



Ashbourne, St Oswald with Mappleton, St Mary

Annual Report and Unaudited Financial Statements of the Parochial Church Council

For the year ended 31st December 2025

St Oswald, Registered Charity No 1185390

Ashbourne, St Oswald with Mappleton, St Mary

Meeting of Parishioners – Election of Churchwardens

12:15 p.m. on Sunday 19th April 2026 in St Oswald's Church Hall

AGENDA

Opening Prayer

1. Appointment of Clerk (to both meetings)
 2. Apologies for absence
 3. Minutes of the last meeting (6th April 2025)
 4. Election of Churchwardens (nominations must be received before the start of the meeting)
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Ashbourne, St Oswald with Mappleton, St Mary

Annual Parochial Church Meeting

12:25 p.m. on Sunday 19th April 2026 in St Oswald's Church Hall

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of APCM 2025 and any Matters Arising
3. Report on Changes to Electoral Roll
4. Annual Report on Proceedings of PCC, to include:
 - Safeguarding
 - Vicar's Report
 - Annual Report from the PCC
 - Reports from St Oswald's Groups and Organisations
5. Treasurer's Report, to include:
 - Financial Statements of the PCC for year ending 31st December 2025
6. Report on Fabric, Goods and Ornaments of the Church
Report on the Church Hall
7. Report on proceedings of the Deanery Synod
8. Election of Representatives to Carsington Deanery Synod
9. Election of representatives of the laity to the PCC
10. Appointment of Independent Examiner
11. Any Other Business

Ashbourne, St Oswald with Mappelton, St Mary
Minutes of Annual Meeting of Parishioners – Election of Churchwardens
12:00 noon on Sunday 6th April 2025

Present: 44 Parishioners (see record book)

Churchwarden (and Lay Chair) Paul Elliott welcomed those present. Rev. Nigel Rode then read a prayer and opened the meeting

- 1) It was agreed that Susan Damesin, Minutes Secretary, would act as clerk for both the meetings.
- 2) Apologies for absence: from 10 people (see record book)
- 3) The Minutes of the last meeting held on 28 April 2024 were approved.
- 4) Election of the churchwardens: Nominations for churchwarden had been received for Paul Elliott and Anne Ford to continue as churchwardens (papers on file). Decision to appoint Paul Elliott and Anne Ford was unanimous; congratulations and thanks were given by those present. PE also voiced his thanks for all the support that the wardens had received from the many helpers over the past year.

This then closed the Annual Meeting of Parishioners.

Ashbourne, St Oswald with Mappleton, St Mary
Minutes of Annual Parochial Church Meeting
12:15 p.m. on Sunday 6th April 2025

Present: 44 people.

Chaired by Paul Elliott, Churchwarden.

1. Apologies for absence were noted – there were ten apologies.
2. The Minutes of the APCM 2024 were approved and signed. There were no matters arising from those Minutes.
3. The Church Representation Rules of the Church of England makes it mandatory that a completely new Electoral Roll be compiled every six years which is the case in 2025. The number recorded for **St Oswald's and St Mary's combined is 114.**
4. The Annual Report on the proceedings of the PCC by Janet Wright had been approved by the PCC and the activities of the Parish 2024 and had been circulated prior to the meeting. The Safeguarding Report by Celia Dickinson was circulated prior to the meeting and thanks were given to Celia for her work on the very important subject of safeguarding in the Parishes. Thanks were given by those present to all who had worked on the Ministry Team Report and the various reports from other groups and organisations connected to the Church. Janet Wright wished to emphasize the number of groups and

activities going on in our church which are to be celebrated and felt we should focus on the skills and abilities we do have which are considerably more than many churches. To a request made by a member of the those present about the Vacancy, PE reported that two advertisements had been posted without finding a suitable applicant. A third advertisement would appear shortly which it was hoped would be more productive. PE also pointed out that St Oswald's is not the only church seeking a new vicar.

5. The Treasurer's Report and Financial Statements for year ending 31 December 2024 – circulated prior to the meeting. AB reported that as PKF Smith Cooper who usually examine the accounts had increased their fee considerably, he had found an alternative solution. Heather Self would be taking on the Independent Examination and AB expressed his thanks to her for her help. AB reported that the Giving Programme in December 2024 had been most successful, and he expressed his thanks to all those who had participated in the giving. R Clews asked about fundraising events. There were no further questions. Thanks to AB from those present for the excellent accounts presented. **The meeting unanimously voted to formally accept the accounts for 2024 as presented.**
6. Report on Fabric, Goods and Ornaments of St Oswald's and St Mary's. In addition to the Quinquennial items treated there are plans for the replacement of the lead roof over the South Aisle and South Transept and the preparation of plans for an internal porch at the West Door. Not addressed was the wind scour problem on the Spire which PE pointed out is a big project. PE reported that some funds would be used to make changes inside the church (repositioning the font and the bookstall) and some to heighten the wall at the end of the carpark, at the same time as installing an electric cable to repair the light in the carpark.
JW pointed out that you do not have to be a member of the PCC to join the Resourcing Forum (Dealing with Fabric and budget). Volunteers would be welcome.
Report on the Church Hall – project managed by Andrew Wright and report circulated prior to the meeting. PE pointed out that the rental receipts were now covering the costs of running the building and the office. Thanks expressed by those present to AW for the report and the work he has carried out to improve the hall since the flood in 2023. It was pointed out that there is a problem of acoustics in the hall which needs to be addressed.
7. Report on Carsington Deanery Synod 2024 to be found in the Annual Report on page 47.
8. Election of representatives of the laity to the PCC. Two members of the present PCC have completed 3 year term of Office. (Linda Barbour & Janet Wright). Four places available. Nominations received for **Janet Wright & James Pogson**. At the meeting **Raymond Massey** nominated by Sue Massey, seconded by Michael Smith and **Debbie Ashton-Cleary** nominated by Heather Self, seconded by Michael Halls. 4 members elected. If there is someone willing to represent St Mary's, PCC could co-opt them.
9. Appointment of Independent Examiner of accounts. **New independent examiner – Heather Self**, proposed by PE and seconded by AB. All in favour
10. Any other business. Formal thanks to Rev Maggie Rode and to Rev Nigel Rode for the enormous amount of work carried out by them both at St Oswald's and St. Mary's and the other churches of the benefice during the year.

Following that, thanks and a gift made to Rev Pip Short who was part of the Ministry Team and has now retired. Although still carrying out useful work around St. Oswald's.

The Meeting closed at 13.15 with The Grace led by Revd. Nigel Rode

Ashbourne, St Oswald with Mappleton, St Mary

Annual Report and Audited Financial Statements of the Parochial Church Council for the year ended 31 December 2025

Correspondence Address

St Oswald's Parish Office
School Lane
Ashbourne, DE6 1AN

Priest-in-charge:

Rev'd Dwayne Engh

Bank:

Lloyds Bank plc
Compton
Ashbourne, DE6 1DY

Independent Examiner:

Mrs Heather Self MA, FCA, CTA (fellow)



The Parish of St Oswald, Ashbourne with St Mary Mappleton

Report of the Parochial Church Council

For the year ended 31 December 2025

The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of St Oswald, Ashbourne (the “PCC”, or “Trustees”) presents its annual report and audited financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2025.

Aim and Purposes

To follow

Objectives and Activities

To follow

The Parish of St Oswald, Ashbourne with St Mary Mappleton

Report of the Parochial Church Council

For the year ended 31 December 2025

Trustees

The PCC is a body corporate (PCC Powers Measure 1956, Church Representation Rules 2006). Members of the PCC are either ex-officio or elected by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) in accordance with the Church Representation Rules.

