

The PCC has the responsibility of co-operating with the Rector, to promote the whole mission of the Church - pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical - in the Ecclesiastical Parish and the area of the Itchen Valley. It is the duty of the Rector and the PCC to consult together on matters of general concern and importance to the parish.

## Objects and activities

The PCC is committed to enabling as many people as possible to worship at our churches and to become part of our parish community. The PCC and Ministry Team all acknowledge the need to consider public benefit in planning activities and guidance on the advancement of religion.

## Achievements and performance

The report from the churchwardens sets out some of the highlights of the parish's achievements and performance in 2025.

Average Attendance			
Early Morning Holy Communion			
2025	2024	2023	2022
10	16	9	10
10am Parish Communion			
2025	2024	2023	2022
29	26	28	32
All Age Worship			
2025	2024	2023	2022
29	26	33	39
Valley Worship			
2025	2024	2023	2022
52	40	47	42
Evensong			
2025	2024	2023	2022
31	29	33	23
Café Church			
2025	2024	2023	2022
56	46	50	-
Total Attendance – Christmas Eve and Day			
2025	2024	2023	2022
383	379	475	358
Total Attendance – Easter Sunday			
2025	2024	2023	2022
146	118	155	123

2025 Life Events		
Baptisms	Weddings	Funerals
4	5	9

## Electoral roll

There are 111 names on the 2026 Electoral Roll for the Parish, of whom 10 live outside the parish. This is an increase of 3 on 2025.

# Church Wardens' Report



The 2025-26 year for the Itchen Valley Parish has been an extraordinary one, with a shock to the system at its start, but with many signs of health and vitality along the way and great hope for the future as it finishes. It is my privilege as Lay Chair of the PCC to review the year in place of the Rector. I am conscious as I do so that I speak for the dozens of people who have made consistent, significant and varied contributions to the life of the Parish during this year. I extend gratitude for their commitment, diligence and optimism throughout what could have been a challenging year, but which has proved to be one in which the Parish has continued not just to function, but actually to flourish.



We were saddened at the time of our last APCM in late March 2025 that the Revd Peter Walker had taken a leave at the start of that month and started a period of reflection that ultimately culminated in his decision to resign as our Rector. We were able to celebrate Peter and his wife Georgie's ministry amongst us at a farewell service at the end of May, during which tributes were paid to them both as valued leaders and personal friends and prayers of hope and blessing for their future were offered.



The Parish has therefore been in a period of vacancy throughout the twelve months under review and has benefitted from the support of the Diocese of Winchester in multiple ways during this time. Most visibly, given that we seek to have a Communion service every Sunday in one of the Parish's churches, we have been able to draw on the resources of the Clerical Register in providing an ordained priest to lead these services week-on-week. There have been just a handful of exceptions when no priest has been available and we have had instead to offer a Morning Worship service with no Communion, but overwhelmingly the important dimension of Communion as an act of collective worship as a church family has continued throughout the year.



Also, impressively given the many demands on their time, all of the Bishop of Winchester (+Philip), both the previous and current Bishops of Basingstoke (+David and +Kelly) and the Archdeacon of Winchester, The Ven Richard Brand, have led services for us (including Harvest and Christmas Day, in Richard's case). We are enormously grateful to them for helping us to sustain the spiritual life of the Parish through this period of vacancy.



Revd David Chattell, our Area Dean, has also taken services for us (including a wedding and baptism)

and has provided warm and wise pastoral guidance and support to our leadership team over the last year; I extend appreciation to him for his unstinting commitment to our welfare. Similarly, Revd Canon Andrew Micklefield (well known as our former Rector) has gone out of his way to stand in the gap for us. He led last year's APCM at short notice (with a return engagement this year, at somewhat more notice) and, during the course of the year, preached at both of the Patronal Services of St Swithun's, Martyr Worthy and St Mary's, Easton. He also took two funerals and two services of thanksgiving for the lives of much loved members of our community. Andrew has brought his customary grace, warmth and talent for insightful Biblical teaching to all of these important events and services.

Valley Worship) has grown in numbers during the year, under the creative, loving leadership of Verity Greig and her team.



In addition, with the support of many committed and talented members of our community who have contributed as volunteers to bringing them to life and ensuring their success, important aspects of our Parish ministry outside of Sunday services – like Little Rainbows on a weekly basis, CAMEO on a monthly one and Valley Visitors on a continuous basis – have also gone from strength to strength. We have also benefitted from a host of 'one off' seasonal events and gatherings like our Christmas Eve crib service (with over 250 in attendance), the Pancake Party at the start of Lent, Lent Lunches and the Way of the Cross. Lastly Wednesday Night Worship, held once a month at St John's, Itchen Abbas and faithfully led by James and Julia Wright, has continued to be a source of spiritual encouragement and sustenance for many people within and without the Parish.

Critically, our 'model' of offering a blend of six types of traditional and informal services (Parish Communion, BCP, Evensong, All Age Worship, Café Church and Valley Worship) during the course of each month has continued uninterrupted during the year. Encouragingly, average attendance at five of six of these types of service has risen year-on-year (as set out in the chart on page 3) and we were delighted that our services over Christmas and Easter were very well-attended.



The Parish's finances have been overseen by a dedicated Finance Committee of experts and our very able Treasurer David Anderson (with the support of Janet Denyer) has provided us with another year of careful, wise stewardship of our financial resources. We are most appreciative of his ongoing service to the Parish and it is pleasing that, as our costs relentlessly rise in this inflationary period, the Parish ended the year with only a modest deficit (readily covered by reserves) rather than the wider one originally projected.

