St MARY'S
CHURCH • WELDON

Annual Report

and

Financial Statements

of the

Parochial Church Council

For the year end 31st December 2026

Reaching Up Reaching In Reaching Out

APCM Rector's Report 2025

Dear Church Family,

As we gather for our APCM in 2025, I want first to give thanks to God for His faithfulness to us over this past year. It has been a year not primarily of high visibility change, but of deep preparation — a year of praying, listening, discerning, and getting ourselves ready to reach out more intentionally to our community.

We sensed together that before we could move into a Year of Invitation, we needed first to be a people prepared — spiritually attentive, united in heart, and expectant of what God might do.

A Year of Preparation

Throughout 2025 we have sought to position ourselves before the Lord — in prayer gatherings, in PCC discussions, in small groups, and in countless quiet, unseen conversations. We have been asking not simply, "What should we do?" but "Lord, what are You already doing in Corby — and how can we join in?"

Preparation can sometimes feel slow. It can be tempting to measure progress only by visible outcomes. Yet Scripture reminds us that fruit grows from hidden roots. I believe we are already seeing signs that this preparation is bearing fruit.

One clear example has been the success of our recent Alpha course. It has been a joy to see people exploring faith, asking honest questions, and encountering Jesus — many for the first time, or in a fresh way. Alpha has not just been an event; it has been a sign that the ground is being prepared. It has also reminded us that invitation matters. When we step out in faith and extend a simple invitation, God meets people.

As we look ahead to a Year of Invitation, we hold onto Jesus' words in Matthew 11:28:

"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."

At the heart of our invitation is not a programme, but a Person. We are not inviting people to attend church activities alone; we are inviting them to come to Jesus — the One who gives rest, hope, forgiveness, and new life.

Milestones and Personal Reflections

This year also held some significant personal moments. It was a deep privilege to see Newton ordained priest. To witness that step in his ministry journey was a real encouragement to us as a church family. During my Sabbatical it was a joy to hear about Adrian's commissioning at St Marys by Bishop Jonathan. Both events remind us that God continues to call and raise up leaders for His Church.

On a personal note, I was grateful for the opportunity to take a sabbatical this year. It was a valuable time of rest, reflection, and renewal. One of the great joys of that time was being able to spend time with family in Australia and New Zealand — reconnecting, listening, and simply being present. I returned refreshed and thankful, with renewed clarity about the calling and mission of this church. I am deeply grateful to Newton, the church wardens, and wider leadership who enabled that to happen.

Exploring Our Space for Mission

As we prepare for a Year of Invitation, we are also asking practical questions about how our buildings serve our mission. Buildings are never the mission — but they can either help or hinder it.

We have begun exploring how we might reorder parts of our church space to make it more flexible, more hospitable, and more usable for mission and community engagement. This is not change for the sake of change, but a thoughtful exploration of how the space entrusted to us can better serve the calling God has given us.

I want to express particular thanks to our Churchwardens and members of the PCC, who have been proactive, diligent, and prayerful in helping us think this through. They have worked tirelessly behind the scenes — often in complex and detailed conversations — to ensure that we move forward wisely and well. We are deeply grateful for their leadership and faithfulness.

The Challenges Ahead

As we move into a Year of Invitation, we must also be honest about the challenges. Preparation is important — but there is always a risk of becoming comfortable in preparation. The temptation toward complacency is real.

A Year of Invitation will require courage. It will require each of us to step beyond familiar patterns. It will mean praying for friends by name. It will mean opening our homes. It will mean extending invitations — sometimes awkwardly, sometimes nervously — trusting that God is already at work in the hearts of those around us.

We must guard against thinking, “Someone else will do it.” The call to invite belongs to the whole church. The harvest Jesus speaks of is not gathered by clergy alone, but by the whole people of God.

Our Ongoing Mission

Through it all, our mission remains the same:

Reach Up. Reach In. Reach Out

Reach Up — to worship God wholeheartedly, seeking His presence and aligning our lives with His purposes.

Reach In — to grow as disciples, encouraging one another, deepening in faith, and building a healthy, loving church family.

Reach Out — to serve our community, share the good news of Jesus, and seek the flourishing of Corby.

We do not invent mission. We discern it. Our task is to seek what God is doing and join in.

As we step into this next season, my prayer is that we would remain attentive, humble, expectant — and bold. That we would be a church known not only for faithful worship but for courageous invitation. That we would trust that the One who says “Come to me” is still calling people — and that He chooses to use us as His voice.

Thank you for your faithfulness, your generosity, your prayers, and your love for this church. It is a privilege to serve alongside you.

With gratitude and hope,

Rev Kane Taylor - Rector

Annual Safeguarding Report for APCM April 2026

As parish safeguarding officer, I have reported regularly to the PCC for each meeting so that they are aware of any issues or training needs. Most PCC members have completed their mandatory training, however there are still some members who need to complete the domestic abuse awareness training.

I have reviewed and updated the parish dashboard and as a result of this there are some actions which need to be completed at the first PCC meeting of the new reporting year. These actions are as follows:

Safeguarding Action Plan needs to be reviewed

Recruitment of ex-offenders' policy needs to be reviewed

Responding to concerns or allegations process needs to be reviewed

A review of the list of church activities and non-church activities needs to be completed.

I will also be arranging a meeting with Rev Kane and Rev Newton and the churchwardens to work through the parish dashboard and agree any actions needed for the following year.

I am now the lead recruiter for DBS checks, and thank you to Alison Sharples who has agreed to be my deputy. When I have completed the relevant training for this role, I will cascade this to her. I will then review the list of all people who need DBS clearance and ensure this is up to date.