Members of the PCC who served during the year and up to the date of approval of this report were:

Ex Officio members

Priest in Charge

The Revd. Dwayne Engh From 15/09/25

Retired Clergy

The Revd. Maggie Rode
The Revd. Nigel Rode

Reader

Mrs Lynda Herbert

Churchwardens

Mr Paul Elliott
Mrs Anne Ford

Representatives on the Deanery Synod

Mr John Elwell From 1/07/23
Mr Roger Harrison* From 1/07/23
Mr Peter Walker From 1/07/23

Elected Representatives

Mrs Celia Dickinson***** From APCM 2023
Mrs Rachel Gardner From APCM 2023
Mrs Lindsay Walker From APCM 2023
Mrs Barbara Williams From APCM 2023

Mr Andrew Burns**** From APCM 2024
Miss Rachel Clews From APCM 2024
Mrs Susan Damesin*** From APCM 2024
Mr Michael Halls From APCM 2024

Ms Debbie Ashton-Clearly From APCM 2025
Mr Raymond Massey From APCM 2025
Mr James Pogson From APCM 2025
Mrs Janet Wright** From APCM 2025
Mrs Linda Barbour Until 06/04/25

Co-opted Representatives

The Revd Pip Short	From 08/09/25
Mr Michael Smith	From 08/09/25
Mr Ashdon Toombs	From 08/09/25

** Electoral Roll Officer ** Secretary *** Minute Secretary **** Treasurer ***** Safeguarding Officer*

The Parish of St Oswald, Ashbourne with St Mary Mappleton

Report of the Parochial Church Council

For the year ended 31 December 2025

Committees

During 2025 the PCC operated with committees as follows:

Standing Committee:

The Standing Committee is empowered by law to conduct PCC business between meetings of the full Church Council. It also acts, when required, as the financial planning group.

Membership consisted of 2 retired priests with PTO, Churchwardens, PCC Secretary and PCC Treasurer and another PCC member invited from a rota. From September the new Priest in Charge also joined.

Resourcing Forum (now called Fabric and Finance Committee)

To provide support and guidance to the PCC on the appropriate maintenance and management of the church premises (church and church hall) and grounds, and on the best use of our financial resources.

Electoral Roll

The Electoral Roll Officer (ERO) records those members of the churches of St Oswald's, Ashbourne and St. Mary's, Mappleton who are eligible to vote in church elections.

The ERO reports at every Parochial Church Council (PCC) meeting and provides a regular update of its current total of numbers from both churches. This year the Electoral Roll was simply revised.

Everyone within the congregation(s) is invited to apply if they wish to be included on this roll, by stating their compliance with the rules as stated by CofE.

Following the compilation of the revised roll in preparation for the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) the numbers recorded for St. Oswald's Church were 109 (105 at APCM 2025 meeting) and for St. Mary's Church, Mappleton were 12 (9 at APCM 2025). This is a combined total of 121 Electoral Roll members for both churches.

Roger Harrison

The Parish of St Oswald, Ashbourne with St Mary Mappleton

Report of the Parochial Church Council

For the year ended 31 December 2025

**Annual Report on Proceedings of the PCC and activities of the Parish
(2025)**

Safeguarding

The Safeguarding training and checks for St Oswald's Ashbourne and St Mary's Mappleton churches aims to prevent abuse from happening and respond well and appropriately if it has occurred. This work is led nationally by the Church of England, locally via the Derby Diocese team and within parishes by the clergy and Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO).

Safeguarding is a standing item at PCC meetings. Policies are reviewed and discussed at these meetings. All policies are reviewed, discussed and then approved by the PCC. The records for these and training undertaken are held on a computerised system for the parish.

Safeguarding procedures are in place alongside the vicar, church wardens and the Parish Safeguarding Officer. Information regarding Safeguarding and how to make referrals, if needed, is on display in the church and the church hall.

All church activities have leaders have been DBS checked and undertaken the appropriate training. This is dictated by the Church of England on a national basis. Groups currently listed are Bellringing, Breakfast Church, Carers Count, Choir, Connect Group, Home Visits, Ossie's Kitchen, Ossie's Potters and School worship and visits to church.

Celia Dickinson, Parish Safeguarding Officer

Vicar's Report

It has been a pleasure serving with you all here in Ashbourne. I'm excited about all the ministry already happening in our churches and the fact that, while we care deeply about the building, we all know it is not simply a museum but a place of living faith with worship and prayer at its heart, serving our town of Ashbourne. I never tire of meeting visitors in our beautiful building, finding out where they have come from, and what has brought them here. For local residents, it is wonderful that they discover how welcome they are and to know that they can readily return. I look forward to the Tourism Working Group's efforts to make our building more visitor-friendly and to try to increase tourism, as well as to the Service Book Working Group revising the services to make them more inclusive. Of course, many people also come for major life events. We had 9 baptisms, 3 weddings, and 42 funerals (35 in church and 7 only at the Crematorium) in 2025 at St Oswald's, and we continue to host numerous civic occasions.

It is evident that we are passionate about being an inclusive, outward-looking church, actively identifying needs within our community and working to meet them through our faith. I found the recent Visioning Day optimistic and hopeful, with many exciting possibilities arising from that discussion. More info on that to follow soon! We eagerly anticipate welcoming a new

Curate, Rachel Knight; to start supporting Lindsay Walker as she trains for Anna Chaplaincy; and to continue supporting Ashdon Toombs in his training as a Reader.

St Mary's, Mappleton continues the pattern of holding one service a month, usually Holy Communion. Thank you to Anne Ford and Paul Elliott for their work supporting St Mary's. Thanks also to the dedicated people who continue to care for the building and keep it open for visitors. There has been one funeral, but no baptisms or weddings have occurred in 2025. There are serious concerns about the fabric of this beautiful building (a major leak near the tower and a crack in the East wall) that will need to be addressed.

As I approach six months in post, I want to thank everyone for all that you do at St Oswald's. There are many ministries and groups that deserve thanks (PCC members, Finance & Fabric Committee, Breakfast Church, Carers Count, Deanery Synod members, Mother's Union, Ossie's Kitchen, Ossie's Potters, to name a few), but I hope you don't mind if I also name some people in particular. A big thanks to our Churchwardens, Anne Ford and Paul Elliott, for all they have done and for consistently going above and beyond in their service to God through their work in our church and community. I am also deeply grateful to Celia Dickinson, safeguarding officer; Andrew Burns, our treasurer; and Janet Wright, who keeps the PCC on track. Additionally, thank you to Sarah Morris for everything she does for the book stall; Andy Wright for all his work in the Church Hall; Peter Walker, the Lay Chair for Deanery Synod; and to Nicola Fisher, our brilliant Parish Administrator.

Preparing the church for Sunday and special services truly takes a group effort, and it's wonderful to see everyone come together to make it happen. Michael Halls, our music director (who will be deeply missed when he retires), along with Roger Harrison, Hugh Morris, and the choir, does a superb job. Thanks to Michael Smith, sacristan, and the serving team; Gill Elliott and the bell ringers; Elizabeth Bridges and the flower arrangers; Tony Wilmore for our recorded services; Deirdre Wilmore for our lectionary and notes introducing the readings; and the vergers at baptisms, weddings, and funerals.

I would be remiss if I did not mention the wonderful ministry team I was blessed to join. I am immensely grateful to the Rev'd Maggie and the Rev'd Nigel for their service, support, friendship, and advice. Additionally, thanks to the Rev'd Pip Short for the 'Walk of Words' and Lynda Herbert for her daily online prayers. It has been a joy and a privilege to come and serve alongside you all here in Ashbourne.