We have also continued summer season innovations like our 'Church with a Splash' service in August (combining a simple service with a pool party and BBQ), which attracted families that are not regular church-goers, and I am pleased to note that the Ark (our monthly children's gathering, held alongside

We remain hugely grateful to all who faithfully contribute to the Parish financially, particularly to our regular donors, as the stability of their gifts really undergirds our finances and makes the job of forecasting income so much easier. Special thanks also need to be extended to Gilly Greenwood and her team for orchestrating the very successful four part Martyr Worthy Lecture Series during the winter. Without the significant funds raised from their sterling efforts the Parish's financial picture would have been very different as we end the year.



I am also pleased to report that a variety of other fundraising efforts (to which again many wonderful volunteers contributed) have boosted the balances of fabric funds dedicated to the repair and upkeep of our individual churches. These have included the Easton Flower Festival in May, the Southwood Players' performances last summer, and two concerts at St Mary's, Easton.



Finally, the best indication of our Parish's current and future vitality was the process that culminated in the appointment of Revd David Cooke as our Rector in early December. At its start, we were advised by

experts in the Diocese that it is not automatic that a half-stipend post in a rural setting would attract candidates and we might therefore have an even more extended period of vacancy than then anticipated.



As such it was very encouraging that two excellent candidates came forward for consideration to be our new Rector, both of whom said that the evident strength of our community, our blend of informal and traditional services and the broad reach of our ministry were key factors in their decisions to apply for the role. We greatly look forward to David taking up his post in late July, to welcoming his family and him to the Valley and to the ongoing proclamation of the good news of Jesus Christ in this place under his leadership.



In closing I extend my great gratitude to my eight colleagues on our PCC, to our LLM Gerry Stacey (who has covered too many bases to mention over this past year, always with good humour, compassion and wisdom), to my fellow Church Wardens Malcolm Hogg and Theo Mezger (who have been hugely committed to ensuring that we have continued to flourish during this year) and to our invaluable Parish Administrator Beccy Clark (who has done so much to hold our Parish's life together over the last 12 months).

**John Barber**  
**Lay Chair of PCC**

# Our Churches



**St Mary's Church  
Avington**



**St Mary's Church  
Easton**



**St John's Church  
Itchen Abbas**



**St Swithun's Church  
Martyr Worthy**

## St Mary's Church, Avington

St Mary's, Avington holds a special place in the Mission of the Parish of the Itchen Valley; not just because of its exceptional and original architectural significance as a fine Georgian, box-pewed Church but as a symbol of hope and majesty to those who visit and worship within its walls.



Following a quiet time during 2024/25, St Mary's has been busy this past year with increased visitor numbers and an increased service schedule. In 2024/25 our visitors' book recorded 82 entries, whilst this year numbers have risen to 167 with many pilgrim, community and youth groups adding to a swelling number of visitors. It is clearly important that St Mary's is there for all. We are blessed with wonderful groups of volunteers led by committed organisers who make St Mary's accessible, relevant and welcoming. There are vibrant groups of un-luckers, caterers, tent erectors, chair providers, flower arrangers, flag raisers, maintainers, gardeners, sides persons, bell ringers and other residents of Avington who help support St Mary's and the parish in these and in so many other ways. A huge debt of gratitude is due to them all.



This last year saw the welcome increase in the number of services held at St Mary's. Included in these were funeral services for Mark and Nicky Stent, whose own lives were so dedicated to the life of our church. Added to these celebrations of their lives, St Mary's saw the wedding of Mark and Nicky Stent's granddaughter and the baptism of their great-granddaughter at the same Service. St Mary's also hosted the Remembrance Sunday Service. Each one of these events was attended by a congregation of nearly 100!

St Mary's was the subject of an Archdeacon's Parochial Visitation which took place on 19<sup>th</sup> November 2025. This is a quinquennial audit of good governance and record keeping at individual churches or parishes in the Diocese. We are pleased to report that the visitation was completed successfully: special thanks for the hard work and dedication of both Gavin Edgerley Harris and Becca Clark who collated and prepared all the necessary documents.

There are ongoing maintenance requirements of the church and churchyard which are in hand and planned for the coming year. Individual parishioners are funding the removal of the tree stump and the laying of wild turf in the churchyard against the wall with the Old Rectory. There is also a project to provide a small, wooden, portable case to exhibit a facsimile of St Mary's' "Vinegar Bible" which will be displayed at the page from Luke 20, where "The Parable of the *Vineyard*" is misspelled as "*Vinegar*"; this work is being funded by an Avington resident.

Fundraising is a priority, together with Mission, and building upon the help and support that St Mary's, Avington deserves.  
**Avington DCC**



## St Mary's Church, Easton

This year has been a mixed year for St Mary's. The first quarter was disturbed by the retirement at the end of the ecumenical year of both the previous Wardens and as well as the early retirement of the Rector.

The DCC remains unchanged with the hugely valuable addition of Harry Smith to the team. In so many respects the Warden benefits from the experience, reliability and energy of Judy Bishop and Sara Janssen the two Deputy Wardens. Whilst the DCC meets only occasionally it works efficiently as a great team, utilising its many differing skills.



The year has been busy at St Mary's where in total 37 services have been held including 3 weddings, 2 baptisms, 4 funerals and two interments. Apart from the funerals, the best attended have been the Crib Service on Christmas Eve (at which the new Bishop of Basingstoke, Bishop Kelly, preached), the Patronal Service and those on Palm Sunday and Easter Day.