I have attended PCC meetings as agreed and delivered awareness sessions and will continue this in the forthcoming year if this is the wish of the PCC. The safeguarding email is regularly checked, but no concerns have been referred.

Thank you to all who have helped and supported me in my role.

Susan Allen

Parish Safeguarding Officer

Church Wardens' Report

The pattern of two services every Sunday with time for coffee between is now well established and seems to be working well. Joint services are held for Mothering Sunday, Easter Sunday and Harvest Festival. The time between the services allows members of both congregations to socialise over coffee and also provides time for occasional Standing Committee meetings when these become necessary.

We would like to acknowledge the work of the people who in various ways keep St Mary's running smoothly, in particular the officers of the PCC and our ever faithful organist Sue Lawson.

Proposals for alterations to the church interior to enable better use of space have been formally submitted by our architects Simson Walton Bond to the Diocesan Advisory Council. This has resulted in two visits and requests for further information on how we envisage the church being used in the future. Opinions have been sought from the congregation and wider community. Consultation with other village organisations are ongoing.

Once final DAC approval has been obtained we will be in a position to launch "Friends of Weldon Church" and to initiate grant applications to help raise the necessary funds.

N Sansom and Chris Bream

Electoral Roll

There has been little movement through the year.

The roll stands at 62.

Janet Player. Electoral Roll Officer

Proceedings Report March 2026

There have been six regular PCC meetings, three Standing Committees and one open meeting.

The continued focus of the PCC is to develop Mission and Outreach, manage the increasing need for funds to keep the church running and maintain the building. Fundraising activities have been considered. The PCC would welcome initiatives in this respect.

In recent months we have been exploring ways to make better use of church space.

The committee is also looking at more effective ways to communicate with church members and the wider community.

The attendance at PCC meetings is generally good with some members maintain 100% attendance.

Janet Player Secretary to the PCC

Deanery Synod Report. 2025 -2026

On 29th May the Ascension Day Evensong with Holy communion was held at St Peter and St Andrew to welcome the Rev. Shakeel Nurmahi.

The October meeting was cancelled.

At the February meeting the Rural Dean Rev. Kane Taylor gave a sermon on his recent sabbatical to Australia and New Zealand. He focused on tribalism and family connections. He shared observations of tribalism in our society.

The Deanery Synod currently meets three times per year.

S. Whitlam and S. Skourakis.

Bell Tower Report 2025/26

State of the Tower

- **Recruitment:** While 4 of last year's 6 youth recruits have moved on due to other demands, we have **3 new adult learners** showing great promise. Our goal is to field a full local band by 2027.
- **Personnel:** We extend our deepest gratitude to **Darren Binley** for his unwavering reliability on the call-bell.
- **Challenges:** Accessibility is becoming a factor for our more senior ringers, and we continue to rely on the "ringing circuit" of neighbouring villages to fill gaps for Joint Services.

Significant Ringing Events (2025-26)

Date	**Occasion**	**Towers / Support**
May	Whit Sunday Confirmation	Local & Regional Support
May 2025	80th Anniversary of WWII	National Commemoration (Weldon & Deene)
July 6th	Newton's Ordination	Local Band
Oct 12th	Adrian Licencing	Local Band
November	Peal: *Zelah Surprise Major*	Visiting Band
January	Peal: *Derelict Delight Major*	80th Birthday celebration for Derek (Derelict) Jones

Visiting Bands & Community

We were pleased to welcome the **St Ives ringers** and the **Nene Valley Ringers** late last year. While we only rang for one wedding in Weldon recently, we are looking forward to another ceremony this April.

A Vote of Thanks: To the ringers of Corby, Stanion, Brigstock, Lowick, and Sudborough—thank you for your essential support on practice nights and services.

Gordon Brown –Tower Captain

Treasurers Report .

The report attached to the 2024 accounts advised that 2025 was not going to be an easy year given the uplift of the Parish Share by £5752. With grateful thanks we received gifts totalling £7,500 to cover this uplift but we have no guarantee that we will be so fortunate during 2026 and receive similar gifts. The commitment to pay a monthly amount under the Parish Giving Scheme or direct to St Marys does give some surety for us each month.

Our Church collections and gift aid receipts fell by 10% from the previous year which was disappointing but we are living in financially challenging times for so many people.

In past years we have been fortunate enough to pay for maintenance costs from our normal General Account and the income to our Fabric Fund has built up over 10 years to give the balance it is now. We transferred £ £3006 from the Fabric Fund during the year to mitigate the maintenance costs.

A deficit for the year arose of £4,807, an increase of 20% on the 2024 deficit. This is not something we can sustain year on year or quite simply we will run out of funds in our bank account. With this in mind we are looking to increase our income by encouraging regular giving.

The regular outgoings of light,heat ,water and insurance increased by 7% which is similar to the increase suffered by domestic dwellings during that year.

2026 looks to be another financially challenging year for us and I hope that we are able to reduce the deficit and generate a surplus of funds. As the song says " Wouldn't it be Loverly"

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT

TO THE PCC OF ST MARY'S PARISH CHURCH, WELDON WITH DEENE

I report to the PCC members on my examination of the financial statements of St Mary's Parish Church, Weldon with Deene for the year ended 31 December 2025. This examination is carried out in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations 2006 ("the Regulations").

RESPONSIBILITIES AND BASIS OF REPORT

As members of the PCC you are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and you consider that the audit requirement of the Regulations does not apply. It is my responsibility to issue this report on these financial statements in accordance with the terms of the Regulations.

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S STATEMENT

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept as required by the Regulations; or
2. the financial statements do not accord with those records; or
3. the financial statements do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of financial statements set out in the Regulations other than any requirement that the financial statements give a true and fair view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the financial statements to be reached.

J Hindle

John Hindle

Date: 17.4.26