St Oswald's remains a special place, at the heart of our town, speaking of God's inclusive love and hope for all. Thank you for taking the time to read this APCM report, and we hope it inspires you to consider the part you might play (or continue to play) in all that takes place in or through here. Wishing you every blessing.

The Rev'd Dwayne Engh

Annual Report from PCC

The PCC met 6 times during the year with Standing Committee meeting between. The average attendance was 16. On 4 additional occasions the PCC were consulted about a single issue by email (as all had access to e-mail) when a rapid decision was needed. Responses and decisions were recorded in the Minute book and ratified at the next PCC meeting.

At the beginning of the year the Resourcing Forum proposed a budget which was unanimously accepted. At subsequent meetings the Treasurer could report with reference to that budget. The Treasurer, Andrew Burns continued to supply the PCC with detailed monthly reports and knowledgeable advice. You can read his report elsewhere.

The PCC has complied with the duty under section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy discipline Measure 2016 (to have regard to the House of Bishops' guidance on Safeguarding). It continued to receive Safeguarding Reports from its Parish Safeguarding Officer (Celia Dickinson) at each meeting and the Officer ensured that safeguarding training and DBS clearance, for those who needed it, was up to date. We clearly identified both Church and non-Church activities taking place on our premises which needed to be on our Safeguarding Action Plan.

The Resourcing Forum planned and monitored several projects to improve the fabric of St Oswald's church and Church Centre (See report on 'Fabric, Goods and Ornaments' and Hall report). A project to repair the roofs of the South Transept and South Aisle, with the addition of solar panels to the South Aisle, was developed and a Heritage Lottery Fund grant applied for. Together with a plan to build a porch inside the West door this should decrease heat loss and reduce our CO2 emissions. Flood resilience measures for the Church Centre were agreed (and completed in early 2026). With so much else going on it was decided to close the 'A Place for All' project. Dr Mike Almond came to update the PCC on how far the group had got, was thanked for the enormous amount of time and effort he had spent, and assured that the vision and ideas would be archived for future reference.

Ossie's Potters continued and developed their work in the churchyard and around the buildings. The work of their coordinator, Anne Ford, resulted in St Oswald's being awarded the Bronze Eco Award.

At St Mary's, Mappleton pruning of some of the trees was carried out and mowing of the churchyard managed.

The pattern of regular services included Sunday 10.30am Holy Communion & 6.30pm Choral Evensong (both with a robed choir) or said Evening service, a weekly online service of Morning prayer or Holy Communion (with thanks to Tony and Deirdre Wilmore), daily online Morning and Evening prayer (with thanks to Reader Lynda Herbert), a monthly 9am Breakfast Church in the Hall, and a monthly service of Holy Communion at St Mary's Church. At the St Oswald's Sunday morning service, reading of the Gospel by lay people was reintroduced, and Lay people also carried forward bread and wine. St Oswald's Sunday morning and evening services were preceded by bellringing. After the 10.30am service the congregation were offered refreshments in the Church Centre Hall. Festivals and special occasions were accompanied by a 'Walk of Words' along the churchyard paths (with thanks to Rev'd Pip and her team)

There were social activities throughout the year. Teddy Bear Parachuting (from the church roof) marked the start of Ashbourne Festival and drew the usual large crowds. The church also hosted one of the Festival concerts. Summer lunchtime concerts in church were very popular. A MacMillan coffee morning was held in the Hall and a Harvest lunch. Towards the end of the year the ever-popular Christmas Tree festival included trees from local schools and community groups, and that brought in many visitors. St Oswald's also hosted the start of the Ashbourne Arts Lantern Parade and hundreds of children and adults gathered to carry a lantern.

St Oswald's and St Mary's are members of Ashbourne Churches Together. As such we played a full part in events planned together during the year. We met together in the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, marking the beginning of the week with a pulpit exchange between the member Churches. During Lent we shared a weekly simple lunch. Then on Maundy Thursday a cross was carried to the top of Thorpe Cloud and on Good Friday carried through town heading the walk of Witness. Later in the year a free Summer Fun event on the Park (with a large number of inflatables!) and the Bright Night of Fun (alternative to Halloween) proved very popular with children and parents alike, from the town and further afield.

Focussing on the needs of our local community, Ossie's Kitchen served meals twice a month, with Ossie's Potters meeting on alternate weeks. Carers Count met once a month and Citizens Advice Bureau used the Church Centre to meet clients. The Hall and Meeting Room were heavily booked by local groups (Uniformed organisations, Art classes, Slimming World, Ashbourne Over 60s, Parkinsons Support, Stroke Club, Tai Chi & Yoga Classes were all regular clients, in addition to Church groups). Flowers and food which Marks and Spencer would throw away, were collected (thanks to the team who go daily), and made available. In 2025 the Church Centre entrance Hall was carpeted, had a large display fridge installed and a worktop, to create St Oswald's Community Larder. Generous donations for items collected allowed the Church to establish a Community Fund to distribute. Amongst other things this allowed us to install a Defibrillator outside the Church Centre.

Links with local schools were maintained and strengthened. St Oswald's Primary School continued to come into the church almost every month in termtime for a service they planned. In addition, every school year group made 2 morning visits to church as part of their RE curriculum. Revd Nigel, Jane Almond, Jane Edwards and Janet Wright, helped them tackle topics which varied from a church Treasure Hunt to creating the sounds of Holy Week or answering questions such as 'What is it like for someone to follow God?', 'Why does Christmas/Easter matter to Christians?' Ashbourne Primary School and QEGS Secondary School pupils also made visits

Separate reports about each of our regular activities follow – this report is not complete without them.

For much of the year we were without a Priest in Charge or Administrator. It is due to the amazing commitment of Churchwardens, Anne and Paul, and our retired priests, Maggie and Nigel, that the Church still thrived. A second advert for the role of Priest in Charge resulted in an interview in May, and we were delighted that the Rev'd Dwayne Engh was licensed to the

Ashbourne Group of Churches in September. Interviews for the role of Parish Administrator were held at the end of October and Nicola Fisher was appointed, giving us a full team!

News and information was shared on our website and in weekly emailed newsletter. Communication was improved by proper management of the noticeboards inside and outside our buildings (Thank you Rev'd Pip).

We finished the year with surprise at what had been achieved in difficult circumstances and excitement about the future.

Approved at a meeting of PCC on 09/03/2026.

Janet Wright

Report on Fabric, Goods and Ornaments of St Oswald's Church 2025

St Oswald's, Ashbourne

There has been little change of significance since the last APCM.

Fabric

During 2024 there was little progression of the priority items raised by the Quinquennial Inspection conducted by Mark Parsons our Church Architect in September 2020 as the majority of the actions had been completed.

Progress has been made on the items identified as follows:

Priority Items

1. Installation of Roof Alarm protection for the lead sheeting on the church roof was completed in 2021.
2. The interior of the spire is suffering from "wind scour" which needs to be attended to. The stone is being eroded by wind entering via the lucarnes (unglazed openings) which can be addressed by fitting windbreaks. These will replace the existing bird-netting, many of which are already in need of repair. Identification of a project manager and contractor is still outstanding.
3. The lead sheeting on the Chancel roof is wearing thin and is slipping giving rise to occasional leaks, most notably over the organ console. In addition, the overlaps between the sheets were considered to be inadequate for the pitch of the roof. The Church Commissioners accepted Chancel Repair Liability and they appointed our architect to manage the project to relay the lead on the Chancel roof. The contract commenced in September 2022 and was completed in July 2023.