Regretfully, the size of the Easton based congregation dwindles. It has never recovered since COVID and as it has no suitable venue for the Ark/Sunday School, it has lost to the other churches in the parish the two services that appeal to the

younger generation. Another challenge is that Eastoners appear less inclined to recognise and travel to the other churches in the Valley, therefore we are failing to attract the new and younger families of Easton, of which there are so many. They represent untapped potential for the new Rector. Further this illustrates so clearly our desperate need for the extension but only once the immediate renovations are completed.



Over the last year fundraising for the renovations has continued, firstly by setting up a JustGiving scheme and secondly through organising an alternative flower festival and two, quite different, concerts, one in the autumn and the other recently in the spring. JustGiving is designed to appeal to the passer by and those who do not attend church. The concerts are huge fun and were intended to reach out to both the wider community and those who rarely enter the building. More fund-raising activities are planned.



It takes a very big team of workers to run St Mary's, all of whom were mentioned by me at our recent Patronal Service. I will not list them here but again we are really grateful to each and every one of the team for your generous and dedicated contributions in so many differing ways. Thank you.

**Theo Mezger**  
**St Mary's Churchwarden**

## St John's Church, Itchen Abbas

The uses of St John's continue to be many and varied including CAMEO every month, Little Rainbows every Monday in termtime, all parish meetings, services and events for Itchen Abbas School at least 3 times a year, an away day destination for others who ask for this, Bible courses, and Wednesday Night Worship.

During the vacancy our Holy Communion services have been taken by a range of clergy who have been appreciative of the welcome they receive, and we have in turn been appreciative of their ministry. Gerry Stacey has taken many services, some at short notice when a visiting priest was suddenly unavailable, for which we the congregation have been most grateful. Sarah Noble, Tim Clapp and Lavinia Owen have organised, provided music and led our monthly All Age Worship with inspirational content. Café Church takes place in Itchen Abbas Village Hall on the first Sunday of each month which is in essence an extension of St John's, where many people from the whole Itchen Valley parish take part, helping and participating.



Charlotte Appleby organises CAMEO each month along with her large band of cooks and helpers providing this wonderful event for the over 65's in our community.



Since Vernon Tottle retired as verger, chair movers have volunteered from across the valley so that the arrangements for a service or clear space for Little Rainbows can be done, as well as hoovering the carpet. We have also now employed Willy-Ann Henderson to take over the cleaning of the church including the kitchen, bathroom and office – she is doing a very good job, and the church is looking very fresh and clean.

The different people who provide various things to enhance our worship and time after services are always cheerfully helpful including Elizabeth Bouldin who organises the flower rota, and Arminel Tottle who organises the decorations for festival occasions. Joan Dartnall opens and closes the church every day with help from near neighbours when she is away. Brigid McManus takes the minutes at meetings. The churchyard maintenance is well looked after by Andamar, and John Bouldin leads a group when additional tidying is needed and also helped organise a team of children from Prince's Mead school who planted herbs in an area of the churchyard. John Taylor has become the essential person over new boiler decisions. Patrick Appleby is on hand to help with practical problems. Stephen Mead and Seanine Joyce have contributed help over various tasks. Joan Dartnell, Elizabeth Bouldin and Jean Taylor provide coffee and biscuits after services. Lavinia Owen in leading the Ministry Team and Valley Visitors provides thoughtful and prayerful leadership and is joined as a welcomer to services with Nick Owen.

**Itchen Abbas DCC**

## St Swithun's Church, Martyr Worthy

2025 was a successful and happy year for the community of St. Swithun's. The normal range of services took place and all were well attended.



Evensong, in particular, has developed into a more choral service with the choir singing a short anthem and a reflective piece at the end.

Valley Worship and the Ark is regularly held at St Swithun's, led by John and Nicky Barber with James Greig also actively involved and Tim Clapp customarily leading the worship. The Ark provides a warm environment for children to look at aspects of the Bible and the World and tell us all about it at the end of the service.



The Lessons and Carols service before Christmas was very well attended indeed. Every corner of the church was filled, and the choir led some spirited singing. The Way of the Cross on Good Friday, directed by Jenny Crowther, proved fitting and moving experience.



We enjoyed a splendid patronal in July with Revd Canon Andrew Micklefield as preacher. After the service Verity Coleman and the team laid on an excellent meal in the Village Hall, with wine provided by the Friends. Thanks to all who made it such an enjoyable community event.



When I encounter visitors or pilgrims at St. Swithun's, they often remark on their perception that the church is clearly "loved". Everything is in good order, a beautifully clean church, with lovely flowers on show and a cared-for churchyard to match.

Our warmest thanks to Cathy Dickinson for organising the cleaning, to Lizzie Reid who manages the flower rota, to all the sides people and to Simon Ffennell who spends so much of his time on every aspect of church life, including leading the Evensong services.



Sara Mason retired as churchwarden in March after seven years of sterling service. The congregation expressed their heartfelt thanks to her with a number of gifts. It is good that Sara has continued as chair of the DCC and organiser of the coffee rota. Thanks again to her for her years of service.

Finally, thanks to John Barber for taking on the role of churchwarden at a particularly busy and demanding time.

**Malcolm Hogg**  
**St Swithun's Churchwarden**

# Church Reports

## Report on the fabric, goods and ornaments of the churches

### **St Mary's Avington**

St Mary's is blessed with a substantial group of volunteers from Avington who devote much time and labour in ensuring the Church Fabric, Goods and Ornaments are kept in good order and well maintained. Last year ongoing maintenance progressed, and the Church kept clean.