Less Urgent Items

In no particular order, other items to address were:

- Trip hazards and uneven patches in places on the footpaths, from the gates and around the SW corner of the building. DDDC accepted responsibility and undertook repairs to the tarmac to the southwest corner of the church.
- The wooden block flooring in the Nave and S Transept requires relaying or replacing. This has been included as part of reordering the church.
- Some drainpipes and gullies required attention to refix and/or unblock and these have been addressed. During 2023, all drainpipes and gullies were unblocked and all lead downpipes were replaced with cast steel. In 2024 cleaning of the drainpipes and gullies was repeated.
- Pointing work is required in numerous places. Repointing of the Chancel was undertaken as part of the Chancel reroofing project.
- Some floor tiles in the Chancel by the choir stalls, require repair or replacement. No action to date.
- All the doors require treatment with linseed oil and repainting the ironwork. Alternative advice received indicates that the doors should not be treated.
- The South Transept door requires attention to improve its attachment to the doorway. During 2022 the South door was rehung with new hinges.
- The main gates require redecorating (DDDC responsibility). No action to date.
- Access to the Boiler House is hazardous and requires upgrading. Boiler house steps have been cleaned. Further attention is now required.

Additional Fabric Items

In addition to the Quinquennial items the following issues were addressed during 2025:

- Preparation of plans for the replacement of the lead roof over the South Aisle and South Transept which are both subject to leaks. Progress is being made to complete the necessary approvals (Faculty and Planning Permission) with the aim to undertake the project in 2026.
- Preparation of a plan to install an internal porch at the West Door to improve heat retention and reduce draughts. Project was put on hold pending the appointment of the new Priest in Charge. Plan to progress to completion in 2026.

Goods and Ornaments

There was no change to the church inventory in 2025.

Quinquennial Report

The Quinquennial inspection for 2025 was undertaken in November 2025, but the final report is outstanding (draft report received in February 2026).

Church Hall

On 21st October 2023 the Church Hall was flooded when the Henmore Brook overtopped the wall at the South end of the car park and the flood water was retained by the Environment Agency embankment. As a result there was extensive damage to the contents and the fabric of the hall. During the first half of 2024 the hall was completely refurbished, alterations were made to the toilets to improve access and a new meeting room created in the old kitchen.

St Mary's, Mapleton

There has been little change of significance since the last APCM.

Fabric

During 2024 there was little progression of the items raised by the Quinquennial Inspection conducted by Mark Parsons our Church Architect in December 2022.

Progress has been made on the items identified as follows:

Priority Items

1. Arrange for the electrical system to be inspected and certified for a new 5 year period by a registered inspection electrical contractor. The testing of the electrical system was completed in October 2023 with some rectification required.

Less Urgent Items

In no particular order, other items to address are:

1. Rake out and repoint joints/cracks in NHL mortar to southwest short return wall at the side of the tower and at high level at the northeast corner of the nave's east end at cornice level.
2. Redecorate church notice board and treat oak church yard gates.
3. Relay stone paving slabs to the front of the tower entrance.
4. Carefully restore the Medieval glass panel in the centre north nave wall. Removing the 1960's 'recorded' reeded glass 'quarry'
5. Redecorate the nave west wall and upper tower entrance to the balcony.

During the Autumn of 2025 evidence of water leaks from the tower at the west end of the church building have become apparent and investigations are taking place.

A crack in the plasterwork at the wall at the East end of the church appears to be widening and action is underway for this to be investigated.

Goods and Ornaments

No changes to the Inventory have been recorded.

Approved at a meeting of PCC on 09/03/2026.

Paul Elliott and Anne Ford, Church Wardens

Report on St Oswald's Church Centre

The year saw a further increase in hall usage. The combination of regular client use, the Ossie's kitchen contribution and one-off bookings for children's parties, meetings etc and meeting room use, have resulted in the net hall income now exceeding the total hall costs by several thousand pounds.

Regular maintenance of items and systems including the fire alarm and extinguisher safety checks, the cooker ventilation cleaning and the PAT testing of all electrical appliances have been completed. Building development has centred on the entrance foyer, flood resilience and decoration and carpeting of the upstairs area outside the Parish office. Fitting a lockable fire escape door between the hall corridor and the entrance foyer has enabled the extended access to the Community Larder. This provision, led so effectively and energetically by Anne Ford and supported by a whole team of volunteers who perform the nightly 'M & S run' does much to support vulnerable individuals and families. More recently, thanks in part to a grant received from Derbyshire Dales District Council, we have installed flood barriers for all four doorways, fitted non return valves on all wastewater and sewage pipes and sealed pipework exit points. These flood resilience measures will, in the event of a flood like the one witnessed in October 2023, ensure that the building would be much more resistant to water ingress.

For the future, we hope to install a false ceiling at current ceiling lighting height. This would significantly improve the (awful) acoustics in the room as well as reduce heat loss (and hence the heating bill). We are also considering upgrading the external lighting and improving the external lighting and internal heating controls to enable remote control of both.

Andy Wright

The Parish of St Oswald, Ashbourne with St Mary Mappleton

Report of the Parochial Church Council

For the year ended 31 December 2025

Financial Review

Reserves Policy

Independent Examiners Report

Financial Statements

To follow

Reports from St Oswald's Groups and organisations

Choir

Thank you to each member of the choir for continuing enthusiasm, loyalty and commitment. The impact on our worship and in the community is huge. The average attendance at choir practice on Friday evenings is 20, Sunday morning 16 and Sunday evening 17, figures very similar to 2024. About 10 choristers will be at both services on Sundays. In September, we set up a scheme for Choral Scholarships. At the end of the year, this was provoking interest but commitment would wait until 2026. What the choristers do is take the ordinary and make it extraordinary by giving of their best, and probably better than their best in so many ways. The Hallelujah Chorus on Christmas Day was a fine example of this.

We acknowledged the deaths of Rachel Chipchase, Stella Young and Gerald Humphries early last year. They were each so supportive of musical outreach here. We do miss them. We were of course so pleased that Dwayne was called to work in our parishes and the Induction Service was very special. We have already taken note of his musical input!

Roger continues to support the music in Clifton School. I want to place on record my thanks to Roger and Hugh for personal support at all times, especially with playing the organ. One of them moves to the organ from the Offertory to enable me to conduct the choir more. We believe this is having a positive impact on congregational singing. It will come as no surprise to you that our team of organists help to ensure there is real music in many of the churches in the locality. Roger also very kindly ensures that the recorded services have musical input throughout the year.

The ten Summer Recitals were a huge success with an amazing range of skills and expertise shown in so many ways. The financial benefits for St Oswald's church and its outreach, especially where it involves music, are very significant. Leaving the building with such positivity is a part of our mission for everyone. There will be fourteen recitals in 2026!

Our dedicated team of choristers managed to sing 168 anthems (148 different anthems) covering 103 Sunday services including 11 full Choral Evensongs (10 settings and 6 Preces and Responses) plus midweek special services. We have also developed a link with Tissington with choral input for many of their weddings. Pastoral care underpins all we can do and achieve with a very healthy dose of expectation and challenge.

We are so fortunate to have such a great choir leading our worship. The skill set is amazing. I greatly appreciate what each chorister brings to the life of St. Oswald's church and its outreach into the wider community. Ashbourne should be proud of its musical beating heart. It is an investment rather than a cost that music here continues to be so important. Support and encouragement for the choir by our ministry team and congregation is vitally important so, thank you all.

Michael Halls

Bell ringers report 2025

The ringers at St Oswalds have continued to keep the bells ringing and sounding out through the last year, ringing for most of the Sunday morning and evening services as well as weddings, Christmas, Easter, Remembrance and other special services.

Andrew continues to be the ringing master at St Oswalds, assisted by Roy, taking the lead at practice nights. Thank you Andrew for your continued leadership and encouragement although at times I know we are a bit trying! We continue to make progress with method ringing recently ringing Kent treble bob minor and Stedman methods. It is also important for us to continue to ring rounds, call changes and plain bob methods to enable ringers to progress, concentrate on handling and striking and to incorporate new learning. We currently have 3 learners, all at different stages in the process of ringing, but all making good progress. Watch out for our new ringers in 2026.

In 2025 we were pleased to be asked to ring the handbells for a wedding at St Johns as a surprise for the bride.

The ringers held their annual outing ringing in towers at Ipstones, Cheadle, Dilhorne, Draycott in the Moors and Rocester.

The bells continue to be well maintained by David and we very much appreciate his knowledge and skill at this task. Without his dedication to this task we would be unable to continue to ring the bells. New ropes are on order for the tower, these are made specifically for the tower as rope length is individual to each tower and we await their arrival, the current ropes having been used for approx. 12 years.

We hope you have enjoyed our ringing over the last year, the ringers are looking forward to the ringing challenges of 2026 and the chance to learn and try new methods.

Gill Elliott

Breakfast Church Report 2025

Breakfast Church met throughout the year, except in August. We met each month on the second Sunday, starting with breakfast at 9.00am and then progressing to a short period of worship, prayer and an activity-centred talk.

Breakfast gave the opportunity for those who attend to chat, catch up and, sometimes, meet new people. Our worship followed a recognisable pattern and included a celebration of birthdays, worship songs, prayers and a short activity/talk.

We began 2025 with a look at the Lords Prayer. Each month we illustrated a line of the prayer by exemplifying its meaning through drama or an activity. In the latter part of the year, we turned our attention to the core of Christian belief as summarised in the Creed. We broke this into three sections, one each month and then rounded off the year with the Christmas theme for our December meeting.

Numbers attending have averaged in the low twenties, with roughly one quarter of those being children. Ashdon Toombs rejoined the team after his placement in the Hlland Ward group of churches finished in August. His return was enthusiastically welcomed by all.

The Breakfast Church Team (Gill, Roger, Ash, Janet and Andy)

Annual Report for St Oswald's Bookstall (2025)

It has been positive year with a significant increase in sales and profit compared to 2024. Many thanks to all those in the congregation who continue to support its work.

The bookstall is currently run by myself, Sarah Morris.

- *Aims, Objectives & Outcomes*

to provide a source of Christian literature and cards to the church congregation and visitors. I continue to hold a trade account with Ben & Hannah Dunnett, supplier of Christian cards/bookmarks. I undertook a special orders of an advent book for our house group; sales of Christian literature otherwise remain very low.

to raise money for the work of the church through sales of general and local interest books and cards. A new venture this year was the expansion of cards by local amateur artists from our congregation – thanks to Jane Almond, Ray Massey and Peter Walker. Outstanding Maps trade account remains a good source of local interest books and the St Oswald's guidebook is ever popular. In addition we have raised a substantial sum from the sale of homemade jams, marmalade and chutneys by Jennie Ferry to whom we are very grateful.

to source stock where possible such that we additionally support other charities. This year cards I sold cards from both Cards for Good Causes (for a variety of charities at Christmas) and the Mother's Union. A decision was made not to do a Christmas Leprosy Mission order as I had repeat problems with damaged goods from them. Christmas card sales were at the highest they have been since we have taken over the supply of these.

- *Financial Detail*

	2025	2024	2023
Expenditure (£)	1096	1352.00	980.43
Sales (£)	4201	3021.00	2210.00
Profit (£)	3105	1668.00	1229.57

	Full year 2025				
	Actual	Budget	Var	PY	Var
Bookstall income	4,201	3,310	▲ 891	3,021	▲ 1,180
Bookstall expense	(1,096)	(1,490)	▲ 394	(1,352)	▲ 257
Bookstall surplus/(deficit)	3,105	1,821	▲ 1,285	1,668	▲ 1,437
Margin %	74%	55%		55%	

- *Future Plans*

trade account with Teal publishing just taken out which will enable a wider range of cards to be supplied – such as Easter, baptism and age specific card

ongoing reflection on possible re-siting of the bookstall within the building

future budgeting needs to reflect the fact that significant income has come from selling donated items which may not be sustainable long term.

Finally, thanks also to Andrew Burns as ever for his support and encouragement with the financial side!

Connect Group

The 'Connect Group' encourages us to connect with one another, discussing agreed material, learning from one another and growing our faith, whilst sharing highs and lows – and cake and drinks!

We met weekly (with breaks when most of us are away/busy), in one of 2 homes. A typical session would begin with 'check in' where we each had the opportunity to share the highs and lows of the previous week. We would then spend time discussing, or reflecting on, something we'd agreed to study that week, breaking for refreshments at a convenient point. We have found it most helpful to focus on the Bible readings set for the following Sunday, sometimes reading around the brief extract which is read out. It is then fascinating to hear what the preacher that week has to say! We finish with prayer for each other or people close to us. At the end of key terms like Christmas and summer we shared a meal together.

We have regularly been a group of 5 to 7 but our homes would take more if anyone would like to join us. You would be welcome!

Janet and Andy Wright

St Oswald's Prayer Group/Lent Group

A Group started to meet every Thursday throughout Lent in 2024. We met in the home of Jim and Jane Edwards, a group of 9 people, led by Maggie Rode. Towards the end of Lent (due to a massive building upheaval at Jim and Janes), we relocated to Lindsay and Peter's house.

After Lent, the group were unanimous in not wanting to finish and so began meeting throughout the year on the last Thursday of every month where, under Maggie's guidance they discussed 'strong and powerful' women in the Bible, followed on by Saint Peter and Andrew. We then began to look at The Nicene Creed

In 2026 the group came together again, and Maggie continued exploring the Nicene Creed with us (we are still in the process). However, Lent is once again upon us, and the group is meeting weekly taking part as a group in Dwayne's 'Retreat in Daily Life'.

The group has become very precious to many of us, offering us all a way to deepen our faith and get closer to God.

Mothers' Union

In 2025 Ashbourne Mothers Union had 24 members. Sadly, we lost faithful member Ron Torr at the end of 2024. Two new members joined.

Our monthly meetings of prayer and worship were interspersed with social evenings. The year started with our annual Iona communion service led by Revd. Maggie. During the Year our Diocesan president, Emily Brailsford, came to talk about her role as Domestic Abuse Manager for Mothers Union and the RISE UP campaign she developed. We went on to make origami doves, the symbol of the campaign, to decorate our tree for the Christmas Tree Festival to draw attention to the campaign.

Also, during the year money was raised for MU charities at a cream tea, posies were made for Mothering Sunday and assistance was provided at baptism services

Nancy Bell

Ossie's Kitchen

'Ossie's Kitchen', a 'stand-alone' outreach activity of St Oswald's Church is a community café under the leadership of the St Oswald's clergy and Church Wardens, run by volunteers from across the community, for the community.

Our purpose is to address loneliness, social isolation and food poverty by providing fortnightly, fresh cooked three course meals to be eaten in the company of others. Community Transport is available and meals are delivered to the housebound. We make no charge but suggested minimum donations are welcomed.

The produce we use comes mainly from the charity FareShare, using food that would otherwise go to landfill, for which we pay an annual subscription which contributes to the cost of delivery. Any produce not used in the meals is offered to the Guests in the form of grocery bags for which a suggested donation is welcomed.

2025 was a markedly quieter, easier year than 2024 as we were no longer working on the King's Award, coping with organising meals at 'Stepping Stones' while the Church Hall was repaired following flooding, or co-operating with Foundation Derbyshire and Derbyshire County Council to make cleaning products available to our Guests.