There is an ongoing project, funded by an Avington resident, to exhibit a facsimile of St Mary's copy of a "Vinegar Bible" at the page which misspells "The Parable of the *Vineyard*" as "*Vinegar*".

Regularly monitored humidity readings throughout the year show the significant benefit that the de-humidifier makes within the building.

St John's, Itchen Abbas has kindly donated to St Mary's two replacement carafes as well as a number of silk liturgical items for the altar.

The December 2022 Quinquennial Review, not issued until 19<sup>th</sup> September 2023, recommended works of repair and maintenance to be carried out over the period 2023 - 28. In accordance with this Review, work has been carried out on flooring, pews, handrails, repointing together with wood repairs particularly to the south door. Also highlighted was the need for annual inspections and servicing of electrical and fire protection systems and other checks. These have been carried out year on year with certification where required.



### **St Mary's, Easton**

The progress with the renovations has been slower than we would like. Therefore, the plaster work above the font has to be completed; the metal roof joist that spans the nave has yet to be anchored at the south end; and the coping stones running externally around the chancel need to be reset.

The delay is attributable to parish distractions, some dissatisfaction with the architects and the absence of anyone able and willing to lead the institutional fund raising. These excuses are now resolved and a small subcommittee of the DCC has been established to drive the matter forward: Judy Bishop – architect and

builders; Harry Smith - institutional fund raising; Sara Janssen – communications / Friends of St Mary's; with the church warden, Theo Mezger, supporting all the above.

The next steps are for the architect to set out the specification of the work, quotes to be obtained and a faculty to be sought. Institutional funding will be sought only once a faculty has been obtained. Meanwhile, local fund raising for these works continues. To date some £33,000 has been raised for this purpose.

The quinquennial report due last year has been undertaken and we await its receipt.

The development of the extension is on hold until at least the restoration work is well under way.



### **St John's, Itchen Abbas**

The most difficult aspect of keeping St. John's in good order has been the boiler which was unreliable throughout this period. There have been several attempts at flushing through the system, which works for a while but not consistently. John Taylor has been indefatigable in noting all the potential problems, spending hours waiting for heating engineers and to date the wait continues for quotes about installing a heat pump.



The church field was successful for parking until last autumn's ceaseless rain and for safety it was closed from December. The continuing rain made the closure a sensible decision and it was reopened for the services on Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> March.

In the kitchen the storage arrangement for the altar frontals appears ingenious but is rather cumbersome, removing and getting out the next frontal is a slightly unwieldy task undertaken by Jean Taylor which she

does with good grace. The Old Vestry has become storage for extra equipment needed for some services as well as Little Rainbows. It was discovered that there were several silk hangings as well as spare glass carafes which are not needed in St. John's and these have been donated to St. Mary's Avington, they have been listed there and will be used in the future.

### **St Swithun's, Martyr Worthy**

There have been no alarms or concerns with the structure of St Swithun's this year.

The boiler, which is towards the end of its useful span, behaved impeccably, requiring normal servicing only.

The organ, being the only pipe organ in the Parish, receives regular servicing but required additional work to the mechanical side during the year. This additional cost will be covered by the Friends of St Swithun's, with our warm thanks.

As reported last year, the Memorial West Window was approved in principle by PCC subject to fundraising. The appeal, directed toward the worshipping community in MW, was successful. Sufficient funding, including contingencies, was raised. The project was then formally approved by PCC and is well under way.

We expect the Window to be installed and completed in the spring of 2026. Robin Greenwood has put in a great deal of hard work on this, and we are very grateful to him.

The DCC is planning two developments for the church this year:

The placing and securing of an icon in the alcove in the south wall near the font; and the installation of suitable metal handrails outside the south door. The Friends have kindly indicated support for both these. We have purchased a set of pillar candle holders for use on the windowsills. Not only will these look good, but they will provide enhanced stability for candles thus improving safety as well.

Both these two items will, of course, be subject to PCC approval and the granting of faculties.

We are so grateful to Simon Ffennell whose unstinting work in and around the church ensures a well maintained and cherished building along with services always beautifully set up.



## **Deanery Synod Report**

Deanery Synod met three times during the year and considered a range of topics relating to both pastoral ministry and community engagement:

### **Focal Ministry**

During the year reports on the existing focal ministers continued to show benefits and an additional minister, Minna Bruce was appointed to Ovington.

### **Funeral Ministry**

Mark Hixon (Richard Steel & Partners) gave an informative presentation on trends in the funeral sector. He highlighted the close relationship between funeral directors and the Church, particularly in supporting families at times of bereavement. While church funerals have increased slightly in recent years (around 30%), there has been significant growth in direct cremations, where no service takes place.

The Synod noted the importance of:

- Encouraging people to plan funerals in advance
- Strengthening links with local funeral directors
- Promoting the value of Christian funerals and memorial services

### **Deanery and Diocesan Updates**

Bishop Kelly joined one of the meetings and is planning to visit many Parishes looking to develop closer links and ties.

### **Living in Faith and Charity**

A key focus was how parishes can respond to local need, particularly in rural areas. Issues discussed included poverty, food insecurity, and the pressures facing farming communities. Faith & Generosity Week June 2026 will take place from Sunday 7th June to Sunday 14th June

Practical ideas shared included:

- Community food initiatives and cafés
- Social gatherings to reduce isolation
- Greater collaboration between parishes
- Building stronger understanding of rural life
- Parishes are encouraged to take forward simple, practical actions and report back on progress.

### **Conclusion**

The meetings highlighted both challenges and opportunities for the Church. There is a clear call to be more present in our communities—supporting people at significant life moments and responding with compassion and practical care to local needs.