Instead, 2025 was a year in which we focussed simply on our core role. Our Guest attendance and number of meals provided at 1,283 was slightly down on 2024 (1,409) but taking into account the number of Guests who had moved out of area and the last of our Ukrainian Guests now no longer needing our support, the overall attendance was most positive as we welcomed new Guests.

In June, we marked our sixth birthday including holding the annual Volunteers' Social with another enjoyable BBQ. Our year was completed with our traditional 'Christmas Special' meal and we were again very grateful to an anonymous donor for the excellent turkey. On that occasion we wished David and Fran Holt farewell as they embarked on their emigration to Ireland. David and Fran had been part of the Volunteer and Leadership Team and made an enormous contribution since 'Day 1' of operating, for which we are most grateful.

In past years, apart from Guest's donations, we have benefited from support in terms of grants, significant legacies and donations as well as smaller, but important, personal donations. This year, we have neither applied for, nor received, any financial support apart from our Guests and smaller personal donations, for which we are most grateful. Despite this, the financial year, subject to audit, will show a very small surplus. However, the cost of providing Community Transport is an increasing concern, especially as we have been advised of a 38% increase in charge for the coming year being an additional £500 cost on top of the £774 by which we subsidised the cost of Community Transport in 2025.

Although 2025 was a relatively quiet year it was another successful and enjoyable one for which we give thanks for our Guests, to FareShare and Ashbourne Community Transport for their support and help, and to our wonderful team of forty-five Volunteers whose rota duties range from reservations, planning, preparing and cooking the meals, pot washing, serving at table, home deliveries and refuse disposal not to mention the mutual pastoral support and care of Guests and Volunteers.

To close with comments from just two Guests:

'The meals are always wonderful!'

And

'Thank you for making us feel like a family'.

Maggie and Nigel Rode

Ossie's Potters

Welcome to the Ossie's Potters Report for 2025, where in, as the previous year, the focus of the group continued to remain unchanged in that:-

For some overcoming isolation and loneliness

Taking part and feeling comfortable in group work

Undertaking physical activities (within own limitations)

Enhancing skills and knowledge around gardening plants and nature

Being in the fresh air and having a closeness with that nature

Enhancing personal well-being

The meetings continue to take place every other Tuesday afternoon between 1pm and 3pm - alternating with the Ossie's Kitchen facility. The format of the session also remains the same with the first hour or so gardening and the rest of the time having discussion and enjoying time together over refreshments.

Some group facts:-

The numbers of people attending any one session ranged from 4 - 9 people.

The Group met 22 times throughout the year.

There were 142 individual attendances throughout the year.

Average attendance being 7 (6.45) people per session.

The year began with our NewYear meeting where we had a chat and discussed what we would like our aims were to be for the year ahead, this was followed by, at the next meeting, walking around the grounds of St Oswald's Church and the Church Hall to ensure that all our aspirations were reasonable, safe and achievable.

Projects for the year included:-

- West Door, Boiler House, Priest's Door and Hall Wall borders maintenance.
- Decorative Flower Pots and Troughs
- Promoting Wildlife and Nature
- Unearthing more graves
- Tidying the Turnbull and Peterson Graves / with stake - and Accompanying History
- Bench restoration
- Christmas Craft Workshops
- Christmas Tree Festival - Decorate our own tree

One highlight of the year included a trip to RHS Bridgewater for many of the members of the group, interestingly throughout the year we were able to achieve many of our projects, but we do have to consider weather conditions, seasonal attention to the plants that is required, and that some projects require a little more planning to achieve.

The Ossie's Potters remains only a small group, but the effect that small group has in the presentation and care shown to the areas around St Oswald's Church and The Church Hall shows that it is indeed a very much loved and cared for place. This fact is regularly commented upon by those who visit, both local and from further afield. As a closed churchyard, Derbyshire Dales District Council takes care of a multitude of duties including the mowing of grass and the tree maintenance. It is the Ossie's Potters group that compliments their work perfectly for the good of Individuals, the Church, the Community and the Town.

Anne Ford

Carers Count Report For 2025

The Carers Count group continues to meet in the Church Hall on the first Wednesday of the month, between 10am and 12 noon. The usual numbers of people attending varying between 5 and 12 at any one session.

The importance of the caring role, undertaken by those within our local community remains at the heart of the focus of the sessions. To give support, and enrich their quality of life in a safe and confidential environment, but also be a resource of information to the Carer, the sessions aim to be relaxed and informal to aid discussion with a listening ear and a simple chat to those faced with the very many varying challenges experienced in the caring role.

For several meetings speakers were invited to attend. Highlights within our year included PCSO Peter Bradbury, who was very informative regarding keeping oneself and the home safe and

recognising fraudulent activity electronically or otherwise, Jackie from the Citizen's Advice, who spoke of the ranges of topics that Citizen's Advice cover from help to fill in forms to benefit, debt and housing advice. Natalie from the DAACSS (Derbyshire All-Age Carers Support Service) spoke of the support given to carers within this area. Their aim is to ensure carers have access to preventative, timely, appropriate and person-centred support.

Also included through the year the guest speakers included Delph Massey, Care Co-ordinator who works with GP surgeries in Ashbourne and the surrounding area. Her role included signposting patients to the correct service that they need. Those attending took great interest in what Delph had to say and duly responded by asking lots of 'care' questions following her session!

By November we were all starting to make preparations for Christmas and we found ourselves nicely making our Christmas cards for our loved ones during the very much liked craft session that was led by Carol Thorpe. All was thoroughly enjoyed with a special treat of homemade refreshments of mince pies and tarts that were kindly made by Lynn Snell.

With everyone now nicely in the Christmas spirit, our meetings for the year concluded in early December when thirteen members attended our annual Christmas meal held at the Shoulder Of Mutton at Osmaston. With lots and lots of chatter, the gentle sound of Christmas music, and the warmth of the open fire, made for the perfect setting and plenty of clean plates at the end - it was evident that the meal was very much enjoyed by all and it made for a complete success for our Carers they really do Count!

Anne Ford

St Oswald's Ramblers

The St Oswald's ramblers meet on the second Monday of each month aiming to walk approx. 5 miles. During the past year the rambles have been well attended with Zeb and Jet keeping everyone in order.

The starts have been varied through the year and have included Blore pastures, Hartington, Tittesworth reservoir, Grindon and Alstonfield. The muddiest Ramble was the Winster ramble as we attempted to follow a stream through the woods, however the route provided some beautiful views. The hottest ramble was at Grindon where we discovered there is a moor at and we found a memorial to an aircraft that crashed in snow delivering supplies to the villages cut off by the snow. Our final Ramble of 2025 started from Denstone and finished with a group lunch at Denstone (in the dog shed so Jet could join in!).

If you are interested in a social 5 mile ramble why not join us. There is much socializing and chatter during the walk and we get to see some wonderful parts of Derbyshire.

Here's hoping that 2026 will find us in some more amazing parts of the county.

Gill Elliott

Walking Group

The walking group aims to walk on the last Saturday of the month and cover approx. 10 miles. Unfortunately over the last 12 months only a few walks have been completed finishing with the Christmas walk, which was well attended, with 10 walkers being joined by 8 others for a meal at the Church Inn Chelmorton.

Sadly 2025 saw the passing of one of the groups long standing members, Margaret. We miss her cheerfulness on our walks and certainly the "big house" missed her organizational skills.

In May 2025 the group completed the Friendsway 2, a 49 mile route from Sedburgh to Ulverston. Sedburgh was the finish point for the Friendsway 1 which the group completed in 2023. The group based itself in Kendal and enjoyed beautiful scenery and good weather for much of the week, picnics with stunning views, a shared meal and a celebration dinner on the last night.