**LLM Gerry Stacey**

## Reports

### CAMEO

CAMEO continues to flourish, with no great changes – if it ain't broke...! We are still gathering new guests, which is gratifying. Some of our guests are active recruiters now, word of mouth is the best advertisement. We can always fit in more, so if you would like to join us, please ring Charlotte Appleby (779778).

Numbers ranged from a low of 30 in June – it was helpers who were mostly absent, but the reduced band worked miracles, and we managed! – to a high of 56 in December, perhaps the presence of Father Christmas and the Itchen Abbas School choir was an encouragement. The average was 41 across the year, a little higher than last year.



Several of our helpers have heavy family commitments at the moment, either grandchildren or parents, or in some cases both, with the occasional health issue as well, so we would welcome more cooks. CAMEO guests are very generous so we can pay for ingredients, your time is priceless. All skill levels are welcome.

The table and chairs team have done great work, coming up with innovative ways of fitting in extra numbers, and cheerfully hoovering afterwards and resetting the church for whatever is the next service or event.



As well as at Christmas the Itchen Abbas School choir came to sing their Harvest Songs and at Easter, we much enjoy their visits, and we hope they do too. How fortunate we are to have such a lovely school so close.

**Charlotte Appleby**

### Valley Visitors

It is time again to thank our very special team of Valley Visitors, who continue to do such a marvellous and caring role in the Valley. They are a fantastic and constant rock in a changing church world, fulfilling a very necessary need for the vulnerable, lonely and bereaved. It is a silent service that can, so often, be forgotten. We are so fortunate to continue to have such a dedicated team, but are, as ever, hopeful that we can attract some younger members to this rewarding work. This is particularly necessary as we have, sadly, lost three of our valuable members this year. I would like to say a HUGE and heartfelt "Thank you" to Liz Platt, Elizabeth Bouldin and Nick Owen for their many years of dedicated help - appreciated enormously by those they visited.

Obviously, this will be an exciting year of change, with the arrival of David Cooke and his family, and I am sure he will be looking closely at what we do, so if anyone feels inspired to join us, please get in touch. We continue to work closely with a thriving CAMEO.

**Lavinia Owen**

### Wednesday Night Worship

Now in its eight year, Wednesday Night Worship continues to take place once a month in St John's, Itchen Abbas. Its purpose remains the same: to provide a space for people to meet with God and meet with each other through worship, prayer, and sharing testimonies of what God is doing in our lives and communities.

Whilst we follow a similar structure each month, there is also a uniqueness to each evening and no two evenings are the same. The evenings begin with a few minutes of fellowship over tea and brownies whilst people arrive. We then move into a time of worship, followed by one of the group sharing a testimony and message of faith-building encouragement, rooted in Scripture. Sometimes there are numerous people with testimonies to share. A significant part of the evening is then left open for continued worship and prayer ministry. Our desire is to give the Holy Spirit free rein to lead our time, to meet with all who are hungry to be filled by Him, and to offer prayer ministry to all who would like to receive.

Our size fluctuates from month to month, but this last year we have seen many new faces joining us from the Winchester and Alresford areas. On a smaller evening there may be 15 of us, but on other evenings there can be over 50.

The evenings are very much open to all who are keen to worship, to pray, and to be encouraged in their faith, in an informal setting.

**Julia Wright**

### Little Rainbows

We continue to start the week with our Little Rainbows gatherings in the church, where parents and little ones get together for a play and chat. Delicious coffee and cake is so kindly provided by our generous Rainbow helpers. We have a lovely regular group of parents and children who provide such wonderful support to each other, and we have been lucky to have some new and returning families joining us too.



Last year's babies are now thriving and busy toddlers, who particularly enjoy our addition of a parachute to circle time. We are all extremely grateful to have the opportunity and space to meet every week, the community created is vital to so many of us. It is always a highlight of our week!

**Sarah and Juliette**

### The Ark

We have many young teens coming now so we felt it was right to up the age of our content for this season and therefore since September 2025 we have been following the themes of Youth Alpha at the Ark starting with "Welcome to the Conversation", followed by "Jesus is...", "What does Real Love Look Like", "Why would I want a relationship with God?" and "What does a relationship with God look like?". Taking us up to the summer break we will explore "Who is the Holy Spirit?", "How can I be filled with the Holy Spirit?", "How does God help us overcome evil?", "Does God heal today?" and "What happens next?". Following Alpha also helps reaffirm the faith of children who have grown up in a Christian home.

We have had some great questions and thoughts since we started it.



We regularly have 10 children between the ages and 2 and 12 on a Sunday during Valley Worship and we run activities that the children enjoy whilst watching the video cinema style with beanbags and snacks. Games and crafts we've done include matchbox challenge, squeegee painting, Fimo keyrings, Lego crosses and some Gladiator games reflecting what the children might be watching on TV on Saturday night.



There is a small group of regular leaders, helpers and parents who attend, and we all love seeing the children have fun whilst talking about their faith.

**Verity Greig**

### UTX (Under the Cross)

Although during 2025 we have had to suspend the meeting of our parish youth group - UTX, we are very much looking forward to launching it again in 2026.

## Health and Safety

There were no accidents, near misses or other adverse incidents were reported during the year. H&S is very much a team effort, as the valued previous H&S Officer, Sara Mason, has often said. Warmest thanks to Sara from the PCC and the Parish for her dedicated professionalism over many years. She has left a sure foundation in place. Particular thanks to David Swinstead for offering to stay involved in the review and updating of our policies and Risk Assessments, and to Theo Mezger, Churchwarden at Easton, for his unfailingly pro-active and incisive approach to matters H&S for the events and operations in which he is involved, as well as in PCC generally. Thanks also to John Barber who, as chair of PCC, ensures that H&S attracts the priority that it merits in PCC meetings and at all other times.