We hope that 2026 will bring some good walks and we are all preparing for the next long distance walk holiday.

The walking group is always looking for new members and if a 10 mile walk is something that interests you please come and join us.

Jackie Burns

St Oswald's Book Club

St Oswald's Book club meets the first Monday of every month in Ashbourne Library. Book Groups in the Library setting are very much welcomed as libraries increasingly wish to become hubs for the community.

We meet between 10.00am and 11.00am and sit in the comfort of the library looking out over Ashbourne as it bustles with life. The library staff make us welcome with flasks of hot water so that we can enjoy a coffee.

The Book Club has been meeting for many years and in many venues, but we find the welcome nature and accessibility of the library 'just right'. Our main contact 'Ruth' helps us source our reading material, a fine balance between what we may be requesting and what there is on offer in the Dales. Books come in hardback, paperback and audio. As with any reading group you must be 'open minded' about the next month's read, often challenging, can be disappointing but also a book you simply 'cannot put down'.

We always discuss the book we have currently read; this can cause lots of fun and interest, but also the group is comfortable enough to be honest in sharing their frustration. We receive our next month's read and then some of us settle down to chat and catch up.

Our group currently has 13 members and is steadily growing. We can usually juggle copies/load on Kindle if we are struggling for books. Reading groups are a great way to explore new authors, develop/regain a love for reading, a gentle way to come together in fellowship.

Lindsay Walker

Flower Arrangers

There are a group of 12; divided into 3 teams. We arrange flowers each week except for Lent and Advent. We all combine for major festivals where there are more arrangements in church.

Main arrangements are The Sanctuary, St Oswald's Chapel and if available the West door.

We have a list of people who donate flowers in memory of someone or a special occasion. The list is, at the moment, looking a bit depleted as people have passed on or moved away.

We are grateful for flowers donated by Marks and Spencer.

Most couples who are getting married in St Oswalds have already planned flowers months ahead of the wedding. Everything is more expensive these days and flowers are one item that they may choose to cut back on.

Elizabeth Bridges

Carsington Deanery Synod 2025

Introduction

As required, three Deanery meetings were held in 2025: 3 February, 1 July and 23 October. Minutes from each of these meetings have been issued and apart from the latest the two earlier minutes are approved; all have been distributed to PCCs.

It is hard to summarise the considerable detail shared with members of the Deanery throughout the year. One recurring theme, however, has been the increased recognition that Deanery is there to serve. To this end Phil Michell our Area Dean throughout 2025, created a chart below.

The other key message permeating the meetings is the resources and commitment offered by those working at Church House in Derby for our benefit, such as visiting speakers Sam Frith our Strategy Lead, Gareth Greenwood, Church Buildings Officer and Lesley Griffiths, the National Lottery Heritage Fund & Heritage Engagement Support Officer and Will Hagger.

Summary - February 2025 Deanery meeting (for more detail see the minutes)

At the February meeting we shared Good news stories from several of the parish churches.

Nicky Fenton introduced proposed changes to Deanery Synod. A group discussion on the changes was held, and input gathered together to be presented to Bishops Council. A question was asked by the floor as to who the current Deanery Leadership team comprises. Phil responded that it was currently him as the Assistant Area Dean (at that time, and later in the year took on the role of Area Dean), Peter Walker (Lay Chair), Peter Kelsey (Finance), Emily Brailsford (Reader Rep), Pauline Key (Retired Clergy Rep) and a vacancy.

Peter Kelsey explained the New Settle Deanery Motion that he was proposing. The motion was discussed and carried. Peter made a plea on behalf of Martin Marples to do more across the parishes to claim Gift Aid; it was noted that this is having an impact on our finances, as we are not claiming the gift aid we are entitled to.

Phil identified the need for a deanery minute secretary now that deanery administrators have been made redundant, a voluntary position to cover three synods per year and three DLT's. Phil stated that Stats for mission return is at 94% urging those who have not completed there's to make every effort to do so.

The Stats for mission return is currently at 94%. Phil asked people to chase those that haven't completed theirs yet.

July Deanery meeting

The meeting was opened by prayer (as are all deanery meetings).

We first of all shared Good News stories across the parishes.

Sam Frith who is the Strategy Lead introduced himself and talked about his role of wishing to understand the needs and opportunities of local churches, looking to provide support to benefit

our parish and ministry, together with the Bishop's team. Following questions, Phil thanked Sam for his time.

Phil took the time to once again identify the Deanery Leadership Team as himself, Peter Walker, Emily Brailsford, Peter Kelsey and Rev Pauline Key – stressing that they are here to support everyone and encouraging everyone get in touch.

Peter Kelsey delivered the report from the Diocesan Synod, stating that the approval of accounts had taken place and offered help available to those not claiming Gift Aid, and stating that claims can be backdated by up to four years. He stated that there are some vacancies on Diocesan Synod.

Peter wished to improve communication between Diocesan Synod and Deanery Synod and suggested that Deanery Synod members receive a copy of this document to get a better understanding of what is happening at Diocesan Synod. At February's Deanery Synod the Hereford Motion was passed. The motion started in Hereford and now 35% of all dioceses have approved it. For Derby Diocese the motion started here at Carsington Synod and went on to Diocesan Synod. It was approved by two thirds of the Synod. Bishop Libby was really excited that a deanery had brought forward a motion that was discussed at Diocesan Synod - a good example of how the local can affect the diocese, which can then affect national, as the motion will now be discussed at General Synod.

Accessibility was discussed - recognising the need to create accessibility symbols that work well. Discussion followed about overcoming the challenges of disability in churches and how to get the message out to people, including how people can get involved.

There followed a video from the Diocesan Board of Education.

It was highlighted at the meeting that there are four vacancies for lay people on Diocesan Synod and that should there be interest this would be welcomed to put their name forward. Any lay member of Deanery synod can be nominated. There is a full complement of clergy on Diocesan Synod.

On Financial returns, Phil identified those who hadn't returned their forms, saying he was able to speak to the churches enquiring if they needed help. If anyone is still struggling, then the message was to speak to someone on the Deanery Leadership Team or someone from Finance at the Parish Support Team (Church House) who will do their best to help. A question was raised about the cost that has been transferred to parishes for the finance software. It was explained that this cost only applies to those using Myfund reporting which the diocese recommended some time ago. This new service will be a web service but it will cost £25 per month.

Finally, the meeting looked at the main challenges facing the church. the response was succession planning - with the floor explaining that people are not going to keep going, most will only be able to serve for another 5 to 10 years. There are no new younger people coming onto PCC's to replace the current volume. This was a low point with which to end the meeting.

Phil closed the meeting with a prayer.

October Deanery meeting

Peter Walker as Lay Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and especially our speakers, Gareth Greenwood and Lesley Griffiths, and Will Hagger. He said he was sorry that Phil could not attend the meeting but read out the following message from Phil:

To all members of Carsington Deanery Synod

I am so sorry that I am not able to be with you this evening. I'm afraid that the flu bug got hold of me before my flu jab had had time to take effect! Hence this brief letter to you. I expect most of you will have heard by now that I will be leaving my current role of Rector of the Hlland United Benefice in January to take the role of Lead Chaplain to the Derbyshire Rural Chaplaincy (which Rev Alan Griggs is about to vacate). This also means that I will no longer be your Area Dean.

Whilst I have only been Area Dean since May this year, I have served as Assistant Area Dean (with no-one to assist!) for over three years. It has been a pleasure serving you and working with you during that time. The Deanery reached a very low point a few years ago but I believe we are now in a much better place, with a more positive outlook and approach to who we are and what we are doing together. It has been lovely seeing that change as more of the vacancies have been filled.