During the year, all church organised events have been appropriately risk-assessed, and to all the organisers who, without exception, accept Risk Assessment as an integral part of the planning process.

The Policy on Carrying of Naked Flames in services was reviewed and updated during the year as were the Risk Assessments for our more populous services (Crib, Christingle and Carol).

There are major works going on at St Mary's Easton, and Theo Mezger, churchwarden, keeps the PCC fully apprised of all the control measures in place to reduce risk.

The Itchen Abbas boiler has been very unreliable and will hopefully be replaced soon. Back-up electrical heating has been provided to achieve tolerable temperatures during the winter.

We will continue to strive for a safe environment for our congregations, volunteers and staff.

Thank you to David Swinstead for conducting a survey of the graveyards to check for tombstone movement. Some tombstones identified have been repaired where required.

The PCC continue to monitor outside events and approval risk-assessments often at short notice, for which I am very thankful.

It is a team effort, and I am very thankful for all the support across the Valley for continuing to make our churches, grounds and events safe and fun places for our congregants.

**Malcolm Hogg**

## Safeguarding

There were no incidents or confidential matters which have raised concern during 2025. There have however been substantial changes to practice and procedures. Due to a data breach at the organisation which handled our online DBS checks (fortunately not involving loss of data relating to anyone in our Parish) we had to revert to conducting all DBS checks using pencil and paper, ably conducted by Beccy Clark. We also conducted a review of staffing and identified a wider range of people needing checking and training in safeguarding. We have now completed all checks required and introduced a new training programme which is in progress and will ensure that all people within the Parish are not only checked for current risks but are also fully trained to identify and deal with any safeguarding concerns in the future.

# Financial Report

## **Independent Examiner's report**

### **Accounts for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2025**

#### **Respective responsibilities of the Trustees and the examiner**

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts and they consider that an audit is not required for the year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the Charities Act) and that an independent examination is needed. It is my responsibility to:

Examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act to follow the procedures laid down in the general directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act, and to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

#### **Basis of the Independent Examiner's statement**

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with these records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seeking explanations from the trustees concerning such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required for an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair' view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

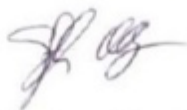
#### **Independent examiner's statement**

In connection with my examination, no material matter has come to my attention which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

Accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act, or the accounts do not accord with the accounting records

I have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed:



Stephen Hendy

Date: 30<sup>th</sup> October 2024

Data Developments, First Floor, The Chubb Building, Fryer Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1HT

## Statement of Financial Activities

	Unrestricted funds	Designated funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds	Total funds	Prior year total funds
<b>Receipts</b>						
Planned giving	87,356	—	—	—	87,356	88,436
Collections and other giving	11,217	—	4,194	—	15,411	9,835
Other voluntary receipts	6,377	—	47,567	—	53,944	21,122
Gift Aid recovered	20,137	—	9,224	—	29,361	19,897
Other receipts	795	—	5,000	—	5,795	7,287
Activities for generating funds	3,828	—	12,613	—	16,441	14,269
Investment Income	4,283	838	3,562	—	8,683	9,193
Receipts from church activities	8,292	—	—	—	8,292	4,199
<b>Total income</b>	<b>142,287</b>	<b>838</b>	<b>82,160</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>225,286</b>	<b>174,242</b>
<b>Payments</b>						
Cost of generating funds	708	—	17	—	725	843
Missionary and Charitable Giving	—	—	—	—	—	—
Common Mission Fund	76,600	—	—	—	76,600	70,520
Clergy and Staffing costs	27,778	—	—	—	27,778	31,295
Church Running Expenses	39,879	3,086	—	—	42,965	43,230
Hall Running Costs	—	—	—	—	—	—
Church Repairs & Maintenance	—	—	8,058	—	8,058	58,965
Hall Repairs & Maintenance	—	—	—	—	—	—
New Building work	—	—	15,939	—	15,939	1,496
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>144,966</b>	<b>3,086</b>	<b>24,015</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>172,068</b>	<b>206,352</b>
<b>Net income / (expenditure) resources before transfer</b>	<b>(2,679)</b>	<b>(2,248)</b>	<b>58,145</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>53,218</b>	<b>(32,109)</b>
<b>Transfers</b>						
Gross transfers between funds - in	7,450	3,778	35,379	—	46,608	53,150
Gross transfers between funds - out	(7,450)	(3,778)	(35,379)	—	(46,608)	(53,150)
<b>Other recognised gains / losses</b>						
Gains / losses on investment assets	—	—	—	—	—	—
Gains on revaluation, fixed assets, charity's own use	—	—	—	—	—	—
<b>Net movement in funds</b>	<b>(2,679)</b>	<b>(2,248)</b>	<b>58,145</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>53,218</b>	<b>(32,109)</b>
<b>Total funds brought forward</b>	<b>115,852</b>	<b>23,534</b>	<b>66,169</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>205,556</b>	<b>237,666</b>
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>	<b>113,173</b>	<b>21,286</b>	<b>124,315</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>258,774</b>	<b>205,556</b>
<b>Represented by</b>						
<b>Unrestricted</b>						
General fund	113,173	—	—	—	113,173	115,852
<b>Designated</b>						
Itchen Abbas Designated Fabric	—	21,286	—	—	21,286	23,534
<b>Restricted</b>						
Avington Fabric	—	—	5,028	—	5,028	4,843
Easton Fabric	—	—	47,752	—	47,752	29,213
MW Window Fund	—	—	36,253	—	36,253	—
Martyr Worthy Fabric	—	—	21,158	—	21,158	18,507
Were Fabric Fund	—	—	14,123	—	14,123	13,604

## Balance sheet

	Total funds	Prior year funds
<b>Current assets</b>		
Debtors	6,500	6,024
Investments	215,703	169,656
Cash at bank and in hand	49,639	40,718
	<b>271,844</b>	<b>216,399</b>

<b>Liabilities</b>		
Creditors: Amounts falling due in one year	13,069	10,842
	<b>13,069</b>	<b>10,842</b>
<b>Netcurrent assets less current liabilities</b>	<b>258,774</b>	<b>205,556</b>
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>	<b>258,774</b>	<b>205,556</b>
<b>Total net assets less liabilities</b>	<b>258,774</b>	<b>205,556</b>
<b>Represented by</b>		
<b>Unrestricted</b>		
General fund	113,173	115,852
<b>Designated</b>		
ItchenAbbas Designated Fabric	21,286	23,534
<b>Restricted</b>		
MWWindow Fund	36,253	—
Avington Fabric	5,028	4,843
Easton Fabric	47,752	29,213
Martyr Worthy Fabric	21,158	18,507
Were Fabric Fund	14,123	13,604
<b>Funds of the church</b>	<b>258,774</b>	<b>205,556</b>

## Statement of assets and liabilities

	General	Designated	Restricted	Endowment	This year	Last year
<b>Current assets - Cash at bank and in hand</b>						
CAF currentaccount-	12,220	2,255	18,352	—	32,828	11,555
CAF Gold bank account-	5,497	1,014	6,013	—	12,526	25,611
Nat West current account-	907	167	2,153	—	3,228	2,540
CCLA (CBF) depositaccount-	463	85	507	—	1,056	1,011
<b>Totals</b>	<b>19,089</b>	<b>3,523</b>	<b>27,026</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>49,639</b>	<b>40,718</b>
<b>Current assets - Debtors</b>						
Accounts Receivable -	4,636	290	1,573	—	6,500	6,024
<b>Totals</b>	<b>4,636</b>	<b>290</b>	<b>1,573</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>6,500</b>	<b>6,024</b>
<b>Current assets - Investments</b>						
Flagstone CAF Deposit -	94,672	17,472	103,558	—	215,703	169,656
<b>Totals</b>	<b>94,672</b>	<b>17,472</b>	<b>103,558</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>215,703</b>	<b>169,656</b>
<b>Liabilities - Agency accounts</b>						
Agency collections -	—	—	6,853	—	6,853	6,707
<b>Totals</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>6,853</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>6,853</b>	<b>6,707</b>
<b>Liabilities - Creditors: Amounts falling due in one year</b>						
Accounts Payable -	2,249	—	990	—	3,240	3,735
Prepayments -	2,975	—	—	—	2,975	400
<b>Totals</b>	<b>5,225</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>990</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>6,216</b>	<b>4,135</b>
<b>Grand total</b>	<b>113,173</b>	<b>21,286</b>	<b>124,315</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>258,774</b>	<b>205,556</b>

## Fund movement by type

	Opening	Incoming	Outgoing	Transfers	Gains/losses	Closing
<b>MWWindow - MW Window Fund</b>						
Restricted	—	52,192	15,939	—	—	36,253
<b>Sub-total for MWWindow</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>52,192</b>	<b>15,939</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>36,253</b>
<b>General - General fund</b>						
Unrestricted	115,852	142,287	144,966	—	—	113,173

<b>Sub-total for General</b>	<b>115,852</b>	<b>142,287</b>	<b>144,966</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>113,173</b>
<b>AVFabric - Avington Fabric</b>						
Restricted	4,843	184	—	—	—	5,028
<b>Sub-total for AVFabric</b>	<b>4,843</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>5,028</b>
<b>ENFabric - Easton Fabric</b>						
Restricted	29,213	26,613	8,075	—	—	47,752
<b>Sub-total for ENFabric</b>	<b>29,213</b>	<b>26,613</b>	<b>8,075</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>47,752</b>
<b>IAFabric-D - Itchen Abbas Designa</b>						
Designated	23,534	838	3,086	—	—	21,286
<b>Sub-total for IAFabric-D</b>	<b>23,534</b>	<b>838</b>	<b>3,086</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>21,286</b>
<b>MWFFabric - Martyr Worthy Fabric</b>						
Restricted	18,507	2,651	—	—	—	21,158
<b>Sub-total for MWFFabric</b>	<b>18,507</b>	<b>2,651</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>21,158</b>
<b>WEREFabric - Were Fabric Fund</b>						
Restricted	13,604	518	—	—	—	14,123
<b>Sub-total for WEREFabric</b>	<b>13,604</b>	<b>518</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>14,123</b>
<b>Grand total</b>	<b>205,556</b>	<b>225,286</b>	<b>172,068</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>258,774</b>