As I move on to a new role, I want to take this opportunity to thank you all for your support over the years, for your honesty when times were challenging and for your hope and positivity which is still in evidence today. May our gracious, loving and empowering Lord equip you and bless you in each of your contexts and may you continue to encourage and support each other over the months and years to come.

It's not 'goodbye' but 'au revoir' as I remain in Derbyshire and our paths will cross at some point, I'm sure.

God bless

Rev Phil Michell

Peter Kelsey thanked Phil for his dedication and leadership and wished him a speedy recovery.

Archdeacon Nicky sent a message acknowledging the Synod's sadness at Phil's departure and confirmed consultations are underway to plan for ongoing leadership and future support for the deanery.

The opening prayers were led by Steve Dunning with scripture from Mark 10:35–45, reflecting on servant leadership.

Peter Walker invited parishes to share their good news stories so that together we can celebrate the valuable work taking place across the Diocese. Peter described how he has recently been in contact with the Diocese Communications team and would like to share these encouraging stories more widely using the internet and other social media platforms.

Publishing them online would be a wonderful way to highlight the meaningful work that is happening across Carsington Deanery, showing just how much there is to celebrate. Peter will

make sure these are shared with the Communications Team: Aiden Melville (Head) and Debbie Patrick and Rowan Rankin who share a role in the team.

Across the deanery, preparations are well underway for the forthcoming Deanery Confirmation Service. Revd Janet, Revd Nicola and Father Nicholas are leading a confirmation course with 10 adult candidates, all growing confidently in their faith and commitment. The confirmation service will take place in Wirksworth on 20th November, and it promises to be a joyful celebration for the whole deanery community.

Presentation by Gareth Greenwood, Church Buildings Officer

Gareth explained that the Church Buildings and Mission Team at Church House provides a wide range of information, practical support, and financial guidance to parishes. As the Church Buildings Support Officer, Gareth works across 318 churches in the diocese. Much of his role involves listening to parishes, offering practical advice on repairs, and helping them access grants and “quick wins” funding. He emphasised the value of networking and peer support, where local stories and shared knowledge strengthen confidence and capability. Gareth highlighted that Quinquennial Inspection (QI) reports can feel daunting, especially where work has been delayed over time.

Gareth can act as a “critical friend”, helping PCCs reflect on priorities, sustainability, and planning manageable next steps. He is also available for visits, offering independent advice.

He encouraged parishes to plan so they can apply quickly when funding becomes available. Early conversations can shape the vision, purpose, and missional aims of projects, whether the goal is evangelistic growth or simply ensuring people know the church is there. He also emphasised that finances are the responsibility of the whole PCC, not solely the treasurer. Finally, he encouraged churches to be open as much as possible. When churches have footfall and are secured appropriately, insurance companies are usually supportive. Open doors invite prayer, welcome visitors, increase mission visibility, and create opportunities such as refreshments and digital giving.

Presentation by Lesley Griffiths, National Lottery Heritage Fund & Heritage

Engagement Support

Lesley works with the Heritage Engagement Centre, supporting parishes and community groups wishing to apply for funding through the National Lottery Heritage Fund, which distributes around £300–£320 million per year across the UK. In the East Midlands region and there are two and a half Heritage Fund support officers who all work closely together to assist as many parishes as possible. A new leaflet is available showing the types of projects this part of the country has successfully delivered through Lottery funding. Lesley highlighted that there are two main programmes churches can apply to, and that early support is available before submitting an application. This may include one-to-one advice via email, Teams or Zoom, and in some cases a site visit, which can help the team understand the building and its needs more clearly. Webinars are provided regularly, giving guidance and the opportunity to ask questions, something applicants find extremely valuable. See the minutes for fuller details.

Lesley strongly recommended that parishes speak to Gareth first to shape the project vision and scope before engaging with the Heritage Fund. She described Gareth's support as invaluable in ensuring churches are ready to take forward a strong and viable application.

Diocesan Finances

Peter Kelsey reported on the financial position following the approval of the 2026 Diocesan Budget. The budget currently stands at £11.6 million, which he acknowledged is a significant amount of money. Earlier in the year, Synod agreed a proposal to operate with a planned deficit of £2 million spread over three years in order to support mission and ministry during a challenging period.

During the debate, a key question was raised about clergy recruitment: Should the Diocese continue to recruit new clergy when finances are tight? In response, Synod was asked to vote on whether we should (a) increase clergy numbers or (b) reduce clergy recruitment. Synod clearly affirmed that the Diocese should continue to recruit more stipendiary clergy. As a result, the number of stipendiary posts has now increased from 90 to 95 and is expected to move closer to 100 as new appointments progress.

However, financial trends are currently heading in the wrong direction. At Diocesan synod it was reported that we are currently three-quarters of the way through the year, and the Diocese is £80,000 below the Common Fund level expected which is a worrying sign. Of the 37 parishes in this deanery, only around ten are close to contributing 100% of their Common Fund; several others are significantly below.

Across the Diocese, parish income has increased by around £300,000 since 2019, yet Common Fund contributions have fallen substantially over the same period. This has a direct impact, as the Common Fund is used to pay clergy stipends and housing, not to cover administrative costs at Church House. If the Common Fund does not rise, the Diocese will struggle to sustain current clergy numbers.

Peter also highlighted that a number of parishes have not claimed any Gift Aid in the past two years, despite this being a simple way to increase income. He encouraged clergy and PCCs to look closely at this and seek help if needed.

There are also opportunities to reduce costs. For example, one parish received £8,000 back after the Diocese helped resolve an electricity billing issue. The Diocese is keen to offer similar support wherever it can, parishes do not need to face these challenges alone.

Peter acknowledged the very real pressures parishes face: from urgent building repairs to limited volunteer capacity, and the understandable feeling that paying Common Fund may not always be the top priority. However, without increasing income, it becomes difficult to justify increasing clergy numbers, especially as new worshippers often need time before they give financially.

Looking ahead, the Diocese hopes that growth in mission and attendance will lead to growth in generosity, but this takes patience. The Diocese has carefully managed reserves and can draw on up to £2 million to support ministry in the short term. However, this is not sustainable without increased parish giving.

Support continues to be available from the Parish Support Team. Steve Johnson offers practical advice on stewardship and generosity, and there are diocesan officers who can check parish finances for anomalies or missed opportunities.

In summary, Peter stressed that we are all in this together. The Diocese wants to work alongside parishes to grow the Church and secure the resources needed to sustain ministry across every community.

Vacancies

The meeting stated that we currently have four vacancies for lay representatives on Diocesan Synod. Anyone who is a member of Deanery Synod is eligible to stand.

At present our elected lay representatives are: Emily Brailsford; Lesley Needham; Peter Walker and Peter Kelsey. If you would be interested in serving and helping to shape the future direction of our Diocese, please get in touch for more information or to express interest.

Parish support team - here to help

Will thanked the Deanery for inviting him to tonight's meeting and thanked the speakers for their presentations. Will reminded us that the Parish Support Team is here to help. Many parishes are being asked to do more than ever, and the team wants to support the development of mission opportunities to help churches grow and flourish and encouraged those thinking about a project to get in touch early, encouraging all to be aware that the team can help shape ideas, provide advice, and provide support in finding the right language and approach for grant applications and mission planning, concluding that you don't need to work it out alone, we'd love to help.

The meeting closed with prayers led by Steve Dunning.

Date of the next meeting: Wednesday, 25th February 2026 Holy Trinity, Matlock Bath

Peter Walker