## Analysis of income and expenditure

	<b>Unrestricted</b>	<b>Designated</b>	<b>Restricted</b>	<b>Endowment</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>This year</b>	<b>Last year</b>
<b>INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS</b>							
<b>Planned giving</b>							
0101 - Planned giving - GAE donations	68,026	—	—	—	68,026	67,922	
0110 - Planned giving - non GAE donations	2,829	—	—	—	2,829	6,864	
0201 - Planned giving - GA inclusive donations	16,500	—	—	—	16,500	13,650	
<b>Total</b>	<b>87,356</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>87,356</b>	<b>88,436</b>	
<b>Collections and other giving</b>							
0302 - GASDS Avington	1,041	—	—	—	1,041	—	
0303 - GASDS Martyr Worthy	5,057	—	1,126	—	6,183	3,720	
0304 - GASDS Itchen Abbas	1,897	—	—	—	1,897	2,296	
0305 - GASDS Easton	1,582	—	2,177	—	3,760	2,167	
0501 - One-off GAE gifts (inc CAFDonate GAE)	1,638	—	890	—	2,528	1,651	
<b>Total</b>	<b>11,217</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>4,194</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>15,411</b>	<b>9,835</b>	
<b>Other voluntary receipts</b>							
0410 - Churchwall boxes	152	—	—	—	152	176	
0550 - Donations for specific purposes	1,496	—	43,407	—	44,904	300	
0701 - Legacies	—	—	—	—	—	5,458	
08A1 - Other donations Non GAE & one-off grants	4,728	—	4,159	—	8,887	15,187	
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,377</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>47,567</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>53,944</b>	<b>21,122</b>	

**Gift Aid recovered**

0601 - Giftaidtaxreclaim	20,137	—	9,224	—	29,361	19,897
Total	20,137	—	9,224	—	29,361	19,897

**Other receipts**

0901 - Otherfunds generated	795	—	5,000	—	5,795	7,287
Total	795	—	5,000	—	5,795	7,287

**Activities for generating funds**

0910 - Fundraisingevents	3,828	—	12,613	—	16,441	14,269
Total	3,828	—	12,613	—	16,441	14,269

**Investment Income**

1001 - Dividends	—	—	—	—	—	—
1020 - Bank interest	4,283	838	3,562	—	8,683	9,193
Total	4,283	838	3,562	—	8,683	9,193

**Receipts from church activities**

1101 - Wedding&funeralfees	8,292	—	—	—	8,292	4,199
Total	8,292	—	—	—	8,292	4,199
<b>INCOME TOTAL</b>	<b>142,287</b>	<b>838</b>	<b>82,160</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>225,286</b>	<b>174,242</b>

**EXPENDITURE****Cost of generating funds**

1730 - Costs of fundraising events	708	—	17	—	725	843
1735 - Costs for Easton fete	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total	708	—	17	—	725	843

**Missionary and Charitable Giving**

1850 - Mission giving	—	—	—	—	—	—
1860 - Donation to FOSSwithun	—	—	—	—	—	—
1870 - Giving to Secular charities	—	—	—	—	—	—
1880 - Winter fuel redistribution	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total	—	—	—	—	—	—

**Common Mission Fund**

1910 - Commonmissionfund	76,600	—	—	—	76,600	70,520
Total	76,600	—	—	—	76,600	70,520

**Clergy and Staffing costs**

2001 - Assistant ministryexpenses	188	—	—	—	188	166
2050 - Parish administrator & bookkeeper costs	25,644	—	—	—	25,644	24,878
2060 - Youth work	270	—	—	—	270	426
2101 - Rector's expenses	1,675	—	—	—	1,675	5,824
Total	27,778	—	—	—	27,778	31,295

### Church Running Expenses

1741 - Bankcharges	86	—	—	—	86	248
1902 - Expenses for vacancy	1,168	—	—	—	1,168	—
1905 - Deanery Synod	75	—	—	—	75	75
2002 - Wedding and funeral expenses	2,029	—	—	—	2,029	1,340
2120 - Stationery, printing, computing	6,736	—	—	—	6,736	7,023
2125 - Sacristy	27	—	—	—	27	167
2201 - Training courses	—	—	—	—	—	274
2202 - Children's activities	719	—	—	—	719	533
2203 - Parish entertainment and hospitality	864	—	—	—	864	827
2301 - Church running - insurance	7,176	—	—	—	7,176	7,040
2320 - Organ tuning	524	—	—	—	524	508
2330 - Church maintenance	1,670	—	—	—	1,670	3,020
2331 - Service: fire, heating, safety	1,896	3,086	—	—	4,982	2,901
2332 - Worship and music	2,529	—	—	—	2,529	3,204
2350 - Upkeep of churchyard	5,843	—	—	—	5,843	7,601
2360 - Administration	917	—	—	—	917	835
2401 - Church running - electric	3,324	—	—	—	3,324	2,811
2410 - Church running - gas	3,201	—	—	—	3,201	3,659
2420 - Church running - water	812	—	—	—	812	1,158
2501 - Church running - annual maint.	275	—	—	—	275	—
Total	39,879	3,086	—	—	42,965	43,230

### Church Repairs & Maintenance

2336 - Quinquennial inspection - Avington	—	—	—	—	—	2,767
2727 - Easton major repairs	—	—	8,058	—	8,058	56,197
Total	—	—	8,058	—	8,058	58,965

### New Building work

2725 - Easton extension	—	—	—	—	—	1,496
2728 - MW West Window	—	—	15,939	—	15,939	—
Total	—	—	15,939	—	15,939	1,496
<b>EXPENDITURE TOTAL</b>	<b>144,966</b>	<b>3,086</b>	<b>24,015</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>172,068</b>	<b>206,352</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>(2,679)</b>	<b>(2,248)</b>	<b>58,145</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>53,218</b>	<b>(32,109)</b>



[www.itchenvalleychurches.org](http://www.itchenvalleychurches.org)